



ANNUAL LEARNING REPORTING 2024

IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S
LEARNING AGENDA

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Background

In 2023, International IDEA developed an institutional Learning Agenda. The Learning Agenda assumes that all Staff Members at International IDEA continuously learn by developing knowledge products and implementing activities and projects, as well as working to improve the systems and processes that support effective implementation. It is also designed to enable and encourage the exchange of knowledge and experience within International IDEA as well as to provide learning opportunities to strengthen and support Staff Members and to further systematize knowledge and learnings to disseminate to internal and external stakeholders, through an annual learning report. This report is the second annual report on learning activities undertaken by the Institute in the context of the approved learning agenda. It summarizes activities as well as key learnings for the 2024 financial year.

International IDEA's objectives for learning



For the identified sub-objectives International IDEA stakeholders have developed thematic priorities for learning for 2024-2026 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Thematic priorities



The thematic priorities are articulated through a series of learning questions that the Institute will aim to explore through evidence gathering and analysis.



On the first learning priority, **Context Matters**, the learning questions outlined in 2023 were:

- How do we learn about and address the complexity of the environments in which we work, with an initial focus on backsliding contexts, crisis contexts (i.e., volatile, and complex environments including war), and repressive contexts?
- What are the best-fit interventions for the complex contexts in which International IDEA works?



On the second learning priority, the **Democracy Support Cycle**, the questions were:

- How does the work of International IDEA lead to improved democratic outcomes for our boundary partners and stakeholders? How do our interventions lead to the intended change in behaviour or practices?
- How do we leverage and combine all International IDEA's approaches effectively to drive improved outcomes?
 - How do we better connect the four types of work International IDEA executes (think-do-convene-advocate)?
 - How can we create a virtuous cycle of knowledge production, capacity development, advocacy and convening of dialogues? How do we make our knowledge useful?
- How do we adapt programmes during their implementation to reflect ongoing learning?
 - How do we ensure that we learn from what works well and not so well to adapt our capacity development projects during implementation?
 - How or to what extent can we adapt our programming to changing dynamics on the ground?



And on the third learning priority, **Connecting and Institutionalizing Knowledge**, the questions were:

- How do we institutionalize a process to use the knowledge and to revisit that knowledge on a regular basis to make sure we stay relevant and effective? What kind of knowledge management is needed?
- How do we strengthen and enhance our learning across Programmes and Teams and share findings with donors and partners?
 - How do we create and nurture a learning culture at International IDEA and with donors and partners where one is free to express one's honest observations, doubts, and struggles without the fear of jeopardizing the existing funding, power dynamics, or relationships?
- How does our learning impact on our project design and implementation?
- How do we regularly update/refine policies and procedures to reflect new knowledge gained? How can we explore alternate procedures with donors who rely on us to execute our existing procedures?

The Learning Report

The purpose of the learning report is not to explore all the learning questions every year but rather use them as an analytic lens for harvesting learnings from practice. Hence, this learning report seeks to systematize some of the learnings that have evolved from the implementation of International IDEA's activities. The report is not based on a plan for strategic learning but instead draws retroactively on lessons that IDEA's Staff Members have learned by implementing projects as well as from evaluations of these projects. As the learning questions have not changed and learnings draw on similar sources, the learnings from 2024 confirm and build on learnings from 2023, and thus, there are strong similarities and overlaps between the 2024 learning report and the 2023 report. However, as evidence has now been generated over two years the evidence base for the learnings is stronger.

Lessons learned on Context Matters

Learning from political transitions in Africa



Key lessons learned:

- 1) In transitional contexts International IDEA needs to increasingly develop integrated knowledge of, and holistic approaches to, constitution-building programming in the interlinked areas of transitional justice, conflict mediation and the rule of law.
- 2) International IDEA has learned to work with a non-prescriptive approach, presenting comparative examples and options (or a 'choice architecture'), rather than solutions, to local stakeholders.

International IDEA's Constitution Building Programme was launched in 2006 and has since grown to become a premier thought-leader in the field of constitutional transitions, producing well over 100 publications and providing support in over 30 countries worldwide. This experience over almost two decades has brought a great deal of learning in terms of understanding the complexities in the negotiations over the structures of power during political transitions. **Over the last few years International IDEA has applied some of the knowledge learned to broaden its constitution building programming in the interlinked areas of transitional justice, conflict mediation and the rule of law.**

In 2024, International IDEA was engaged in supporting transitions in Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Gabon, Libya, Mali, Niger, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen. Except for The Gambia these countries share three common characteristics:

1. The presence of transitional governments and de facto authorities.
2. Plans to implement political and/or peace-making transition road maps.
3. The conceptualization of transitions as dedicated processes of changing a country's political paradigm away from authoritarianism, military rule, or armed internal conflict, toward democratization and stronger constitutionalism.

