

INTERNATIONAL IDEA STRATEGY



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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance ([International IDEA](#))’s fourth institutional Strategy, valid from January 2023.¹ This Strategy was further updated in 2025, to reflect new challenges in the global landscape and to refine priority thematic areas. This Strategy addresses challenges and opportunities in the democracy landscape, building on International IDEA’s strengths, comparative advantage, and niche in the democracy support and assistance field. It sets out the Institute’s strategic direction and implementation framework, while ensuring there is sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging needs and challenges at the global, regional and national levels.

The Strategy is organized into the following sections:

1. International IDEA’s identity, added value and comparative advantage (who we are)
2. Democracy in perspective: current challenges and opportunities (why)
3. International IDEA’s thematic priorities (what)
4. Working modalities, mainstreaming lenses, criteria for engagement, optimizing our work, communication and resource mobilization (how)
5. Stakeholders—governance actors, target groups, strategic partners (with whom)
6. Conclusion (in sum)

This Strategy sets out the Institute’s strategic direction and implementation framework, while ensuring there is sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging needs and challenges.

¹ This document will be updated periodically in line with decisions taken by International IDEA’s Member States based on the changing democracy landscape.

These sections are summarized in a conclusion and complemented by Annexes describing International IDEA's:

- A. Definition of democracy
- B. Theory of change and results framework
- C. 2020–2021 strategic reviews, 2022 strategy development process, and 2025 strategy update process
- D. Criteria for country-level engagement

Through International IDEA's 'think-do-convene-advocate' approach, the Institute aspires to be associated with the credibility, excellence, relevance, agility and integrity of its work.

1.1. INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S IDENTITY, ADDED VALUE AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE—WHO ARE WE?

International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) with an explicit mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide. As an IGO with a worldwide presence, International IDEA fills a key niche. Through its 'think-do-convene-advocate' approach, the Institute aspires to be associated with the credibility, excellence, relevance, agility and integrity of its work.

International IDEA's diverse [membership](#) of democracies from all over the world reinforces its legitimacy. The Institute's statutes require Member States to demonstrate their commitment to the rule of law, human rights, the principles of democratic pluralism and to strengthening democracy. It seeks to enhance Member State engagement to fully capitalize on its IGO status, while extending its membership base in all regions and expanding the diversity of democratic experiences.

The Institute is the only IGO dedicated solely to supporting democracy worldwide; it has permanent United Nations (UN) Observer status. Combined with its ability to convene multilateral institutions, national actors, democracy defenders and civil society organizations (CSOs), International IDEA plays a unique role in harnessing collective global action to defend, support and advance democracy. Through its strategic partnerships with the UN and regional organizations, International IDEA also has a catalytic role in advocacy to enhance the effectiveness of international democracy support.

International IDEA's 'think-do-convene-advocate' approach is underpinned by continuous learning; it is an *impartial global knowledge provider* on democracy that offers *country- and region-specific capacity development and advisory support*. The Institute bridges the gap between academic research and on-the-ground project implementation, while systematically ensuring that both benefit from continuous learning. It *assesses and shares best-fit options, convenes policy dialogues*, and strengthens countries' capacities to negotiate and implement democratic reform. While other organizations may also offer some of these functions, few, if any, consistently combine them in a reinforcing

cycle of global knowledge production and practical tools designed to build the capacity of democratic actors and use convening power and *policy influence to advocate* for democratic values and practices in multilateral policy fora.

International IDEA considers democracy essential for promoting and guaranteeing human rights, and believes that participation in political life, including government, is part of human rights, proclaimed and guaranteed by international treaties and declarations, as well as the Institute's Statutes.

1.2. VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision

A world in which everyone lives in inclusive and resilient democracies¹ with accountable actors, institutions and processes able to respond to citizens' needs, protect human rights and deliver sustainable development.

¹ The bold vision statement will be the short version for external use.

Our Mission

International IDEA advances, promotes and protects sustainable democracy worldwide in consideration of human rights commitments through policy-relevant knowledge, capacity development, advocacy and the convening of dialogues.

1.3. MISSION STATEMENT²

International IDEA's mission statement considers the challenges and threats to democracy, acknowledging the link to the protection of human rights and the need for advocacy to protect and safeguard democracy around the world. It describes *how* the Institute intends to achieve its vision and mandate and highlights its key modalities of engagement, which include developing capacity and knowledge products, advocacy and convening dialogues.

² Mexico presented observations regarding the competence of International IDEA to protect democracy and electoral institutions, which can be found in Annex E.

In the framework of this strategy, the convening of dialogues and advocacy have been added as instruments to enable International IDEA to advance democratic reform at the global, regional and national levels. To achieve these goals, the Institute aims to inform and influence multilateral and national foreign policy agendas and priorities to advance sustainable democracy.

International IDEA's focus remains supporting and advancing democracy, which requires adherence to universal and legally binding human rights commitments. Respect for human rights, democracy, equality and the rule of law continue to underpin all aspects of the Institute's work.

1.4. INTERNATIONAL IDEA AND THE 2030 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

International IDEA's vision is anchored in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Institute believes that democratic principles are core to (and important enablers of) the Agenda's realization. Rule of law; access to justice; accountable and transparent institutions; responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making in line with the 'Leave no one behind' principle; and fundamental freedoms are cornerstones for achieving all of the Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

International IDEA and the Sustainable Development Goals

The following Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and targets are particularly relevant to International IDEA's mandate:

- SDG 16.6: Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.
- SDG 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels.
- SDG 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- SDG 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.
- SDG 5b: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- SDG 5.9: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.
- SDG 10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- SDG 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.
- SDG 13.3 Improve education, awareness raising, and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
- SDG 17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology.

Chapter 2

DEMOCRACY IN PERSPECTIVE: CURRENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES—WHY?

International IDEA's strategic direction and work aim to strengthen democracy in terms of representation, rights, rule of law, and participation. In advancing its vision and mission, the Institute considers and responds to current realities and emerging trends in the democracy landscape, with a view to helping its Member States and other democratic partners address the challenges—and seize the opportunities—facing democracy and the field of democracy support.

This chapter outlines the key features of the democracy landscape as of 2025, as well as the challenges and opportunities most prominent in the Institute's work.

**International
IDEA responds to
current realities and
emerging trends
in the democracy
landscape to
address the
challenges facing
democracy today.**

2.1. THE DEMOCRACY LANDSCAPE

Democracy **is in decline** globally—in every region, including within long-established democracies. The number of countries moving towards authoritarianism exceeds the number moving towards or consolidating democracy, and has done so for nine consecutive years. The Institute's Global State of Democracy Indices reveal that more than half of countries fell in at least one key indicator of democratic performance between 2019 and 2024. International IDEA's data show negative or stagnant trends in all four aspects of democracy (Representation, Rights, Rule of Law, and Participation). Meanwhile, authoritarian leaders are using increasingly brazen and coordinated tactics to undermine democracy.

This democratic downturn has been stimulated and aggravated by a complex interplay of factors, from mounting economic inequality since the global financial crisis, to the growing spread of online and offline disinformation amid societal and political polarization, to geopolitical shifts as autocratic powers strive to reinforce and export their authoritarian models. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has highlighted how authoritarian regimes actively

undermine the international order, just as the conflict and humanitarian disaster in Gaza has showcased that same system's inability to prevent human suffering and uphold human rights. Legacies of the Covid-19 pandemic include lingering democratic restrictions in democratically weak contexts and highly contentious public debates over the appropriate limits of power in the democratic state. Amid all these pressures on governance, survey data, [including from International IDEA](#), show citizens' increased disaffection with democracies' failure to address their evolving needs and demands, and commensurate distrust in democratic institutions. This dissatisfaction, which affects established and emerging democracies alike, is often strongest among politically marginalized communities, such as minorities, women, and youth.

Yet, despite these severe challenges, it should not be forgotten that democratic processes have come [a long way](#) over the past 50 years, and remain resilient in many ways. From Belarus to Myanmar, pro-democracy movements continue to defy autocratic oppression and demand their democratic rights. There remains [broad public support](#) for democracy around the world, including in undemocratic contexts. Even authoritarian regimes flatter democracy with imitation, holding sham elections and adopting democratic language in shallow attempts to conceal their anti-democratic behaviours. Digital technologies and rising Internet access are enabling an unprecedented exchange of information and discourse, connecting democratic actors worldwide and offering new avenues for institutional innovation and participatory governance.

The landscape for democracy is one that requires both defence and offence from democracy support actors.

The landscape for democracy is thus one that requires both defence and offence from democracy support actors: to protect democratic institutions and values from rising threats, while honouring the gains that have been achieved and proactively seizing new opportunities. Renewing democracy will entail not only safeguarding the core principles and institutions of democracy but also reforms to enhance economic fairness and social inclusion.

Perhaps above all, it demands a reinvigorated commitment to partnerships. The challenges of the world today are simply too complex and evolving too quickly for any one organization to successfully tackle alone. Democracies everywhere face critical tests of legitimacy and trust; strengthening and rebuilding these pillars depends on global cooperation to benefit from insights and capabilities across diverse regions, experiences, and traditions. Strategic alliances with partner organizations and networks can offer thematic complementarity and operational efficiency, while leveraging International IDEA's unique strengths as a convenor and facilitator.

2.2. KEY CHALLENGES: SYSTEMIC ISSUES

Rising conflict and security concerns

Russia's war in Ukraine and global hybrid threat activity, the resurgence of armed conflict within and between countries in the Middle East, the spread of coups and terrorism in the Sahel, the undermining of public safety by organized

crime in Latin America and shifts in the long-standing commitments of the United States to pay for allies' defence have all heightened focus and spending on security as an imperative for states. Security investments are ultimately about protecting sovereignty, self-determination, and a way of life. In some places, security grounds are used to justify violations of democratic rights and values. For International IDEA's Member States, however, security is intertwined with democracy. In these countries, democracy is part of the way of life and what makes these societies worth protecting.

What's more, democracy helps ensure peace. The mechanisms for this relationship are complex, but the basic proof may be found in [decades of peace among democracies](#). And what is true for peace is also true for prosperity. Authoritarian regimes suffer disproportionately from widespread corruption and weak rule of law, jeopardizing both domestic and foreign investments. In the long run, democracies make better long-term economic partners [and do better](#) at achieving sustainable and inclusive development.

More democracy means more peace and a more secure world. In an increasingly securitized era, both the success of democracy and the sustainability of democracy support will depend on elucidating and reinforcing the connections between democracy and security, while avoiding the excessive securitization of core democratic institutions and values.

More democracy means more peace and a more secure world.

Declining international support for democracy

The global field of democracy support is under pressure in unprecedented ways. Many traditional donors are reducing Official Development Assistance and shifting resources to domestic and security priorities. The defunding and shutdown of USAID in 2025 is the starkest demonstration of this trend, but democracy support actors around the world are dealing with cuts and closure.

As the United States pulls back from its longstanding commitment to supporting democracy in the world, others must champion democracy, reinforce domestic public support for democracy, and help fill strategic parts of a vacuum in governance assistance. The democracy support ecosystem must also recommit to focused and collective action to increase value and effectiveness—evolving from a model of donor-led promotion and aid to one of shared learning and inclusive partnership.

Supporting democracy is more vital and timely than ever to bolster inclusive governance against the rising tide of demagoguery—and the repression and conflict that flow in its wake.

Weakened multilateralism

International IDEA is part of a multilateral system of intergovernmental organizations, laws, and norms. This system, with the United Nations at its centre, has defined the international order since the Second World War. For 80 years, these institutions have facilitated international dialogue and cooperation, while averting the worst forms of human carnage that marked the preceding decades.

Multilateralism must engage effectively and inclusively with the main concerns of the world today, and with those who will inherit the world tomorrow.

In recent years, however, these structures have been hollowed out. Rising powers in the Global South justifiably demand improved representation in a multilateral system still privileging the victors of a war that few alive today remember. Meanwhile, the transatlantic consensus of mutual security and prosperity commitments between North America and Europe is under severe strain. As international legal and normative structures are violated in ever more frequent and flagrant ways, the multilateral system often struggles to respond.

If multilateralism is to remain a force for global unity and peace, it must engage effectively and inclusively with the main concerns of the world today, and with those who will inherit the world tomorrow—reflecting the diverse experiences and aspirations of societies across all regions. The multilateral institutions at the global and regional level that survive and succeed will need to embody principles of representation, equality of peoples, fairness, and participation: principles of democracy.

Accelerating digitalization

The future of governance is increasingly digital. [Two-thirds of the world's population](#) is now online, and there is growing demand for public services at the pace and ease of the internet. Emerging technologies are flattening financial and geographic barriers and fostering transnational communities and exchange. Artificial intelligence will only accelerate these transformations, offering the potential for entirely new economies, social structures, and politics. Every democracy must strive to seize these opportunities.

