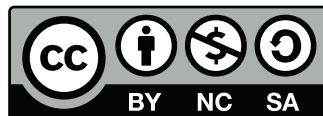


# INTERNATIONAL IDEA STRATEGY

At a glance



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## WHO WE ARE

# MANDATE, VISION AND MISSION

International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) with an explicit **mandate** to support sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA combines a global presence with a diverse **membership**, features that reinforce its legitimacy.

With its ‘think-do-convene-advocate’ approach underpinned by continuous learning, International IDEA combines the role of an impartial global knowledge provider on democracy with country- and region-specific capacity development and advisory support. The Institute is the only IGO solely dedicated to supporting democracy worldwide and holds a permanent UN Observer status. Combined with its ability to convene multilateral institutions, national actors, democracy defenders and civil society organizations, International IDEA plays a unique role in harnessing collective global action to champion, defend and advance democracy.

### Our Vision

A world in which everyone lives in inclusive and resilient democracies.

International IDEA’s vision is anchored in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. International IDEA believes that democratic principles are core to (and important enablers of) the realization of the 2030 Agenda. 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 to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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**International  
IDEA is an  
intergovernmental  
organization with an  
explicit mandate to  
support sustainable  
democracy  
worldwide.**

## 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.

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.

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.

## WHY

# THE DEMOCRACY LANDSCAPE

In advancing its vision and mission, International IDEA 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.

Democracy **is in decline** globally—in every region, including within long-established democracies. This democratic downturn has been stimulated and aggravated by a complex interplay of factors: from security concerns amid rising conflict, to weakened multilateralism and declining international support for democracy, to social and economic challenges associated with accelerating digitalization. In many countries, citizens report increasing disaffection with democracies' failure to address their evolving needs and demands, and commensurate distrust in democratic institutions.

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. 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.

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. 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.

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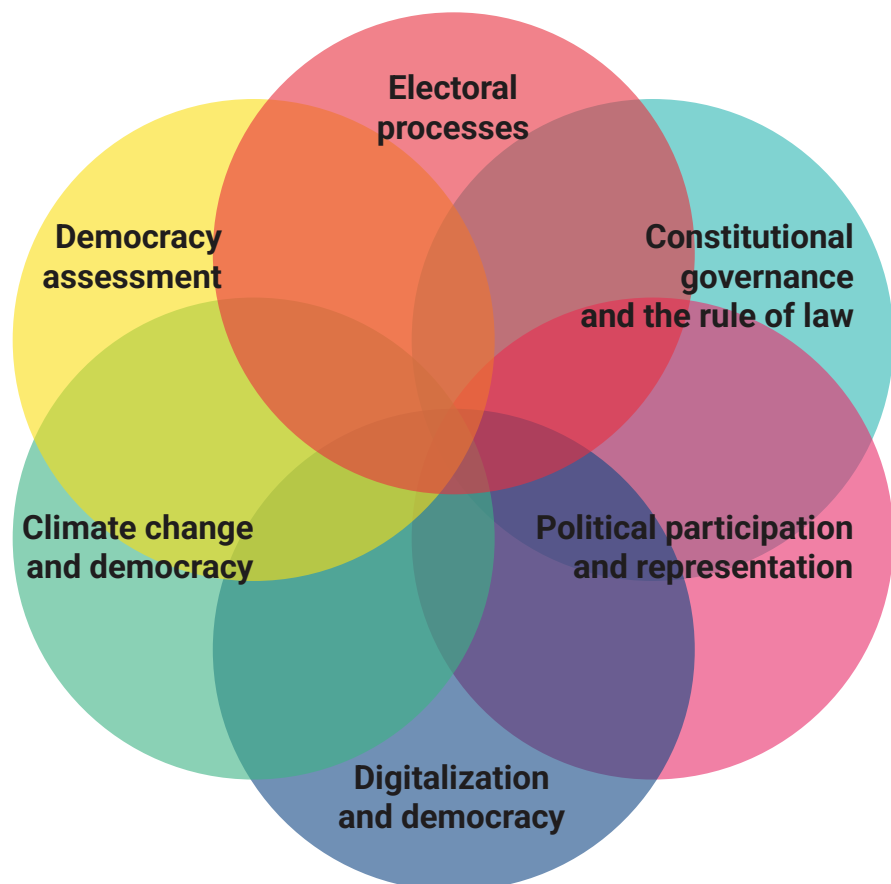
**International IDEA helps its Member States and other democratic partners address the challenges—and seize the opportunities—facing democracy and the field of democracy support.**