During 2024, International IDEA drew several lessons from its work in these contexts:

1. National and international stakeholders agree that transitional frameworks help to conceptualize what kind of constitutional reforms, elections, national dialogues, and transitional justice mechanisms are needed to deliver democracy or peaceful resolution of conflict. **Therefore, a key lesson is that International IDEA needs to increasingly develop integrated knowledge of and holistic approaches to constitutional reforms, elections, national dialogues, and transitional justice.**
2. **Key leaders need encouragement and some pressure to proactively shape transitions to deliver sustainable democratic social contracts.** The Institute has learned that excluded groups can be helpful in putting pressure on political leaders, by holding

them accountable to the implementation of transitional frameworks. The Institute has also learned that continuous dialogue with transitional authorities can provide encouragement for reforms. For example, in The Gambia the onset of a constitutional transition spurred disruptive dynamics that fueled distrust and political disagreement among leaders. Continued engagement allowed International IDEA to learn how to better support leaders to dialogue and maintain crucial momentum in the transition process. **A key lesson is that effective engagement and confidence building with leaders starts right from the beginning of transitional processes and it requires a commitment to trust building over time and through several disruptions.**

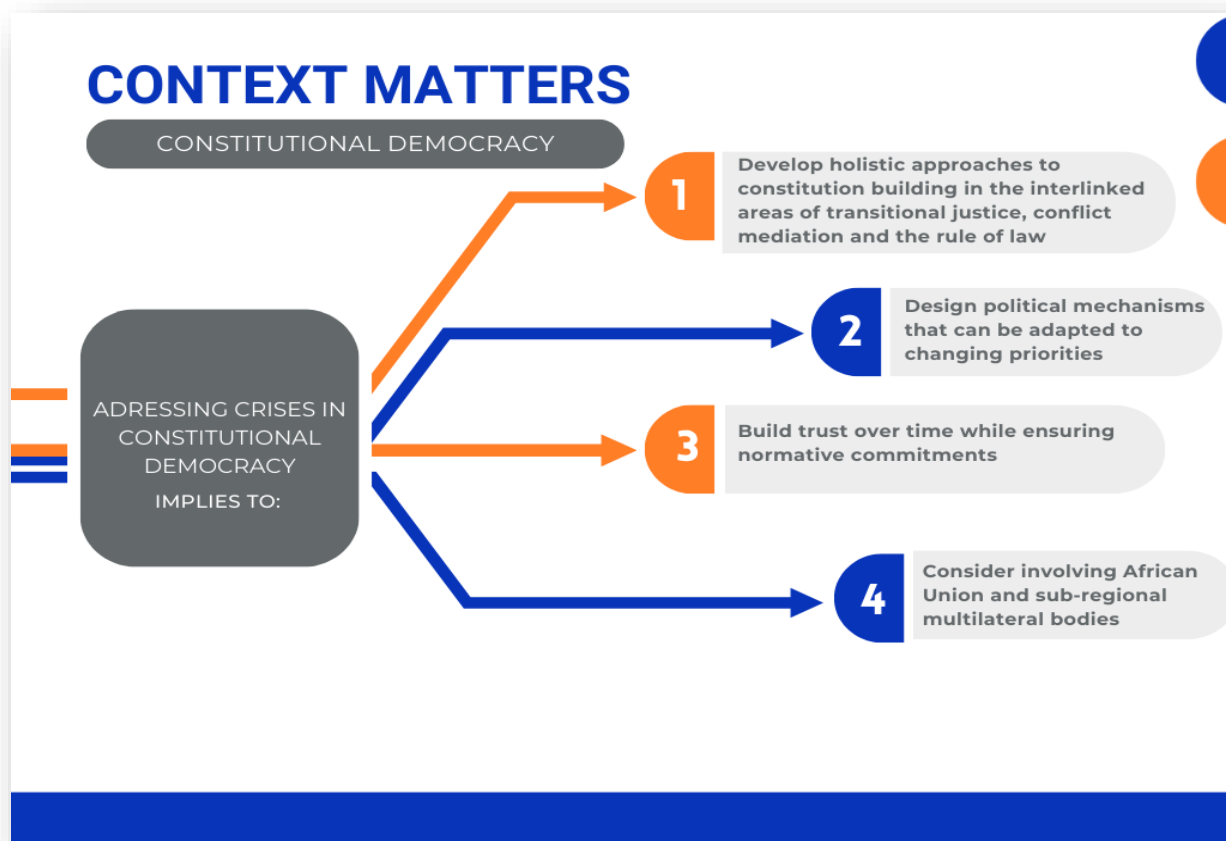
3. Maintaining momentum in timed and sequenced transitional processes tends to result in national actors elevating pragmatic decision-making over principled respect for normative frameworks. Thus, **best-fit interventions are those that aim to ensure progress under appropriate democratic frameworks while preparing soft-landings for “good enough” outcomes.**
4. The scope of transitional frameworks could shift dramatically over time. For instance, a process of modest constitutional amendments may rapidly evolve into discussion of a new constitution. **Consequently, best-fit interventions must start with designing political mechanisms that will secure a transitional process that can be adapted to changing priorities.** For instance, high-level consensus mechanisms have proven to be useful to allow transitional authorities and their political opponents to remove emerging transitional bottlenecks, as in The Gambia and Somalia, while their absence in Sahel states, Libya and Yemen resulted in stuck processes.
5. **International IDEA has learned to develop measures to support transitions through standing dialogue mechanisms, including annual reflection gatherings.** Such dialogue mechanisms have proven to enable national de facto authorities, their political opponents, and civil society counterparts to speak on the same platform while addressing international stakeholders. For instance, the 2024 special envoys retreat in Nairobi was successful in enabling national stakeholders in situations of unconstitutional changes of government to address and influence regional and international partners.
6. **Some of the most relevant and effective measures in fragile transitional contexts has involved key mediation or facilitation roles of the African Union and sub-regional multilateral bodies.**