At the same time, this era of digital disruption poses major challenges for the integrity of democratic institutions. Electoral management bodies must contend with a new world of online campaigns, rampant disinformation, digital finance, and electronic voting. Legislatures must leverage technologies to enable more inclusive and direct participation and representation. Governments must ensure that no one is left behind as new technologies redefine the social and economic landscape. And the rule of law must be extended to protect rights and uphold constitutional parameters in digital contexts.

2.3 KEY CHALLENGES: THEMATIC ISSUES

In addition to the systemic issues outlined above, each of the four aspects of democracy on which International IDEA works also faces its own unique challenges and opportunities.

Representation

[Electoral regulations, institutions, and processes](#) are under transformation and under threat. Electoral and regulatory authorities face intersecting challenges including political pressure, security risks, evolving digital landscapes, and extreme weather events. In response, electoral management bodies are revisiting established practices in electoral system design,

voting arrangements and campaign regulation—including in response to new digital technologies—while reassessing policies to safeguard their independence. These efforts acknowledge the need for inclusive mechanisms to support voters, candidates and electoral officials against undue influence, marginalization and harm. In a complex political and technical environment, [protecting elections](#) is key to protecting democracy.

Meanwhile, parliaments play a core role in democratic representation. In many places, the strengthening of parliaments represents a key opportunity for the strengthening of democracy. This requires ensuring that legislative rules and cycles are inclusive, effective and fair.

Rights

Democracy and human rights are inseparable. According to the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), the ‘will of the people’ is the basis for sovereign legitimacy, and any restrictions of rights should be judged against principles of ‘a democratic society’. Rights transcend other elements of democracy—Representation, Rule of Law, and Participation are all grounded in a human rights framework.

Yet these rights are at risk, not only from governments that abuse power and limit access to justice, but from changes in the global landscape, such as climate change and digitalization. The [climate crisis](#) poses an existential threat to humanity, and thus to rights. Governance challenges from climate change—including in terms of food and water security, conflict, migration and natural disasters—are ultimately about how to maintain human rights in a warming world. Meanwhile, even as [digitalization](#) has great potential to expand democratic access and inclusion, it can equally accelerate autocracy, enabling authoritarian regimes to advance their aims via digital surveillance and repressive laws. Digitalization may also create gaps between those with access to new technologies and those without, a phenomenon that often aggravates inequalities from gender, wealth, and other variables. How societies respond to climate change and emerging digital technologies can foster either a more rights-based, safe, and democratic world for future generations—or the concentration of authoritarian power.

Rule of Law

[Constitutions and constitutional change](#) are central to the protection and advancement of democracy, peace, stability and development. Constitutional transitions are increasingly frequent, producing greater demand for expert advice on transitional constitutional arrangements as well as facilitation and capacity development among pro-democracy actors. Moreover, since constitutions are usually among the first institutions to be attacked in backsliding contexts, strengthening democratic constitutions within a rule of law and governance framework is crucial for [preventing democratic breakdown](#). Finally, constitutions can also serve as effective vehicles for addressing long-term challenges such as climate change and socio-economic inequality.

In a complex political and technical environment, protecting elections is key to protecting democracy.

Inclusive participation is a fundamental enabling element of a functioning democracy.

Beyond constitutional processes, rule of law is a key variable in the global trajectory of democracy—one that [International IDEA's data](#) show under mounting strain in many parts of the world. An independent judiciary and equal and inclusive access to justice are critical for achieving human rights, including democratic rights. As rule of law comes under pressure in both non-democratic regimes and some longstanding democracies, this fallback endangers all other core elements of democracy.

Participation

Inclusive participation is a fundamental enabling element of a functioning democracy. Every citizen, and under certain conditions non-citizens,³ regardless of class, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, group, culture, and ethnic or religious background, should have an equal right and opportunity to engage with and contribute to the functioning of democratic institutions and processes. Yet gender-specific political violence, gender stereotypes and social norms, women's limited access to justice and increased attacks on women's rights continue to limit women's ability to participate fully in democratic life. Minorities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, youth and people exposed to socio-economic challenges often struggle to access democratic institutions. Many people have [lost trust](#) in existing political institutions and processes, which are often seen as dominated by elites—a factor in the recent rise of populist and illiberal parties.⁴

In this context, citizen movements are increasingly prominent alternatives to political parties, especially on complex pan-social issues like climate change. Civil society groups play growing roles as [countervailing institutions](#), upholding democracy even when formal institutions like legislatures are weakening. Meanwhile, digital tools enable more equitable and accessible forms of citizen engagement. These new modalities may deepen participation and facilitate democratic renewal.

³ As outlined in articles 2, 25 and 26 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and as stipulated by the UN Human Rights Committee, 'the rights set forth in the Covenant apply to everyone, irrespective of reciprocity, and irrespective of his or her nationality or statelessness. Thus, the general rule is that each one of the rights of the Covenant must be guaranteed without discrimination between citizens and aliens.' The Covenant permits states to distinguish between citizens and non-citizens in two categories of rights: political rights explicitly guaranteed to citizens and freedom of movement. Regarding political rights, article 25 establishes that 'every citizen' shall have the right to participate in public affairs, to vote and hold office, and to have access to public service. However, states' use of a 'guest worker' approach to immigration affects non-citizens' ability to organize themselves and defend their common interests. States should consider granting the right to participate in local public life, including the right to vote in local elections, to long-term non-citizen residents. See <<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/noncitizensen.pdf>>.

⁴ International IDEA, *Global State of Democracy Report 2021*, Chapter 1.

Chapter 3

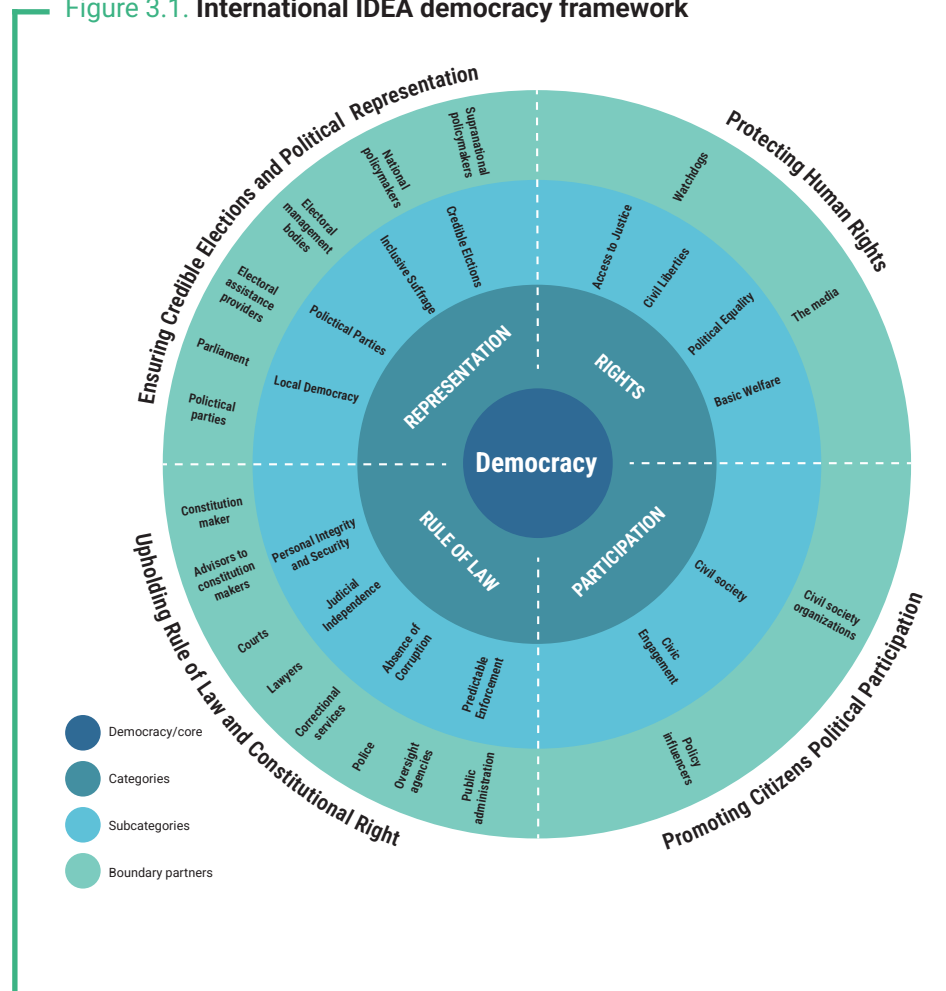
INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S THEMATIC PRIORITIES—WHAT?

To achieve International IDEA's mission, and in pursuit of its vision, it has defined thematic priorities to align with the challenges and opportunities of the democracy landscape and the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Broadly, International IDEA may work with any of the democratic actors who support democratic development within the four categories of democracy as defined by the Institute and as utilized in the Institute's flagship Global State of Democracy Initiative. These four categories of democracy are Representation, Rights, Rule of Law and Participation. The International IDEA Democracy Framework is illustrated by Figure 3.1 below.

Within this framework and the categories of Representation, Rights, Rule of Law and Participation, the Institute has selected thematic priorities of focus as outlined below. These thematic priorities may be revised in each year's annual planning process and agreed upon by the Council of Member States when the Programme and Budget is approved. This allows the Institute to retain flexibility to respond to the shifting needs of its Member States, democracy actors and partners while retaining a clear set of priorities to avoid over-stretching and potentially taxing the Institute in a time of shrinking financial resources for democracy support and promotion. Annual review of the Institute's priorities in the Programme and Budget may also include reducing the number of thematic priorities of focus. Whether to reduce, grow or maintain current areas of focus will be determined by considering the need in the field and evaluation of the value-add International IDEA can provide, requests from boundary partners/target groups and Member States, sufficient available funding, alignment with the Institute's Democracy Framework in Figure 3.1, as well available capacity and expertise. It is important to note that the selection of thematic priorities will not necessarily mirror the internal structure of the Institute. For example, a thematic priority may be selected without establishing a new team dedicated to working on this priority. Existing teams across the organization may instead work collaboratively on thematic priorities, or one existing team may refine its approach and absorb a new thematic priority.

The four categories of democracy are Representation, Rights, Rule of Law and Participation.

Figure 3.1. International IDEA democracy framework



Without assuming a hierarchy, International IDEA differentiates between established and more recent thematic priorities that intersect and reinforce each other.

Established thematic priorities reflect the Institute's work on key democratic processes and its core expertise in designing and strengthening inclusive and accountable democratic institutions and processes within the areas of Representation, Rights, Rule of Law and Participation. These include:

- Electoral Processes
- Constitutional Governance and Rule of Law
- Political Participation and Representation

More recent thematic priorities reflect the Institute's areas of engagement that interlink and cut across with established thematic priorities to create synergies. These include:

- Democracy Assessment
- Climate Change and Democracy
- Digitalization and Democracy

3.1. ELECTORAL PROCESSES

With an aim to strengthen political representation International IDEA will support the improvement and protection of the integrity of **electoral institutions and processes**. The focus will be on improving: (a) the tools and practices of electoral assistance practitioners; (b) the quality of legal and institutional frameworks, procedures and practices in elections; (c) electoral authorities' capacity to implement their mandate; (d) gender equality and inclusive participation in electoral processes; and (e) the role of civil society, democracy defenders, and the media in ensuring the accountability of electoral institutions and the integrity of the electoral process. International IDEA will build on its convening power to articulate and exemplify options and best practices for electoral reform, protecting electoral integrity, defending elections from foreign interference and manipulation, and regulatory policy.

The strategic framing of protection and institutional resilience will inform the development of election-focused global knowledge products, tools and services, while integrating existing knowledge resources. Protecting elections by systematizing regulatory and policy options to ensure oversight of the digital space in electoral campaigns will be a cornerstone of that work.

International IDEA will continue to support electoral assistance practitioners, electoral management bodies and global, regional, and national policy makers with assessments, advisory services, and professional development opportunities. The Institute will further develop the electoral risk management resource package for conflict-sensitive decision making in fragile and conflict-affected states and curriculum packages on best practices, which can inform domestic conversations and bridge building on electoral reform.

The Institute will also engage in high-level fora to develop global standards, enable mutual learning, and encourage conversations on transnational threats to electoral integrity. Due to the multipronged nature of threats to elections, this agenda-setting work demands a broadening of alliances to include policy communities in areas such as anti-corruption, security and development cooperation.

International IDEA will take an integrated approach to election reform across all its thematic priorities and link to our core expertise in Constitutional Governance and Rule of Law and Political Participation and Representation as well as to work on Climate Change, Digital Democracy, and Democracy Assessment to advance democratic reform, while also considering gender equality, rule of law and human rights protection.

With an aim to strengthen political representation International IDEA will support the improvement and protection of the integrity of electoral institutions and processes.

With an aim to support the rule of law and citizens' rights, International IDEA will support inclusive democratic constitution-building processes and respect for constitutionalism.