WHAT WE DO

# INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S THEMATIC PRIORITIES

To achieve International IDEA's mission, and in pursuit of its vision, International IDEA has defined several thematic priorities. These thematic priorities may be revised in each year's annual planning process.

## International IDEA's thematic priorities



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## **ELECTORAL PROCESSES**

Through the Electoral Processes workstream, 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.

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## **CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW**

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.

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## **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION**

International IDEA will build on its track record of supporting political parties and political finance regulation through 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.

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## **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. Democracy Assessment will inform programming on a continuous basis in our other work, creating synergies and capacity to innovate and learn within the Institute.

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## **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 through the effective participation of people in climate policy agendas. 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.

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## **DIGITALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY**

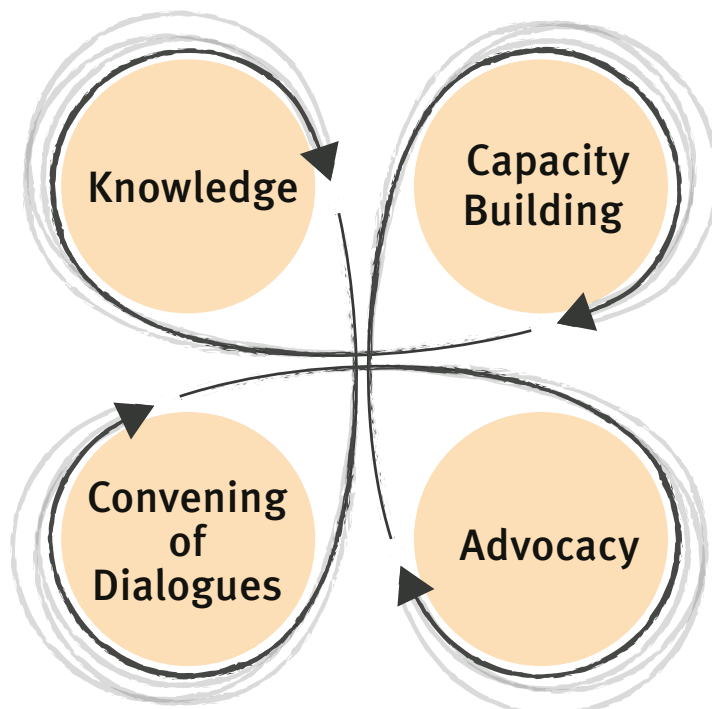
International IDEA will take a holistic approach and support democratic institutions and actors in reaping the benefits of digital innovation for governance and oversight. It will provide them with analysis and tools to protect and renew democracy by countering digital threats and ensuring inclusive digital participation and the protection of human rights. 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. International IDEA's work will seek to enhance dialogue between the Global North and South on digitalization and democracy.

## HOW WE WORK

# WORKING MODALITIES

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

## International IDEA's working modalities



**The Institute's work will continue to be characterized by an impartial, non-partisan, collaborative, demand-driven and holistic approach to democracy cooperation.**

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

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## MAINSTREAMING LENSES

International IDEA will adopt a human rights-based approach and will mainstream (a) gender and inclusion, (b) conflict sensitivity and (c) environmental protection across all its areas of work.

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## CRITERIA FOR ENGAGEMENT

International IDEA will work worldwide at a global, regional, and country level. Based on International IDEA's vision of democracy and its status as an inter-governmental organization, the Institute's work will continue to be characterized by an impartial, non-partisan, collaborative, demand-driven and holistic approach to democracy cooperation. This approach lays a solid basis for acting as a trusted partner to those leading democratic change at the country level.