Experiences in 2024 underscored that International IDEA and Member States have extraordinary convening capacity to influence the direction of transitions, although only national actors can drive the inclusive coalitions and mechanisms that address specific transitional problems. International best-fit interventions are a half-way solution to such problems; they work best when they build on local knowledge and energy. Therefore, **International IDEA has learned to work with a non-prescriptive approach, presenting comparative examples and options (or a ‘choice architecture’), rather than solutions, to local stakeholders.**

For International IDEA the lessons from supporting political transitions in Africa imply that:

- ✓ Start off with designing political mechanisms that will secure a transitional process that can be adapted to changing priorities, while preparing soft landings for “good enough” outcomes.
- ✓ Effective engagement with leaders starts from the beginning of transitional processes and requires a commitment to building trust over time and through several disruptions. Meanwhile, International IDEA needs to ensure normative commitments remain a prerequisite for continued assistance.
- ✓ Key leaders need encouragement and some pressure to proactively shape transitions to deliver durable, democratic social contracts. It is thus effective to develop measures to support transitions through standing dialogue mechanisms, including annual reflection gatherings.
- ✓ Excluded groups can be helpful in putting pressure on political leaders, by holding them accountable to the implementation of transitional frameworks.
- ✓ Some of the most relevant and effective measures in fragile transitional contexts have involved key mediation or facilitation roles of the African Union and sub-regional multilateral bodies.

Figure 1. Supporting transitional processes. Summary.



What works for whom in which circumstances?



Key lesson learned: Instead of implementing “best practices” local stakeholders must be provided with opportunities to shape and own solutions that work for them. A neutral external facilitator may have a role to play in facilitating dialogue between them while providing comparative examples and options.

The development community has gradually moved away from searching for best practices or attempts to answer questions on *what works* to instead explore contextual approaches to *what works for whom in which circumstances*. Through implementation and evaluation of projects in various countries on different continents over the last few years International IDEA has learned lessons that resonate well with this approach.

One set of institutional learnings on how to find best-fit interventions relate to the importance of facilitating joint project design processes, with boundary partners. For example, the EU funded Inter Pares programme, which supports parliaments, has concluded that **good projects must take their departure from an understanding of the types of authority, attitudes and abilities that exist** in the Parliament they are supporting. Similarly, the Programme concludes that involving parliamentary staff in baseline assessments enhances ownership and commitment: When their work and priorities are reflected in planned activities, staff become more engaged and responsive, ensuring greater impact throughout implementation.

Similarly, an internal annual review of International IDEA’s rule of law programme in Nigeria found that **a key to success is working closely with boundary partners to understand institutional incentives and constraints and find ways to address these constraints**.

Moreover, the Programme team notes that **investing time and resources in building trust between stakeholders is crucial**: If stakeholders treat each other with respect and empathy they will be able to work better together, as they understand and solve problems.

Inter Pares has also learned that **adaptation and flexibility need to be embedded in programme design, through flexible results frameworks, work plans and budgets built around outcomes, not around predetermined lists of activities with pre-set output targets**. Although donor requirements may pose challenges for such an approach, this lesson resonates well with what International IDEA has learned in other projects.

These lessons also resonate very well with International IDEA’s on-going work on protecting elections from challenges connected to social media and artificial intelligence, the upsurge of authoritarianism, and increased exposure to natural and human-made hazards (including armed conflicts). With funding from Canada, the Institute has been able to mobilize a broad pool of experts to develop, test and pilot an Integrated Framework for Protecting Elections. The design of the Framework started with consideration of the lessons learned from decades of implementation and research about the effectiveness of electoral assistance.