3.2. CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

With an aim to support the rule of law and citizens' rights, International IDEA will support inclusive democratic **constitution-building processes** and respect for constitutionalism to enable democratic transition and recovery and prevent democratic backsliding or breakdown, in consideration of **rule of law** and good governance principles.

The primary focus of the work will be on (a) constitution-building processes; (b) constitutional design; and (c) enabling a culture of constitutionalism and raising constitutional awareness. Examples of themes within this work include decentralization, separation of powers, constitution building in fragile and post-conflict settings, environmental protection and the protection of future generations' rights, as well as gender and inclusion.

In response to democracy landscape challenges, International IDEA will seek to broaden its focus on enabling democratic transitions or recovery in post-conflict or post-coup contexts. It will do so by working on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and security in a constitutional context. In addition, it will reinforce the links between constitution-building processes and the rule of law—including prioritizing support to the justice sector, enabling access to justice for all, and reinforcing judicial independence—as well as between constitution-building processes and governance, in close cooperation with strategic partners and civil society.

Work within this thematic priority will link to the Institute's work on Electoral Processes and Political Participation and Representation to prioritize inclusive processes that consider diverse societal interests in constitutional design and processes. It will link to the work on Climate Change and to the protection of the environment in constitutions and future generations' rights.

3.3. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

With an aim to support **political participation and representation**, International IDEA will build on its track record of supporting political parties through capacity development and comparative knowledge production in the areas of party organization and finance, gender equality and inclusion, interparty dialogue and citizens' engagement.

While the work will focus on strengthening political parties and political finance regulation, it will take a broader approach to (a) produce knowledge and convene dialogues related to new and different forms of political participation and representation; (b) provide policy advice and capacity development through a multiparty approach to parties to help navigate challenges to their roles and changing membership; (c) build the capacity of parliaments; and (d) enhance the participation of women and youth.

International IDEA will produce comparative tools that build on its Political Finance Database and Money in Politics initiative and will use its convening power to organize dialogues at the global, regional and country levels that analyze the phenomena of social movements and the young generation and the link between political parties and citizen movements.

The work will strengthen its focus on representation through capacity development of parliaments, building on lessons learned from the Institute's INTER-PARES project in cooperation with strategic partners. A focus on women's political participation will identify gender-specific obstacles, cultural and economic as well as health and sexual rights limitations to their online and offline participation in democratic processes. Capacity building will focus on women candidates, women and men politicians, and political parties, while advocacy will target policymakers in global and regional multilateral fora and governments.

This work will link to those on Electoral Processes and Constitutional Governance and Rule of Law to prioritize inclusive processes, and to the workstream on Climate Change, given the role that young people play in the climate change movement. It will also link to digitalization due to the role that technology can play in enhancing political participation, particularly of young people.

3.4. DEMOCRACY ASSESSMENT

Through **democracy assessment**, International IDEA will contribute to advancing and safeguarding democracy by monitoring and analyzing the democratic landscape, with a focus on global and regional trends and conducting foresight analysis. This thematic priority will produce evidence-based tools, publications and communication products, including the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) Indices, the Democracy Tracker and the GSoD reports. In addition, developments impacting democracy will be featured on a GSoD platform as a one-stop shop for democracy data and analysis.

This work will enable the Institute to act as a policy advocate in multilateral global and regional fora. It will allow the Institute and its partners to 'make the case' for democracy, highlighting its benefits and contributing to its resilience while alerting stakeholders to vulnerabilities and opportunities for growth and innovation. In addition, Democracy Assessment will inform programming on a continuous basis in our other work, creating synergies and capacity to innovate and learn within the Institute.

The democracy assessment tools will build and draw upon the Institute's core work on Elections, Constitutional Governance and Rule of Law, and Political Participation and Representation, and inform other work on Climate Change and Digitalization. They will also consider gender and inclusion as a mainstreaming lens.

International IDEA will monitor and analyze the democratic landscape, with a focus on global and regional trends and conducting foresight analysis.

International IDEA will support democracies to address the climate crisis by leveraging their inherent advantages and mitigating their shortcomings.

3.5. CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEMOCRACY

With an aim to explore the inter-linkages between **climate change and democracy**, International IDEA will support democracies to address the climate crisis by leveraging their inherent advantages and mitigating their shortcomings. It will aim to help strengthen democratic and inclusive development based on the effective participation and ownership of people with climate policy agendas. This will be done by transferring knowledge and good practices from Member States and partners. Democracies' performance in relation to climate change will be analyzed against democratic attributes as a basis for policymaking. International IDEA will also raise awareness of the threats that climate change poses to democracy, including the nexus between public health crises and democracy, while exploring how democracies' climate change actions link to the prevention of biodiversity loss.

The focus will be on (a) democratic innovation to tackle climate change; (b) analyzing how climate change affects electoral processes, political participation and constitution-building processes; and (c) promoting democratic consensus for effective climate action.

Innovative institutional approaches that can enhance democracies' responses to climate change will be highlighted. The role of constitutions, parliaments, the judiciary and political finance in responding to climate change, securing climate justice and enforcing climate change judgements will be examined.

Examples of themes include the potential to use citizen assemblies or citizen juries on the issue of climate change; the role of constitutional innovations related to climate change; the role of intercultural and intergenerational dialogues; the role of environmental and human rights defenders; the inclusion of youth, Indigenous peoples and marginalized groups in climate change policymaking; the impact of fossil fuel companies, lobbying and money in politics; the sustainable and accountable governance of natural resources; and supporting parliaments to improve their legislative, oversight and representation functions to accelerate climate action and inclusive governance.

International IDEA's work on Climate Change and Democracy will relate to its core expertise on elections and constitution building; it will take a bottom-up approach by emphasizing the inclusive political participation of the groups most vulnerable to climate change in line with the 'leave no one behind' principle. The Institute will cooperate with partners and experts that specialize in climate change. The workstream will place a strong focus on analyzing the obstacles and identifying innovative policymaking approaches and tools to enable the effective participation of marginalized groups such as youth (future generations), women, and Indigenous peoples in climate change policymaking, including convening and promoting dialogue between them and governments and representative institutions at the national, regional and global levels.

3.6. DIGITALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

With an aim to explore how **digitalization** impacts **democracy**, International IDEA will take a holistic approach and support democratic institutions and actors in reaping the benefits of digital innovation for governance and oversight. It will provide them with analysis and tools to protect and renew democracy by countering digital threats and ensuring inclusive digital participation and the protection of human rights.

Building on International IDEA's core expertise on democracy assessment, elections and constitution building and its work in the field of political parties, the Institute will focus on (a) the impact of digitalization on the global state of democracy, including through digital innovation, e-governance and digital rights; (b) protecting democratic processes (particularly elections) and institutions in the context of digital transformation and disinformation, including through ensuring democratic regulation and oversight of the online space; and (c) digitalization and participation, including questions of democratic rights, equality and inclusion.

Examples of potential themes include harnessing the potential of digitalization to increase political participation; governance transparency and trust in democratic processes; analyzing the abuse of digital tools and the impacts of disinformation, gender-based online violence, mass surveillance, censorship and state-sponsored content online information blocks on democracy; examining the impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, particularly elections; and increasing oversight of political finance. Themes will also cover new regulations that affect digitalization and elections, campaigning, political advertising and freedom of speech. Trends will be monitored through International IDEA's democracy assessment tools, the Democracy Tracker and the GSoD Indices.

International IDEA's work will seek to enhance dialogue between the Global North and South on digitalization and democracy, and to boost digital participation by analyzing how digitalization affects disadvantaged groups. Such groups can experience multiple discrimination because of their age, remote location, economic or social status, education level, gender, ability or membership in certain groups.

This work will link to the Institute's work on Electoral Processes, Constitutional Governance and Rule of Law, and Political Participation and Representation to identify challenges and solutions related to the impact of digitalization. To reinforce knowledge sharing and information exchange, International IDEA will cooperate and match its comparative advantage to strategic partners in this field, including the private sector.

International IDEA will take a holistic approach and support democratic institutions and actors in reaping the benefits of digital innovation for governance and oversight.

Emerging priorities will continue to be evaluated and brought forward for discussion with Member States as part of the annual planned process.

3.7. EMERGING PRIORITIES

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, International IDEA will review and, where necessary, update thematic priorities during the Institute's annual planning process, based on the changing needs of the field, requests from boundary partners and Member States, available funding and capacity, and in alignment with topics and stakeholders in the Institute's Democracy Framework (Figure 3.1) and cross-cutting issues. This may include, for example, further developing the institutional approach on the linkages between democracy and security at local, national and international levels. Understanding that inclusive democracies are more peaceful and strong democratic institutions help prevent conflict, the Institute will explore what niche, if any, the Institute might play in embedding democratic resilience at the heart of security policy and planning. Building on existing publications and programming and staff expertise in areas such as constitution and rule of law and digitalization, the Institute may examine how to strengthen and extend its tools and guidance on fostering institutional resilience to strengthen, safeguard, and advance democracies.

Chapter 4

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY—HOW?

4.1. WORKING MODALITIES

As an IGO with a ‘think and do’ approach underpinned by continuous learning, International IDEA will apply a set of working modalities in pursuit of its vision and mission, and to fulfil its mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide.

These modalities include a virtuous cycle of **knowledge production, capacity development, advocacy** and the **convening of dialogues**. International IDEA’s comparative knowledge and research inform its capacity development, which in turn facilitate advocacy and convening dialogues. Capacity development provides valuable lessons from the field for knowledge production and advocacy, enabling **continuous learning** within the Institute.

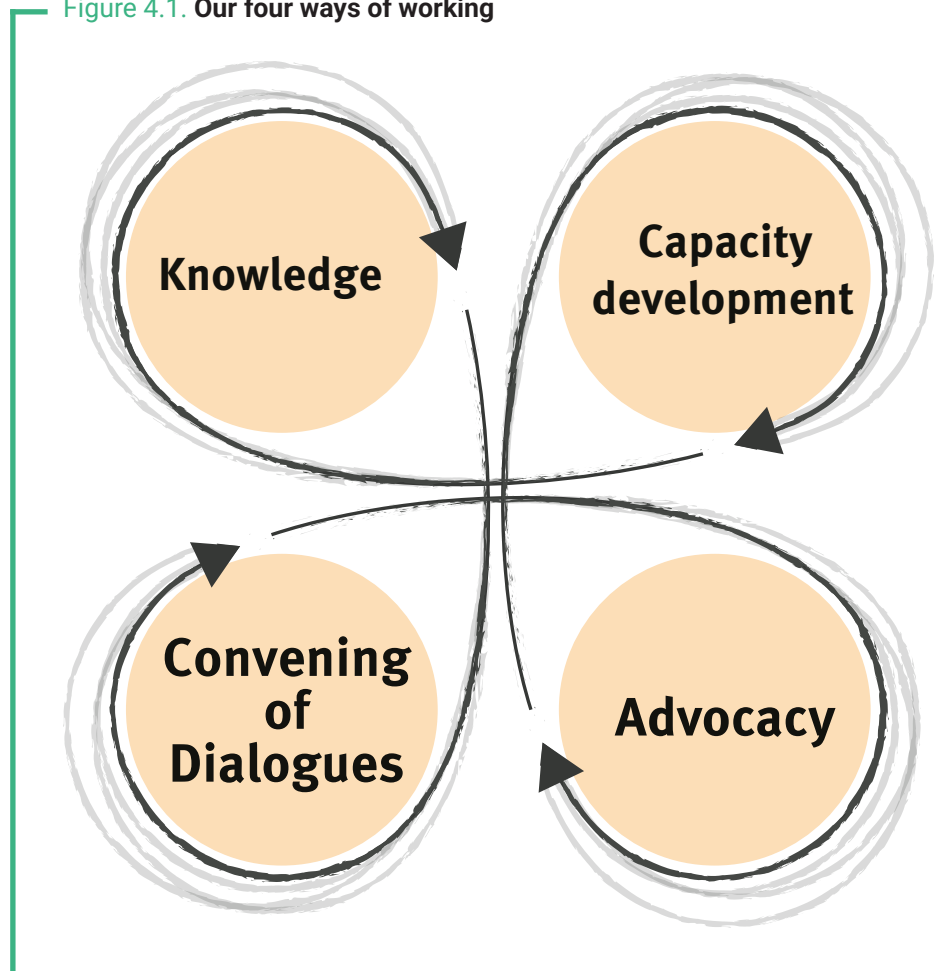
The Institute’s global and regional presence and cross-geographical cooperation come in the form of its global programmes, regional and country offices, as well as its liaison offices to multilateral and regional organizations.⁵ This engagement allows the Institute to stay abreast of developments in the democracy landscape, learn from comparative experiences and adjust its programming, particularly in rapidly evolving country contexts. Coordination and increased collaboration between global, regional and country programmes is a high priority for the Institute, to leverage all relevant internal competence and knowledge for improved outcomes, and to ensure all resources are utilized as effectively as possible. This collaboration provides the basis for the most responsive, holistic, inclusive, and innovative approaches to democracy support.