International IDEA will work in all democratic countries to counteract challenges to democracy where opportunities exist to remedy democratic erosion and breakdown or to improve and advance democracy. Specifically, International IDEA will:

- prioritize countries experiencing visible signs of democratic erosion, including democratic backsliding.<sup>1</sup>
- continue to engage in countries experiencing democratic breakdown,<sup>2</sup> as measured by its Global State of Democracy Indices on a case-by-case basis and with reference to political-economic and risk assessments
- focus on countries that are emerging democracies, choosing opportunities for cooperation by conducting stakeholder analysis and identifying pro-democracy target groups.

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## OPTIMIZING OUR WORK

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

### Assessing results and increasing our learning capacities

International IDEA will strive to expand its monitoring and evaluation capacities beyond its existing structures to better assess how its work and projects

<sup>1</sup> 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 always used to describe countries that were democratic at the onset of the backsliding episode. Democratic backsliding is a form of democratic erosion.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'democratic breakdown' is used by International IDEA to describe the movement of a country from democracy to a hybrid regime (partial breakdown) or to a non-democracy (full breakdown).

contribute to outcomes that protect and advance democracy, as set out in International IDEA's Theory of Change.

#### **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. To nurture a cohesive institutional culture and knowledge management structure, the Institute will encourage co-owned, institute-wide projects led by cross-functional and/or cross-regional teams.

#### **Expanding and harnessing our digital footprint**

International IDEA will enhance its digital footprint and invest in digital technology and the digital capabilities of its staff, to increase and facilitate internal and external communication and outreach. The Institute will also continue to harness the opportunities available through digital means to develop digital (versions of its) products, thereby increasing (cost) efficiency, visibility, and reach.

#### **Investing in International IDEA's human capital**

International IDEA will invest in its staff to attract and maintain talent by offering competitive working conditions, professional development as well as flexible working and residence modalities. The Institute will prioritize and ensure inclusivity, non-discrimination, and diversity in its workforce, including by creating institutional Diversity, Equality and Inclusion goals and an accompanying action plan.

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## **RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

International IDEA is funded through voluntary 'core' contributions from Member States and 'restricted' project grants from donors. To ensure International IDEA's financial sustainability and to be able to maintain or modestly grow its current levels of core funding, while increasing its amount of restricted funding, the Institute will (a) enhance its monitoring and evaluation systems and results reporting to Member States and other donors, (b) continue to develop and implement cost-effective programmes and improve the transparency of reporting, (c) increase its capacity for resource mobilization and (d) seek to diversify its donor base and grow its ability to manage various funding modalities, including 'basket funding' to balance core and restricted funds. The Institute shall be guided throughout these resource mobilization efforts by the vision, mission, and thematic priorities in its institutional Strategy.

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**International IDEA will seek to increase its visibility with an increased focus on creative and digital models as a tool for democracy promotion.**

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## **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 external communications, International IDEA will focus on creating and strengthening ownership by its Member States and donors of the outcomes of International IDEA's work on the state of democracy, democratic reform, and democratic development, highlighting its relevance as an IGO and a credible partner for sustainable democracy.

WITH WHOM

# INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S STAKEHOLDERS

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.** Stakeholders in this group include International IDEA Member States, the Steering Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee, the Institute's Board of Advisers, donors, and the Secretariat.
- 2. Target groups/Boundary partners.**<sup>3</sup> 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 with whom the Institute may cooperate including civil society organizations, media, political parties, parliaments (supranational, national, and sub-national), electoral management bodies, constitution making bodies, oversight agencies, governments (including in exile), regional organizations, and the judiciary.
- 3. Strategic Partners.** International IDEA's partners include professional networks, peer organizations, civil society organizations, multilateral organizations (e.g. EU, AU and UN).

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<sup>3</sup> In its results framework, International IDEA calls target groups 'boundary partners', which are defined as institutions and actors which the Institute interacts with and thus influences directly. The purpose of interacting with boundary partners is to inspire and support them to adopt more democratic behaviours, relationships, and practices.





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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.