Based on the institutional Strategy, global and regional programmes will develop strategic priorities in consultation with one another in the annual

International IDEA’s working modalities include a virtuous cycle of knowledge production, capacity development, advocacy and the convening of dialogues.

⁵ [International IDEA Where we work](#)

Figure 4.1. Our four ways of working



Programme and Budget, which is approved by the Institute’s Council of Member States. These regional priorities and country programmes will align with the Strategy’s thematic priorities and will be designed to enable Outcome Mapping to measure impact (see also Annex B). The Programme and Budget, annual outcome reports, and bi-annual activity reports will ensure monitoring, evaluation and results assessment, and serve as a reporting reference point for all programmatic projects. International IDEA has defined objectives for its financial and administration support functions to align them with the strategic objectives.

4.1.1. Knowledge production

International IDEA will produce and disseminate **publications** containing global comparative knowledge and policy-relevant analysis and tools, as well as **communication products, databases and digital tools and platforms** through in-house expertise in combination with professional networks of external experts and a rigorous system of peer review for quality assurance.

The Institute conducts its analysis and knowledge production at all levels at which it engages—at the global, regional and country levels—and aims to

provide policy-relevant research and political economy analysis to enable advocacy and contribute to public debate.

Emphasis will be placed on producing and disseminating International IDEA's analysis and knowledge in an innovative manner through a variety of channels and technical modalities. These channels include publications of various types as well as communication products published on the Institutional website, social media and traditional media, while technical dissemination modalities should consider databases and innovative digital tools and platforms to increase access to the Institute's knowledge products. The dissemination of each product will be tailored to the needs of the target audience.

4.1.2. Capacity development

Capacity development is a process that takes place over a longer period with the purpose of assisting individuals and organizations to obtain, improve or retain the skills, knowledge and tools needed to do their jobs to a greater capacity. International IDEA provides and will continue to grow its high-quality capacity development through **advisory services** (including on-the-job training, coaching, mentoring, and technical advice), and face-to-face and online **training, events and dialogues** (including facilitation of North–South, South–South and other peer exchanges, network meetings, workshops, seminars, roundtables or conferences convened by International IDEA), and **publications** such as handbooks, policy papers and training modules on democracy-building and reform processes. International IDEA's capacity development efforts allow local actors to debate and refine solutions. International experiences may be useful, but the way forward should build on local knowledge.

International IDEA will provide capacity development through global, regional and country-level expertise to optimize synergies between thematic and technical knowledge, regional expertise and country-level knowledge. Global knowledge products and research (including knowledge of democratic good practices and analytical tools) inform regional- and country-level programmatic interventions, while lessons learned from country-level projects and policymaking inform global knowledge production.

4.1.3. Advocacy

International IDEA will exert its mandate and role as an IGO to mobilize alliances to defend and protect democracy. As such, it will aim to influence policies to strengthen democracy, and to provide democratic institutions and actors with innovative policy options in the face of challenges to democracy. In consideration of the credibility of the Institute, International IDEA will take on an advocacy role and strive to protect and safeguard democracy when it is challenged by undemocratic and authoritarian forces. The Institute will be always impartial among democratic actors, and always partial in support of democracy.

At the global level, International IDEA will conduct agenda-setting and agenda-influencing on issues relevant to the Institute's mandate on which there is a global consensus, such as those reflected in the SDGs, and on democracy-

International IDEA will continue to grow its high-quality capacity development through advisory services, face-to-face and online training, events and dialogues including facilitation of peer exchanges, and publications.

specific issues on which International IDEA believes that such consensus should be pursued. This includes using its Permanent Observer Status at the United Nations and the UN General Assembly. At the regional level, the Institute will engage with the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union (AU), and UN Regional Economic Commissions, among others. International IDEA's agenda-influencing work will always be based on robust analysis and data.

Complementing its work in multilateral fora, through its participation and coordination of alliances, International IDEA will partner with peer IGOs and CSOs, democracy champions and democracy defenders to enhance their collective voice.

Advocacy may take the form of publications and other written products including public statements and policy briefs, training to develop partners' policy influence capabilities, policy-oriented events or dialogues, interventions in international forums, commentaries in traditional and social media, and public or private mediation and diplomacy to support policy objectives.

**International IDEA
has a critical role to
play as a convener
within and across
regions and fields.**

4.1.4. Convening of dialogues

International IDEA will capitalize on its status as an impartial IGO and trusted democracy assistance provider by convening its Member States and actors working in the democracy space to facilitate global, regional and national dialogues on democratic reform. The Institute may also facilitate events and dialogues with a focus on post-conflict and post-coup transition, including exploring pro-democracy mediation. In an increasingly challenged global environment for democracy, and with a shrinking number of active organizations engaged in democracy support, International IDEA has a critical role to play as a convener within and across regions and fields. The Institute will focus on peer learning and sharing of best practices especially among the Institute's diverse membership, global and inclusive dialogues and discussions on democracy, convenings on strategic shifts and responsiveness to geopolitical changes, and opportunities for enhanced coordination of democracy support efforts across its rich and global network.

For example, International IDEA will facilitate policy and technical exchanges among its Member States on critical issues such as protecting electoral integrity or effective ways to manage foreign interference and manipulation in democratic institutions and processes; high-level events and dialogues at the global or regional level to discuss the democracy landscape; dialogues among experts and practitioners on democratic reform; multiparty dialogues, providing politically neutral spaces for democratic stakeholders, including members of the opposition or governments in exile to share their views; dialogues to engage civil society, democracy champions, democracy defenders and under-represented groups; and conflict mediation dialogues.

4.2. MAINSTREAMING LENSES

International IDEA will adopt a human rights-based approach and will mainstream (a) **gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)**; (b) **conflict sensitivity**; and (c) **environmental protection** across all work because inclusive and accountable democratic institutions and processes are only possible if gender equality and the social and political inclusion of various marginalized groups are attained. The Institute will ensure that the challenges and specific obstacles of all people are considered, regardless of class, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, group, culture, and ethnic or religious background, as well as their equal rights and opportunities. The Institute will continue to apply its Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy in its work.

The Institute will also pursue a conflict-sensitive approach while planning and implementing activities, which respects and observes the ‘do no harm’ principle.⁶ International IDEA’s Conflict Sensitivity Mainstreaming Policy is an important tool in this regard.

Finally, International IDEA will ensure that it contributes to environmental protection in the design and implementation of its programmes in accordance with its Green Policy.⁷

Mainstreaming will be done by enhancing the knowledge and capacities of the Institute’s staff through training to apply a gender, youth, inclusion and conflict-sensitive lens to programming, and through a system of focal points as well as communities of practice to transfer knowledge and enable learning.

In its work on gender equality and social inclusion of youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, the Institute will focus on promoting innovative approaches to tackling stereotypes and the root causes of inequality in public life. It will also strengthen global data and trends analysis and create platforms to facilitate networking and increase such groups’ access to policymaking.

4.3. CRITERIA FOR ENGAGEMENT

Based on International IDEA’s vision of democracy and its status as an IGO, the Institute’s work is characterized by an impartial, collaborative, demand-driven and holistic approach to democracy cooperation. This approach serves as the basis for acting as a trusted partner to those leading national democratic change.

The Institute’s work is characterized by an impartial, collaborative, demand-driven and holistic approach to democracy cooperation.

⁶ Conflict-sensitive actions in programming will seek to consciously avoid or minimize negative impacts (‘do no harm’) and equally consciously try to create positive impacts on conflict dynamics.

⁷ The Green Policy aims to ensure that International IDEA’s programmes, activities, offices, staff and other stakeholders consider issues of environmental sustainability whenever relevant; for example, by reducing the institutional carbon footprint as much as possible. The Green Policy updates institutional programming, project design and implementation, office policies and practices.

Key criteria for International IDEA's engagement at the global, regional and country levels include:

- impartiality, defined as neutrality towards and among democratic actors, but never as neutrality towards non-democratic actors;
- the existence of political willingness of state and non-state democratic actors within and outside the country to engage in advancing democracy; and
- considering and ensuring the protection of the credibility and integrity of the Institute ('do no harm')⁸ with a conflict-sensitive and human rights-based approach to programming

4.3.1. Engagement with countries

International IDEA's vision recognizes that democracy comes in different shapes and forms.

Based on the engagement criteria in Annex D, International IDEA will work in all democratic countries to counteract challenges to democracy where there are opportunities to remedy democratic erosion and breakdown or to improve and advance democracy. Specifically, it will:

- prioritize countries experiencing visible signs of democratic erosion, including democratic backsliding;⁹
- continue to engage in countries experiencing democratic breakdown,¹⁰ as measured by its GSoD Indices on a case-by-case basis and with reference to political-economic and risk assessments; and
- focus on emerging democracies, choosing opportunities for cooperation by conducting stakeholder analysis and identifying pro-democracy target groups.

The Institute will facilitate dialogue to establish or support pro-democracy alliances, including in global and regional multilateral fora. It will also consider its comparative strengths in terms of professional networks, knowledge products, and staff security and capacity.

4.3.2. Programmatic and regional/country strategic priorities

International IDEA will work worldwide at the global, regional and country levels. Programming at the regional and country levels will be defined based on regional multiyear strategic priorities and annual plans. To guide the Institute's

⁸ Conflict-sensitive actions in programming will seek to consciously avoid or minimize negative impacts ('do no harm') and equally consciously try to create positive impacts on conflict dynamics.

⁹ International IDEA uses the term '(modern) democratic backsliding' to describe the gradual and usually intentional weakening of checks on government and civil liberties by democratically elected governments. Democratic backsliding is a form of democratic erosion; it is always used to describe countries that were democratic at the onset of the backsliding episode.

¹⁰ International IDEA uses the term 'democratic breakdown' to describe a country's movement from democracy to a hybrid regime (partial breakdown) or to a non-democracy (full breakdown).

work more strategically at the country level, the different types of country contexts in which International IDEA engages have been broadly categorized. International IDEA recognizes that countries' democratic progress fluctuates; advances and reversals lead to movement between categories. Annex D outlines the Institute's criteria for country-level engagement and setting up country offices.

4.4. OPTIMIZING OUR WORK—ASSESSING RESULTS, ENHANCING LEARNING AND CREATING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

As part of its new strategic approach, and in response to the Institute's Internal Strategic Review (2021) and Midterm Strategy Review (2020) (Annex C), International IDEA aims to continuously optimize its work and improve its internal operations.

4.4.1. Assessing results and increasing our learning capacities

The Institute strives to maintain an organizational culture that emphasizes the need for monitoring and evaluation, and rewards learning and knowledge sharing. It will seek to expand its monitoring and evaluation capacities to better assess how its work contributes to outcomes that protect and advance democracy as set out in International IDEA's Theory of Change (Annex B).

International IDEA will enhance learning by systematizing knowledge sharing from project evaluations and lessons learned through Communities for Practice, internal communication and processes, such as the annual publication of an institutional learning report, that help improve the Institute's work.

4.4.2. Enhancing integrated programming and collaboration within the organization

International IDEA's global footprint, as well as its extensive thematic, regional and country expertise, are substantial assets. This is particularly visible when projects and initiatives build on a combination of regional/country expertise and thematic knowledge. In order to nurture a cohesive institutional culture and knowledge management structure, the Institute will encourage co-owned, institute-wide projects such as the Global State of Democracy Initiative.

The Institute seeks to work as 'one'; global and regional teams will conduct joint planning, hold thematic and management-level exchanges, and mutually strengthen regional expertise within global teams and global thematic expertise in regional teams.

4.4.3. Expanding and harnessing our digital footprint

International IDEA will strengthen its digital footprint and invest in its staff's digital technology and capabilities to facilitate internal and external communication. This will enhance the capacity of the Institute's administrative services to sustain substantive work and allow the Institute to regularly

International IDEA aims to continuously optimize its work and improve its internal operations.

engage with key stakeholders (e.g. in Member State capitals). Furthermore, the Institute will develop digital versions of its products to increase cost efficiency, visibility and reach.

4.4.4. Investing in International IDEA's human capital

The expertise, composition and retention of International IDEA's Staff Members play a crucial role as the Institute strives for excellence and credibility in its work as a global knowledge and capacity development provider, convener and advocate for democracy. The Institute must invest in human capital to ensure high-quality knowledge production, capacity building and continuous learning.

International IDEA will therefore continue to invest in Staff Members to attract and maintain talent by offering competitive working conditions, professional development as well as flexible working and residence modalities. The Institute will highlight and ensure inclusivity and non-discrimination in its workforce. It will also prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in the execution of its mission and the realization of its vision, including by creating institutional Diversity, Equality and Inclusion goals and an accompanying action plan.

4.5. FINANCING AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

International IDEA is funded through voluntary contributions from Member States and project grants from donors. Voluntary contributions are defined as 'core income' and can include core financial contributions, earmarked core, secondments and in-kind contributions. Their use is more flexible than project grants, which are linked to specific outputs and outcomes. The field of democracy support and promotion is experiencing a fiscal contraction as reduced levels of Official Development Assistance globally, the collapse of USAID in early 2025, the reprioritization of funds for security over governance and social issues, and an increasingly polarized world environment have severely restrained the potential resources available.

The Institute will need to continue to work closely with its Member States to ensure sustainability.

The Institute will need to continue to work closely with its Member States to ensure sustainability. Increasingly restricted project-related funding, mostly connected to capacity development, will be the Institute's main financial source of growth for the foreseeable future. This will require a flexible and modular Institutional Strategy and structure and procedures that can adapt to the variable availability of project funding and innovative resource mobilization and project management. The Institute will also need to take further steps to safeguard its ability to produce policy-oriented, comparative knowledge, which so far has been largely supported through core resources. This will include greater collaboration across teams, and the development of modular, flexible projects, which straddle knowledge production and capacity development.

International IDEA will prioritize its core funding to cover costs that are not easily, or are only partly, covered by project/restricted funds, including its global knowledge production and advocacy work, its regional programmes, its liaison

offices, its institutional functions (communications, governance support, and the Secretary General's Office), as well as its Executive Division, which provides accounting and treasury, human resources and organizational development, procurement, programme design and support, monitoring and evaluation, and budgeting. Core funding is also used to seed new strategic priority projects before additional restricted project funding can be obtained, and to bridge funding to restricted projects between external grants. Recognizing the changing donor landscape and the need for flexibility in contributions, the Institute will increase its capacity to manage diverse modalities of core funding including earmarked core, secondments and in-kind contributions.

Restricted project funding is utilized across the programme teams. International IDEA's country programmes are generally fully funded by restricted funds, which also contribute to the development of knowledge products. Restricted project funding will increasingly be sought for new knowledge products, capacity development or thematic global priorities to diversify the Institute's funding base and expand its work. The Institute will also seek to grow its capacity to secure basket funding, to give Member States and donors more options in funding modalities and to streamline funding for strategic priorities.

Both core and restricted funding have rigorous controls to assure high levels of quality, transparency, and accountability to Member States and donors. The Institute will continue to compile detailed annual Programmes and Budgets based on transparent and sound financial regulations and internal controls while ensuring high-quality reporting (including through its Annual Outcome and Activities Reports, International Public Sector Accounting Standards IPSAS-compliant audited Annual Financial Statements and International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) compliance), in alignment with this Strategy.

To ensure International IDEA's financial sustainability and to maintain or modestly augment its current levels of core funding, while increasing its restricted funding, the Institute will (a) be guided by its institutional Strategy, to advance democracy via strategic programmes at the global, regional and country levels; (b) enhance its monitoring and evaluation systems and results reporting to Member States and other donors, to better showcase the outcomes of its programmes on democratic reform processes; (c) improve the transparency and clarity of reporting; (d) implement cost-effective programmes and closely monitor overhead costs; (e) seek to diversify its donor base, including through the incorporation of new Member States, and increased engagement with both international multilateral organizations and non-traditional donors¹¹ such as foundations that can provide additional funding; (f) increase its capacity for resource mobilization; and (g) develop its ability to manage various funding modalities including 'basket funding' to balance core and restricted funds.

Both core and restricted funding have rigorous controls to assure high levels of quality, transparency, and accountability to Member States and donors.

¹¹ In accordance with International IDEA's Resource Mobilization Policy, which states that financial assistance will only be accepted from institutions that share the Institute's values. The activities of the prospective funder or donor and the kind of support offered shall not be contrary to International IDEA's Statutes and mandate.

International IDEA will seek to increase its visibility with a heightened focus on creative and digital tools to promote democracy.

4.6. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

To support its mission and help realize its strategic objectives, International IDEA will seek to increase its visibility with a heightened focus on creative and digital tools to promote democracy.

In its communications, the Institute will focus on creating and strengthening its Member States' and donors' awareness and ownership of the outcomes of its work on the state of democracy, democratic reform and democracy development, highlighting its relevance as an IGO and a credible partner for sustainable democracy.

International IDEA will also work to enhance its outreach efforts and relationships with the media as a means of communicating its initiatives and opportunities for collaboration to current and potential partners, as well as other stakeholders, and securing their interest and potential funding. The Institute will also strengthen its relations with traditional and social media to better inform the public and the Institute's stakeholders about its work and contribute to public debates relevant to democracy. It will also advance the International IDEA brand by sustaining and disseminating the Institute's corporate identity.

The Institute will support the publication of relevant and user-friendly comparative knowledge resources about democratic experiences to inform and support democratic reform processes and contribute to the exchange of best practices and mutual learning, particularly among its Member States. The Institute will also promote internal communications to facilitate knowledge management and inculcate a communications-oriented culture within International IDEA.

Chapter 5

INTERNATIONAL IDEA STAKEHOLDERS—WITH WHOM?

To achieve its strategic objectives, International IDEA identifies three groups of stakeholders, with which the Institute partners based on their interest in the organization and their willingness to engage to advance democracy.

1. *Governance actors*:¹² International IDEA Member States, the Steering Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee, the Institute’s Board of Advisors, donors and the Secretariat.
2. *Target groups/Boundary partners*:¹³ International IDEA works within four categories of democracy: rights, participation, representation, and rule of law. Within each of these categories there are a number of actors and institutions that the Institute may cooperate with. These “target groups” or “boundary partners” are outlined in Figure 3.1.
3. *Strategic Partners*: professional networks, peer organizations, CSOs and multilateral organizations (e.g., EU, AU, and UN).

These stakeholders operate—and International IDEA may partner with them—at the international, regional, national and local levels.

5.1. GOVERNANCE ACTORS

International IDEA will continue to enhance its value for members, to ensure an active partnership with all its Member States. This may include organizing events and programmatic activities with (and in) Member States; establishing partnerships with relevant organizations in Member States; facilitating peer

¹² Governance of International IDEA

¹³ International IDEA’s results framework refers to target groups as boundary partners, which are institutions and actors with which the Institute interacts, and thus directly influences (see Annex C). These interactions are designed to inspire and support boundary partners to adopt more democratic behaviors, relationships and practices.

International IDEA will continue to enhance its value for members, to ensure an active partnership with all its Member States.

learning between Member States and programmatic countries; and ensuring positive media outreach related to International IDEA's work that enhances public knowledge about the Institute.

The Institute will also continue to benefit from its Board of Advisors, the members of which have technical knowledge and experience (e.g. as academics, practitioners or policymakers) in the Institute's work areas. International IDEA will strive to increase Board Members' engagement in its programmes and their collective role as 'ambassadors' for the Institute and democracy more generally.

The aim is to assist individuals and organizations to obtain, improve or retain the skills, knowledge and tools needed to do their jobs to a greater capacity.

5.2. TARGET GROUPS/BOUNDARY PARTNERS

Democratic processes involve a variety of state and non-state actors, which have different roles and perspectives. All these actors are potential partners, or "target groups", for International IDEA. These are outlined in Figure 3.1. When working with these target groups, the aim is to assist individuals and organizations to obtain, improve or retain the skills, knowledge and tools needed to do their jobs to a greater capacity. To emphasize that such change processes must be owned and driven by the actors themselves, International IDEA's results framework refers to those actors as "boundary partners" rather than target groups. This conceptual distinction aims to highlight that capacity development is a joint effort, where results depend on both partners in the relationship.

While International IDEA has always engaged with CSOs, during the Strategy period, it will broaden its engagement with citizen movements and CSOs—including democracy activists, champions and defenders—to better address the challenges posed by the democracy landscape. The Institute will support CSOs, political parties and movements, media, and others in their engagement and monitoring of democratic institutions and processes. It will also facilitate CSOs' interactions with democratic institutions (e.g. in electoral processes, constitution-building processes and engagement with parliament) and help inform citizens about how to engage in those processes and what their rights and entitlements are. International IDEA will emphasize the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in all of its work.

5.3. STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Partnerships are embedded in International IDEA's working methodology at the global, regional, national and local levels. International IDEA seeks to maintain and establish relationships with national, regional and international strategic partners, defined as organizations with which the Institute cooperates to achieve a common strategic objective. The purposes of pursuing joint objectives in partnership are to maximize the Institute's results, ensure

complementarity with the work of others, and raise restricted funding for its projects.

International IDEA views its strategic partnerships as mutually beneficial: the Institute's expertise and knowledge can provide added value to organizations that may lack the same knowledge-oriented focus, which can in turn help International IDEA enhance its outreach, provide political leverage, complement its skills base, provide local knowledge and help access relevant networks.

In accordance with Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, International IDEA will seek to further strengthen its network of strategic, institutional, operational and geographic partners based on shared values, principles and goals, as well as through thematic and methodological synergies.

Strategic partnerships help address global, regional and national challenges, and generate sustainable reform and impacts. By joining forces with its strategic partners, International IDEA can better coordinate action, leverage resources, improve visibility, and share experiences and best practices.

International IDEA will map its partners across diverse areas of work, and deepen partnerships with institutions, entities and individuals, including the UN General Assembly and UN bodies and institutions; continental, regional and subregional organizations (e.g. EU, AU, OSCE and ASEAN); governments, IGOs, CSOs and coalitions; as well as public sector institutions, private sector entities, academic institutions and universities, corporate and philanthropic foundations, media organizations, parliamentarians, political parties and foundations.

Strategic partnerships help address global, regional and national challenges, and generate sustainable reform and impacts.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

International IDEA's strategy reaffirms its identity as an IGO with a global footprint and a diverse membership, which is committed to advancing sustainable democracy worldwide.

International IDEA's strategy reaffirms its identity as an IGO with a global footprint and a diverse membership, which is committed to advancing sustainable democracy worldwide. Its mission commits it to adhere to human rights commitments in line with international human rights instruments. The Institute will also work within the framework of the 2030 SDG agenda to develop policy-relevant knowledge and conduct capacity development for democratic actors and institutions. In addition, it will engage in advocacy efforts and convene dialogues among state and non-state actors—particularly civil society and democracy activists—including by leveraging its role as a UN Permanent Observer.

This mission aims to help realize the Institute's vision of a world in which everyone lives in resilient democracies, with inclusive and accountable actors, institutions and processes that can respond to citizens' needs, protect human rights and deliver sustainable development to all.

Recognizing the challenges and opportunities of the global democracy landscape, International IDEA will work at the global, regional and country levels within all four aspects of democracy: rights, participation, representation, and rule of law. Within these areas the following themes will be prioritized:

Electoral Processes—improving and protecting the integrity of electoral institutions and processes, improving the quality of electoral processes, ensuring inclusive participation and an active role for civil society.

Constitutional Governance and Rule of Law—supporting inclusive constitution-building processes that enable democratic transition and recovery and prevent democratic backsliding or breakdown.

Political Participation and Representation—exploring new forms of political participation and representation, as well as issues related to political party organization, finance and inclusion.

Democracy Assessment—developing evidence-based tools, publications and communication products, including the GSoD Indices, the *Democracy Tracker* and the GSoD reports.

Climate Change and Democracy—supporting democracies to leverage democracy’s inherent qualities and address its challenges to formulate effective, citizen-owned climate policy agendas.

Digitalization and Democracy—helping democratic institutions and actors reap the benefits of digital innovation for governance and oversight and protect and renew democracy by countering digital threats.

Emerging priorities including on issues of democracy and security and reinforcing democratic resilience, will continue to be evaluated and brought forward for discussion with Member States as part of the annual planned process. Across all areas of work, International IDEA will mainstream gender and inclusion, conflict sensitivity and environmental protection.

International IDEA’s activities will be directed towards three groups of stakeholders: 1) *governance actors* (e.g. IDEA Member States, governance bodies and donors); 2) *target groups or boundary partners* (actors and institutions whose capacity International IDEA aims to enhance and develop); and 3) *strategic partners* (e.g. peer organizations and multilateral organizations such as the EU, AU and UN).

As part of its working modalities, International IDEA’s knowledge production will inform its capacity development and vice versa. Both will enable advocacy efforts and the convening of dialogues.

In its operations, International IDEA will aim to optimize its work by assessing results and increasing its learning capacities, enhancing cross-fertilization and collaboration within the organization, expanding and harnessing its digital footprint, and investing in the Institute’s human capital.

In its communications, International IDEA will seek to boost its visibility via an increased focus on creative and digital tools to promote democracy.

To ensure the Institute’s financial sustainability, it will increase its capacity for resource mobilization and seek to diversify its donor base, enhance its monitoring and evaluation systems, and grow its ability to manage various funding modalities, including ‘basket funding’ to balance core and restricted funds.

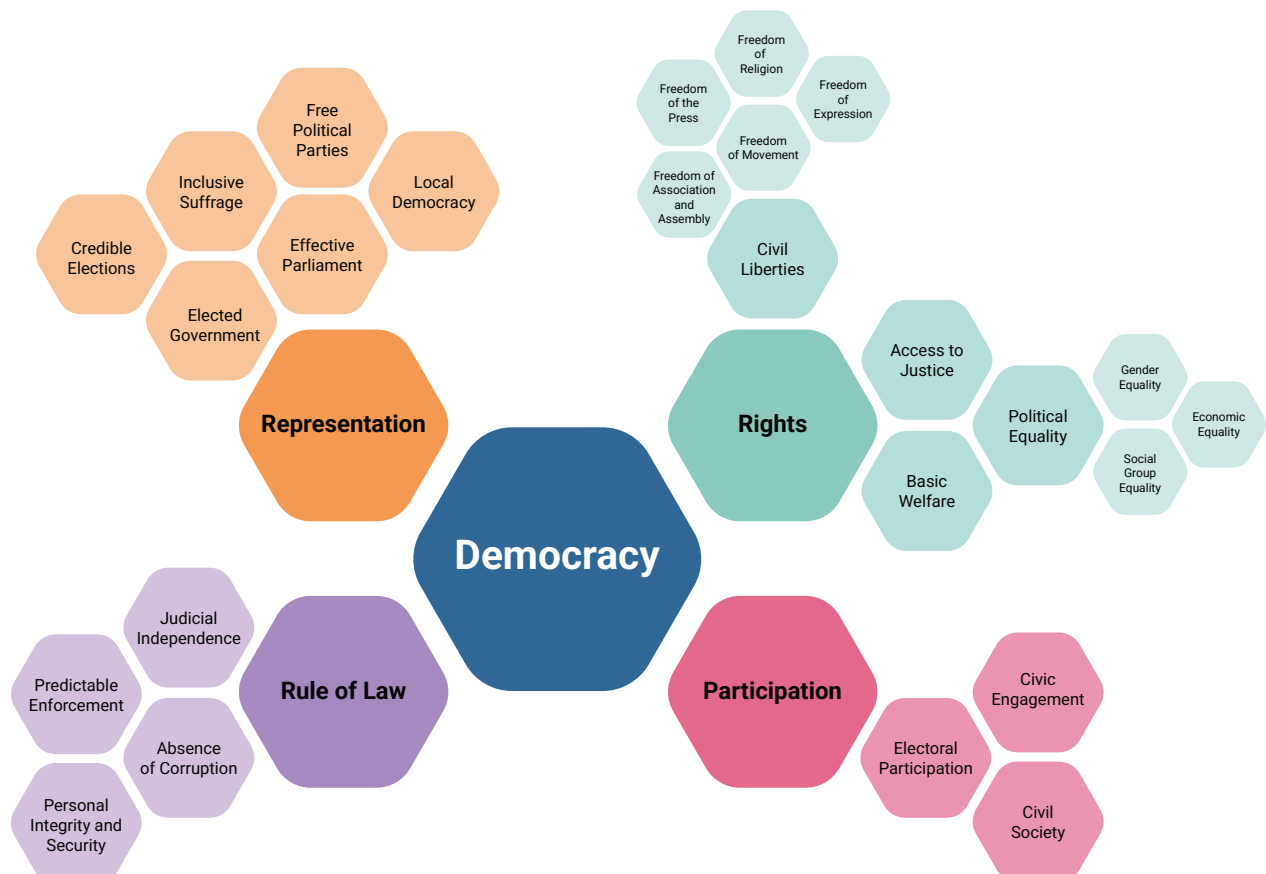
Annex A. International IDEA's definition of democracy

International IDEA's vision is derived from its definition of democracy as a political system that is based on principles of 'popular control' over decision making and 'political equality' among those exercising that control.

International IDEA believes that democracy is a universal human aspiration based on universal principles and an experience that is pursued and lived in different ways around the world; that democracy comes in multiple forms; and that these forms are constantly evolving.

Democracy is a power-sharing mechanism that seeks to guarantee equality and basic rights and freedoms, empower ordinary people, resolve disagreements through peaceful dialogue, respect differences, and bring about political and social renewal through institutional channels. International IDEA's broad concept of democracy encompasses fundamental attributes beyond free and fair elections to include civil and political rights; social, economic and cultural rights; democratic governance and the rule of law.

Figure A.1. Global State of Democracy framework



International IDEA's broad understanding of democracy overlaps with features emphasized by different traditions of democratic thought associated with the concepts of electoral democracy, liberal democracy, social democracy and participatory democracy. This concept of democracy reflects a core value enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948), which has been given legal effect in many subsequent UN treaties and instruments such as the 1966 UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration states that the 'will of the people' is the basis for the legitimacy and authority of sovereign states. It also highlights that 'this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage' and guarantees everyone 'the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives [and] the right of equal access to public service'. This reflects a common and universal desire for peace, security and justice. Article 29 of the Universal Declaration requires that any limitations on human rights and freedoms must be 'determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society'. Democracy reflects the fundamental ethical principles of human equality and individuals' dignity, and is therefore inseparable from human rights.¹⁴

International IDEA's definition of democracy is translated through its [Global State of Democracy Indices](#) into a set of attributes and subattributes, which measure the quality and performance of democracies over time, beginning in 1975. The conceptual framework of the GSoD distinguishes between four attributes of democratic quality:

1. Representation (free and equal access to political representation);
2. Rights (individual liberties and resources);
3. Rule of Law (predictable and equal enforcement of the law and judicial checks on government power); and
4. Participation (active political involvement by the citizens).

This aligns and directly informs the broader International IDEA Democracy Framework shared in Figure 3.1, which outlines these four attributes and the boundary partners with whom we work. While International IDEA argues that these four attributes are essential to democracy, it also recognizes that the degree, shapes, and forms through which these attributes are expressed and implemented differ between countries.

¹⁴ For a full description of International IDEA's conceptual understanding of democracy, see *Assessing the Quality of Democracy: A Practical Guide* (Beetham et al. 2008) and the Background Paper (Sisk 2017) issued in conjunction with *The Global State of Democracy: Exploring Democracy's Resilience* (International IDEA 2017) as well as the *Global State of Democracy Indices Methodology* (International IDEA 2025).

Annex B. International IDEA's theory of change and results framework

B.1. INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S THEORY OF CHANGE

International IDEA has developed an institutional theory of change (see graphic below) to outline how its activities aim to lead to results. Based on Outcome Mapping, the theory of change identifies how activities and outputs inspire and support target groups (defined as boundary partners) to adopt new behaviours, relationships and practices. If this process is successful, the boundary partners will contribute to societal improvements in democratic practices within International IDEA's work. This theory can be summarized as follows:

if International IDEA, in its think tank capacity, develops high-quality, value-based and utilization-focused publications, tools, databases and communications products; and

if International IDEA effectively delivers high-quality products and services to relevant boundary partners; and

if the boundary partners then obtain, improve, and retain the skills, knowledge and tools needed to fulfil their roles in a democratic system to a greater capacity; and

if these boundary partners then demonstrate the necessary political will to utilize these skills, knowledge, and tools to improve their institutional behaviours, relationships and practices;

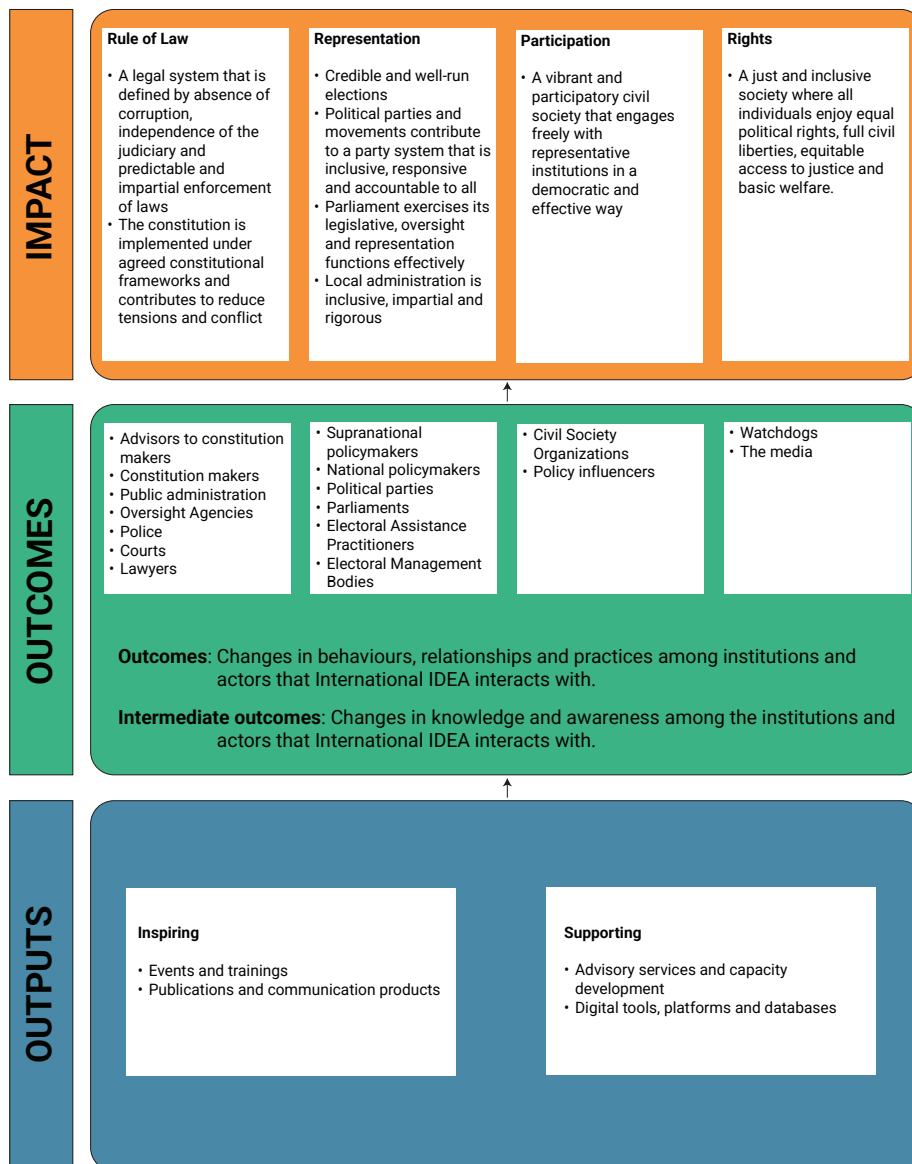
then they will contribute to societal changes in democratic practices globally or in the societies in which they operate.¹⁵

International IDEA has formalized this theory of change into a results framework that is used at the institutional and project levels.

¹⁵ The graphic in this Annex illustrates the framework in a theory of change model, which is further specified in theories of change for International IDEA's workstreams: Electoral Processes, Constitution-building Processes, and Political Participation and Representation.

International IDEA's Theory of Change

Overall goal: A world in which everyone lives in resilient democracies with inclusive and accountable actors, institutions and processes able to respond to citizens' demands, protect human rights and deliver sustainable development to all (SDG 5.1, SDG 5.5, SDG 16.3, SDG 16.6, SDG 16.7)



B.2. INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S RESULTS FRAMEWORK

According to a study published by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, the way in which results-based management has been implemented in the development sector has undermined its potential and led to negative, unintended consequences. The reasons are that there has been a tendency to i) prioritize what can be measured easily; ii) pursue the purpose of accountability at the expense of learning and policy direction; and iii) become overly bureaucratic and rigid. The study points out that some of these challenges derive from a rigid application of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA).¹⁶

In response to these challenges International IDEA has developed a learning-focused approach to results management, where the focus lies on tracking and analyzing the web of changes in behaviours, relationships and practices that evolve during a change process. This system for *learning-based management (LBM)* is quite different from practices where results-based management is accountability focused, with an emphasis on measuring whether activities are implemented in accordance with plans and whether preset milestones and targets are achieved. In contrast, learning-based management is an ongoing process where plans are regularly adapted based on lessons that have been learned through monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

International IDEA's results framework is the conceptual foundation for the LBM system. The framework builds on an institutional theory of change¹⁷ and identifies five levels of results:

1. The first level relates to *performance* – that is, the products and services (or *outputs*) that International IDEA deliver.
2. The second level relates to *intermediate outcomes*. Intermediate outcomes are defined as the changes of knowledge, attitudes and skills by the institutions and actors whose capacity International IDEA aims to strengthen. These 'target groups' are referred to as *boundary partners*¹⁸ in the results framework.
3. The third level relates to *outcomes*. Outcomes are defined as the changes in behaviours, relationships and practices by boundary partners.
4. The fourth level relates to changes in *democratic practices* to which International IDEA contributes.
5. The fifth level captures how International IDEA's work aims to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To assess and report on performance International IDEA has grouped activities into seven output categories and developed a set of 15 institutional output indicators, as shown in Table B.1.

¹⁶ For reference, see OECD, "Learning from Results-Based Management Evaluations and Reviews" (OECD 2019).

¹⁷ See annex 1.

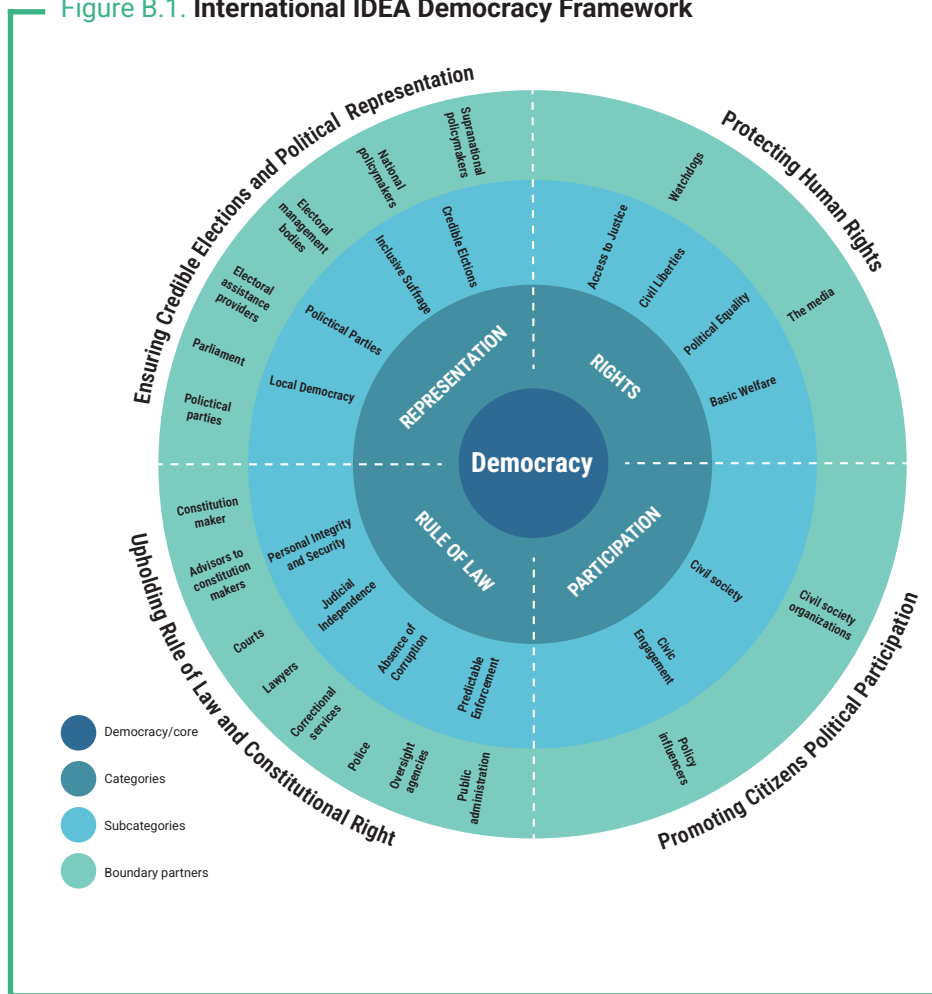
¹⁸ The term boundary partners come from Outcome Mapping. From a results perspective it is conceptually important to use a term that indicates that the actors and institutions whose capacity International IDEA aims to strengthen are independent democratic actors rather than merely "target groups". International IDEA can inspire and support, but not compel, these actors to change relationships, behaviours and practices in accordance with good democratic practices. Hence these actors are not passive recipients or targets of support, but active participants that are in charge of their change processes.

Table B.1. International IDEA's 7 output categories and 15 output indicators

#	Output category	Output indicators
01	Publications: Handbooks, thematic reports, translations, policy papers and training modules published by International IDEA or jointly with partners.	01. Number of released publications. 02. Number of copies distributed. 03. Number of downloads of publications from International IDEA's websites.
02	Communication products: News articles, opinion pieces, press releases, films, social media posts and brochures produced by staff members and published either on one of International IDEA's websites or externally.	04. Number of released communication products. 05. Number of visits to individual web pages.
03	Databases, and digital tools and platforms: Data or interactive software made available on one of International IDEA's websites.	06. Number of visits to databases via International IDEA's websites. 07. Number of external media mentions of International IDEA's databases. 08. Number of visits to digital tools and platforms via International IDEA's websites. 09. Number of countries where visitors come from.
04	Events and dialogues: Dialogues, network meetings, workshops, seminars, roundtables or conferences convened by International IDEA.	10. Number of events and dialogues convened. 11. Number of participants disaggregated by gender.
05	Training: Teaching on skills, knowledge and tools.	12. Number of trainings held. 13. Number of participants disaggregated by gender.
06	Advisory services: On-demand consultations provided by International IDEA.	14. Number of boundary partners that receive advice from International IDEA.
07	Capacity development: A process that takes place over a longer period with the purpose of assisting individuals and organizations to obtain, improve or retain the skills, knowledge and tools needed to do their jobs to a greater capacity.	15. Number of projects with restricted funding.

Output indicators are important from an accountability perspective, but to assess whether activities yield results one needs to know whether boundary partners are developing their knowledge, attitudes and skills and adopting desired behaviours, relationships, and practices in response to the activities. To facilitate this process International IDEA has identified 17 categories of boundary partners whose capacity the Institute aims to strengthen. For each of these a standardized outcome objective has been formulated. To clarify what a project aims to contribute to at a societal level, International IDEA has formulated eight outcome objectives which are tracked by 15 impact indicators that are based on factors (in the green circle) and four that are based on categories (in the red circle) in the Institute's Global State of Democracy (GSoD) indices. The framework is illustrated in Figure B.1.

Figure B.1. International IDEA Democracy Framework



The outcome objectives and impact indicators are defined in Table B.2:

Table B.2. International IDEA's 17 outcome objectives, 8 impact objectives, and 15 impact indicators

REPRESENTATION

Impact objectives	Impact indicators
Credible and well-run elections	Credible Elections ¹
	Inclusive Suffrage ²
Political parties and movements contribute to a party system that is inclusive, responsive and accountable to all citizens	Free Political Parties ³
Parliament exercises its legislative, oversight and representation functions effectively	Effective Parliament ⁴
Local administration is inclusive, impartial and rigorous	Local Democracy ⁵
Boundary partner	Outcome objective
Supranational policymakers: The legal entities and individuals who are responsible for shaping, implementing, or influencing public policy at the supranational level. Such organizations include the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, ASEAN and sub-regional organizations such as the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs).	Supranational policymakers shape and implements supranational legal and regulatory frameworks that protect and promote democracy.
National policymakers: The legal entities (such as parliaments, ministries, and public administration) and individuals who prepare and take decisions on legal and regulatory frameworks. This category of boundary partner includes advisers to national governmental policymakers, such as parliamentary staff members and public servants.	National policymakers prepare and take decisions on legal and regulatory that protect and promote democracy.
Political parties: Political parties serve as vehicles for representing the public's interests. They mobilize citizens, translate their preferences into policies, and provide platforms for political engagement.	Political parties contribute to a party system that is inclusive, responsive, and accountable to all citizens.

¹ This indicator denotes the extent to which elections for national, representative political office are free from irregularities, such as flaws and biases in the voter registration and campaign processes, voter intimidation. Ten sub-indicators capture the clean elections indicator: EMB autonomy, EMB capacity, Election other voting irregularities, Election government intimidation, Election free and fair, Competition, A3 Electoral Process, B2 Political pluralism and participation, B3 Political pluralism and participation, Free and fair elections.

² This indicator denotes the extent to which adult citizens have equal and universal passive and active voting rights. Two sub-indicators capture the inclusive suffrage indicator: Suffrage, Election voter registry.

³ This indicator denotes the extent to which political parties are free to form and campaign for political office. Six sub-indicators capture the free political parties' indicator: Party ban, Barriers to parties, Opposition parties' autonomy, Elections multiparty, Competitiveness of participation, Multiparty elections.

⁴ This indicator denotes the extent to which the legislature is capable of overseeing the executive. Five sub-indicators capture the effective parliament indicator: Legislature questions officials in practice, Executive Oversight, Legislature investigates in practice, Legislature opposition parties, Executive constraints.

⁵ This factor indicates whether the local government is elected and whether it is empowered in relation to the central government. Two indicators capture the local democracy factor: Local government index, Subnational elections free and fair.

Table B.2. International IDEA's 17 outcome objectives, 8 impact objectives, and 15 impact indicators (cont.)

REPRESENTATION

Parliaments: Parliaments are responsible for making, amending, and repealing laws and monitoring and scrutinizing the actions of the executive branch.	Parliaments exercise their legislative, oversight and representative functions transparently, inclusively, and responsively.
Electoral assistance practitioners: Organizations and individuals who provide technical assistance and capacity development on how to plan for and organize credible and well-run elections.	Electoral assistance practitioners provide contextualized support informed by norms, good practices and research.
Electoral management bodies: Organizations that are legally responsible for managing some or all of the elements essential to the conduct of elections and direct democracy instruments, such as referendums.	Electoral management bodies administer electoral processes according to applicable law in a transparent, inclusive, responsive, and responsible manner.

RULE OF LAW

Impact objectives	Impact indicators
A legal system that is defined by the absence of corruption, the independence of the judiciary and the predictable and impartial enforcement of laws	Absence of Corruption ⁶
	Judicial Independence ⁷
	Predictable Enforcement ⁸
The constitution is implemented under agreed constitutional frameworks and contributes to reduce tensions and conflict	Personal Integrity and Security ⁹

Boundary partner	Outcome objective
Advisers to constitution makers: Organizations and individuals that provide technical assistance and capacity development on implementation of constitutional reform. ¹⁰	Advisers to constitution makers use International IDEA's knowledge and networks to provide high-quality advice and advance inclusive practices in constitution-building processes.
Constitution makers: Usually a body that has been mandated by a government to lead a process of constitutional reform and draft a constitution.	Constitution makers apply increased knowledge and skills to make informed choices regarding constitutional design and process.

⁶ This indicator denotes the extent to which the executive and the public administration, more broadly, do not abuse their office for personal gain. Seven sub-indicators capture the absence of corruption indicator: Public sector corrupt exchanges, Public sector theft, Executive embezzlement and theft, Executive bribery and corrupt exchanges, Corruption, C2 Functioning of Government, Prosecution of office abuse.

⁷ This indicator denotes the extent to which the courts are not subject to undue influence from the other branches of government, especially the executive. Eight sub-indicators capture the judicial independence indicator: High Court independence, Lower Court independence, Compliance with High Court, Compliance with judiciary, independent judiciary, F1 Rule of Law, Separation of Power, Independent judiciary.

⁸ This indicator denotes the extent to which the executive and public officials enforce laws in a predictable manner. Ten sub-indicators capture the predictable enforcement indicator: Executive respects constitution, Transparent laws with predictable enforcement, Rigorous and impartial public administration, Criteria for appointment decisions in the state administration, Criteria for appointment decisions in the armed forces, Bureaucratic quality, Law and order, C3 Functioning of Government, Monopoly on the use of force, Basic administration.

⁹ This indicator denotes the extent to which bodily integrity is respected and people are free from state and non-state political violence. Seven sub-indicators capture the personal integrity and security indicator: Freedom from torture, Freedom from political killings, Political terror scale, Internal conflict, Physical integrity rights sum, G4 Personal autonomy and individual rights, F3 Rule of law.

¹⁰ This category of boundary partner includes organizations such as International IDEA, UNDP, the Venice Commission and the Max Planck Foundation.

Table B.2. International IDEA's 17 outcome objectives, 8 impact objectives, and 15 impact indicators (cont.)

RULE OF LAW

Public administration: Government agencies which implement government policies and manage public programmes and services.	Public administration effectively carries out their activities in accordance with applicable law in a transparent, inclusive, responsive, and responsible manner.
Oversight agencies: Public institutions tasked with monitoring, reviewing, and ensuring compliance with laws, regulations, and ethical standards across various sectors of governance. The most recognizable oversight agencies are ombudsmen and national audit offices.	Oversight agencies review independently and autonomously that the state's executive functions treat citizens in accordance with the law.
The police: A civil authority of the state, tasked with maintaining public order, enforcing laws, and protecting life and property.	The police demonstrate professionalism and integrity by adhering to the Rule of Law and a code of professional conduct.
Courts: Formal institutions vested with the judicial authority to interpret and apply the law, resolve disputes, and uphold justice.	Courts decide cases in an independent, legal, and efficient manner.
Lawyers: Licensed professionals who advise clients on legal matters and represent them in court.	Lawyers act as professional representatives for persons accused of crimes and are free and independent in relation to the state, authorities, courts, and all other interests.

PARTICIPATION

Impact objective	Impact indicators
A vibrant and participatory civil society that engages freely with representative institutions in a democratic and effective way	Civil Society ¹¹ Civic engagement ¹²
Boundary partner	Outcome objective
Civil society organizations: Organizations and associations that serve the public's needs in relation to political participation and representation but operate outside of the governmental and corporate spheres.	Civil society engages with representative institutions in an inclusive and effective way to improve public policy and practice, and to hold political decision makers to account.

¹¹ The Civil Society indicator relies on six sub-indicators: CSO participatory environment, Engaged society, CSO consultation, E-participation index, Interest groups, Social capital.

¹² The Civic Engagement factor is constructed from four indicators: Engagement in independent non-political associations, Engagement in independent political associations, Engagement in independent trade unions, Civil society traditions.

Table B.2. International IDEA's 17 outcome objectives, 8 impact objectives, and 15 impact indicators (cont.)

PARTICIPATION

Policy influencers: Organizations or individuals who seek to shape public policy through advocacy, lobbying, research, and public engagement. They operate both within and outside formal government structures and are distinct from policymakers in that they do not hold decision-making authority but aim to influence those who do. The most recognizable policy influencers are advocacy CSOs (such as thinktanks) operating at the domestic and international levels, as well as trade unions, academia and private sector.

Policy influencers protect and promote democracy by designing and implementing effective and evidence-based advocacy campaigns and recommendations based on data and research.

RIGHTS

Impact objective	Impact indicators
A just and inclusive society where all individuals enjoy equal political rights, full civil liberties, equitable access to justice and basic welfare.	Access to Justice ¹³
	Civil Liberties ¹⁴
	Basic welfare ¹⁵
	Political Equality ¹⁶
Watchdogs: Institutions, organizations, or individuals that monitor the actions of those in power to ensure transparency, accountability, and adherence to democratic norms.	Watchdogs act as guardians of public interest by exposing misconduct, preventing abuse of power, and promoting good governance.
The media: Traditional media such as newspapers, television, radio, and non-traditional media such as various digital outlets.	The media informs the public, spreads fact-based knowledge, and holds political decision-makers accountable in a rigorous, objective and ethical manner.

¹³ This indicator denotes the extent to which the legal system is fair (citizens are not subject to arbitrary arrest or detention and have the right to be under the jurisdiction of—and to seek redress from—competent, independent and impartial tribunals without undue delay). Seven sub-indicators capture the access to justice indicator: Access to justice for men, Access to justice for women, Judicial corruption decision, Judicial accountability, Fair trial, F2 Rule of law, Civil Rights.

¹⁴ This indicator denotes the extent to which civil rights and liberties are respected (citizens enjoy the freedoms of expression, association, religion, movement, and personal integrity and security). For the Civil Liberties indicator five subcomponents have been constructed: Freedom of expression (captured in eleven sub-indicators), Freedom of the Press (captured in nine sub-indicators), Freedom of Association and Assembly (captured in ten sub-indicators), Freedom of Religion (captured in five sub-indicators), Freedom of Movement (captured in seven sub-indicators).

¹⁵ This indicator denotes the extent to which the material and social supports of democracy (e.g. nutrition, healthcare and education) are available. Seven sub-indicators capture the basic welfare factor: Infant mortality rate, Life expectancy, Kilocalories per person per day, Literacy, Mean years of schooling, Educational equality, Health equality.

¹⁶ This indicator denotes the extent to which political and social equality between social groups and genders is realized. For the Political Equality indicator two subcomponents have been constructed: Social Group Equality (captured in twelve sub-indicators) and Gender Equality (captured in eight sub-indicators).

Annex C. 2020–2021 strategic reviews and 2022 Strategy development process¹⁹

International IDEA's institutional Strategy outlines its key priority areas going forward to guide programmatic and strategic decision making and ensure the Institute's relevance, added value and competitive advantage. The new institutional Strategy was developed in 2022 in a process led by International IDEA's Member States (led by the 2022 Council Chair Canada, and Vice-Chairs Finland and Cabo Verde), with the participation of the Board of Advisors and the Secretariat.

The Strategy development process aimed to update the Institute's prior institutional Strategy (2018–2022); the strategic guidelines and recommendations emanated from the Internal Strategic Review carried out by the Management Committee in 2021 and the comprehensive Midterm Strategy Review carried out by Member States, the Board of Advisors and the Secretariat in 2020. The process was based on International IDEA's Results Framework approved by the Council in 2018, which outlines the current system for learning-based management and results reporting.

The Internal Strategic Review was a key institutional priority for 2021. It aimed to contribute to the drafting of a new institutional strategy by providing recommendations on defining International IDEA's a) identity, vision and mission; b) thematic and geographic priorities; c) organizational structure; and d) financial structure. International IDEA's senior management led the review and received input from its Board of Advisors, staff members and strategic partner organizations.

The **Midterm Review of International IDEA's Strategy for 2018–2022** was carried out in 2020. Its purpose was to take stock of how operations have evolved under the current strategy and to assess whether any strategic adjustments are needed. International IDEA's Council of Member States, Board of Advisors and staff members contributed to this review by providing input in a survey and participating in workshop discussions. The 2022 Strategy development process also considered the lessons learned and recommendations from restricted project evaluations conducted during the current Strategy cycle. The process was complemented by surveys, focus group discussions and thematic workshops with International IDEA Member States, Board of Advisors and international staff.

¹⁹ See also: [Internal Strategic Review - Key Recommendations PPT Council Meeting 1 December 2021.pdf](#) and [Mid-Term Review of International IDEA's Strategy for 2018-2022.pdf](#)

2025 STRATEGY UPDATE PROCESS

In 2025, approximately 2.5 years after the strategy was approved, International IDEA undertook a process to review and update this Strategy. This was driven by the need to reflect the changing context in global democracy and the democracy promotion field, including global changes in priority and funding, and to assess if these changes necessitated any update to the Strategy priorities. The purpose of this process was to provide a light Strategy update, with the intention to undertake a more substantial Strategy revision in 2-3 years' time.

The Secretariat initiated the process with the support of the Council of Member States and Board of Advisers. Input was gathered from Staff Members, Council Members and Board Members and integrated into the existing Strategy text. The revised and updated Strategy was brought to the Council of Member States for review and approval.

Annex D. Criteria for country engagement

International IDEA's criteria for country engagement will be guided by its global and regional strategic priorities. The following criteria will guide the establishment of new country programmes and the continuation of existing country programmes without prioritizing countries to enable the Institute to seize opportunities for engagement as they arise:

- requests for support or advice from national or regional actors or institutions
- sufficient political space to engage
- the ability to deliver on reform needs through International IDEA's knowledge and practical tools
- programmatic impact relative to International IDEA's funds and capacity
- countries with an important regional position, of which developments can also impact reforms in other countries
- countries where International IDEA can work to advance multiple thematic priorities
- availability and potential for additional external (preferably multiyear) restricted funding

To optimize resources and make International IDEA's margin of operations more flexible, innovative approaches for country engagement will be considered, including by joining efforts with partners to establish a semi-permanent presence in certain priority countries. The following criteria will guide the provision of regular or occasional capacity development:

- requests for support or advice from national or regional actors and institutions
- sufficient political space to engage
- potential for International IDEA to continue to provide ongoing support or for other organizations to carry that support forward

Different types of assessments will be conducted to establish the need and opportunity for engagement and disengagement based on relevant criteria, including country context, potential impacts at the national and subnational levels, political will, country-specific needs, the relevance to the Institute's thematic priorities and relationships with key stakeholders. Country disengagement or office closure will occur if:

- the government or independent bodies such as electoral management bodies no longer require full time support, but occasional support can be channelled through other means in the regional context;
- the political situation no longer permits meaningful engagement inside or outside of the country; or
- funding is no longer available for programming.

Annex E. Considerations to the adoption of International IDEA's Strategy by Mexico

Considerations to the adoption of International IDEA's 2023 Institutional Strategy, made by Mexico regarding the alleged competence of the Institute to protect democracy and electoral institutions.

On the occasion of the adoption of International IDEA's 2023 Institutional Strategy, Mexico wishes to express some considerations regarding the alleged competence of the Institute to protect democracy and electoral institutions.

In sections 1.3, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 4.1.3 of the Strategy 2023 of the Institute it is used language that foresees the capacity of International IDEA to 'protect sustainable democracy', 'protect and safeguard democracy', 'protect and enable democracy', 'mobilize alliances to defend and protect democracy', and to 'take on an advocacy role and "take sides" to protect and safeguard democracy'.

On the other hand, in section 3.1 it is envisaged that International IDEA possesses the competence to 'support the continuous improvement and protection of the integrity of electoral institutions' and in section 6.1 it is provided that this international organization will focus on 'protecting the integrity of electoral institutions and processes'.

Regarding the previous provisions, Mexico observes that neither the Declaration adopted during the founding conference of International IDEA in 1995 nor the Statutes of this international organization foresee any provision regarding IDEA's power to 'protect' democracy.

Instead, the Declaration of 1995 establishes that 'democracy must be advanced', that 'a better and more just world requires nurturing and reinforcing a democratic culture', that 'democracy must be sustained' and that 'democratic institutions must be sustained and sustainable', among other references. None of the aforementioned expressions amount to concluding that States Parties granted International IDEA the power to 'protect' democracy or electoral institutions.

In turn, the IDEA's Statutes envisage that some of the objectives of the Institute are 'to promote and advance sustainable democracy', 'to improve and consolidate democratic electoral processes' and to 'promote transparency and accountability, professionalism and efficiency in the electoral process in the context of democratic development'.

In light of the previous considerations, Mexico argues that the alleged IDEA's competence to 'protect' the democracy or national electoral institutions cannot be derived from the texts of its constitutive instruments. Instead, International IDEA has the power to promote democracy and to help in the consolidation and strengthening of democratic institutions and processes.

The position of Mexico is also supported by the previous practice of the Institute since, for instance, IDEA's Strategy 2012 to 2017 only refers to the 'need to protect the integrity and credibility of electoral processes'. In turn, in IDEA's Institutional Strategy 2018 to 2022 reference is made to the noun 'protection' in passages that point out the 'undermining of constitutionalism by the ruling elite (in some countries and regions) to protect their personal interests' and the 'guarantee and protection of fundamental rights'.

In addition, it is relevant to recall the agreement concluded in 2017 between the Government of México and International IDEA for the installation of an office of the Institute in Mexico. This document foresees in its article 2 called 'purpose' that International IDEA was created to nurture and support sustainable democracy in the world and that its purpose is to promote and consolidate sustainable and democratic electoral processes.

In this order of ideas, Mexico highlights that on its consideration International IDEA's Strategy 2023 exceeds the Institute's scope and capacity when referring capacities to protect democracy or to protect electoral institutions. Instead, Mexico considers that International IDEA has the competence to promote, nurture and strengthen democracy and electoral democratic processes under the Declaration of 1995 and the Statutes of 2006. Any other interpretation of the constitutive instruments that would grant International IDEA the power to protect democracy and electoral institutions might constitute a violation of the consent given by Mexico in the relevant opportunities and a violation of international law.

Mexico underlines that it does not ignore the fact that the text of IDEA's Strategy 2023 was accepted by the vast majority of the Member States. Thus, considering the effects of the above-mentioned considerations, understands these to be applicable in the relations between International IDEA and Mexico, and the interactions of Mexico with the international community concerning its membership to International IDEA.

About International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with 35 Member States founded in 1995, with a mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide.

WHAT WE DO

We develop policy-friendly research related to elections, parliaments, constitutions, digitalization, climate change, inclusion and political representation, all under the umbrella of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We assess the performance of democracies around the world through our unique Global State of Democracy Indices and Democracy Tracker.

We provide capacity development and expert advice to democratic actors including governments, parliaments, election officials and civil society. We develop tools and publish databases, books and primers in several languages on topics ranging from voter turnout to gender quotas.

We bring states and non-state actors together for dialogues and lesson sharing. We stand up and speak out to promote and protect democracy worldwide.

WHERE WE WORK

Our headquarters is in Stockholm, and we have regional and country offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. International IDEA is a Permanent Observer to the United Nations and is accredited to European Union institutions.

OUR PUBLICATIONS AND DATABASES

We have a catalogue with more than 1,000 publications and over 25 databases on our website. Most of our publications can be downloaded free of charge.

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International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with an explicit mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA combines a global presence based on a diverse membership, a feature that reinforces the legitimacy of its actions.

With its 'think—do-convene-advocate' approach underpinned by continuous learning, International IDEA combines the role of a global knowledge provider on democracy with country- and region-specific capacity development and advisory support.

International IDEA's focus remains to support and advance democracy globally, with the acknowledgement that such progress requires adherence to universal and legally binding human rights commitments. Respect for human rights, democracy, equality, and the rule of law continue to underpin all aspects of the Institute's work.