Drawing on these lessons, the Institute's Electoral Processes team (EP) was mindful of exploring one-size-fits-all remedies to electoral risks, which are not owned by national stakeholders and cannot be meaningfully customized to local context. Instead, one of EP's key goals was to find ways to unlock the full potential of national stakeholders, to understand and manage electoral risks collaboratively. Based on these insights, International IDEA defines protecting elections as *collaborative efforts of national stakeholders to prevent, withstand, or recover from negative occurrences that may undermine the integrity of electoral processes and results*. This definition builds on five key premises:

1. Every electoral process faces multiple risks. Therefore, **any effort to protect elections must start with a context-specific analysis of the full scope and complexity of electoral integrity risks in each country.**
2. **Preventing risks from materializing is the most effective way to protect electoral integrity.**
3. Some risks will inevitably materialize and thereby threaten the integrity of the electoral process. Therefore, **efforts to protect elections must build resilience to withstand stresses and shocks from risks that materialize.**
4. Threats that can't be withstood may cause crisis situations in which electoral integrity is significantly damaged or lost. Therefore, **efforts to protect elections should encompass situations in which electoral integrity may need to be restored.**
5. **Protecting elections can be done through a collaborative effort of national organizations** that are well-versed in applying risk management, resilience-building, and crisis management methods.

These premises underpin the content of the Integrated Framework for Protecting Elections:

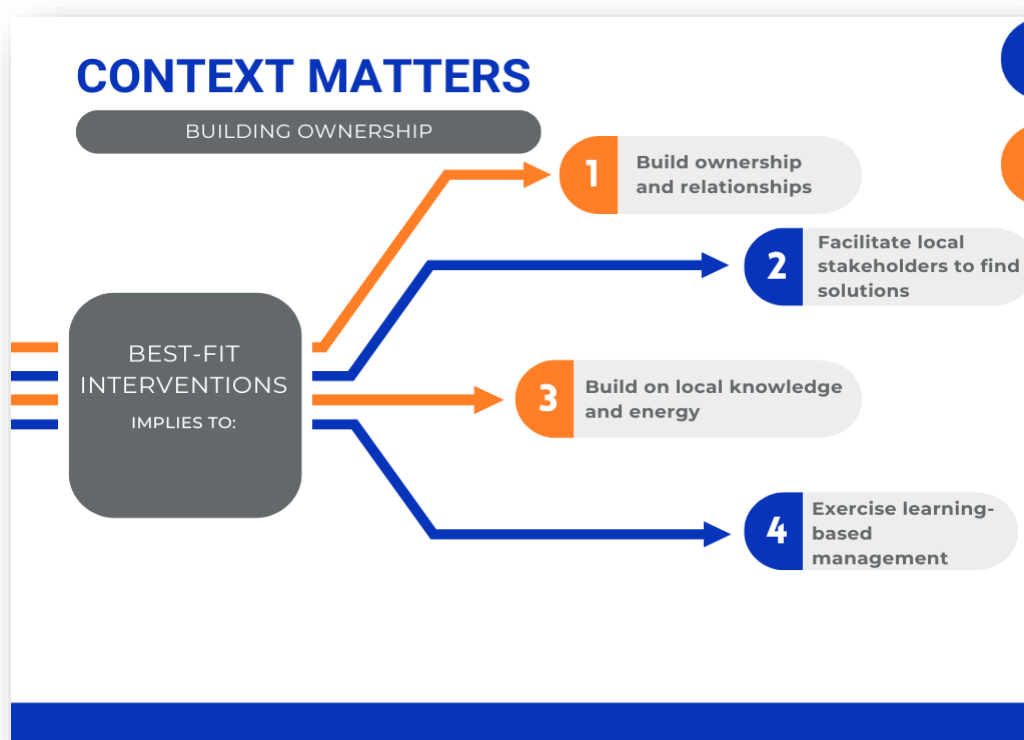
- ✓ *The Guide on Protecting Elections* outlines avenues for implementation of government- or society-wide efforts to protect electoral integrity.
- ✓ *The Protecting Elections Self-assessment Tool* assists user organizations to systematically assess the importance, scope, and quality of their existing safeguards to protect electoral integrity. A self-assessment methodology ensures that the effort is methodological, and that ownership of findings exists.
- ✓ *The Protecting Elections Training Curriculum* supports users of the Framework to build their practical knowledge and skills regarding key concepts of risk management, resilience-building, and crisis management in elections.
- ✓ *The Protecting Elections Resources Toolkit* enables users to quickly find and gather comparative knowledge, experiences, policies, and other tools to deal with specific electoral challenges.

While the Framework will be formally launched at the end of 2025, tests and pilots have already confirmed that it can be fully customized and owned by national stakeholders. It provides incentives for strengthened collaboration between national actors and can empower reform initiatives.

For International IDEA these global learnings imply that:

- ✓ Good capacity development projects must take their departure from an understanding of the types of authority, attitudes and abilities that exist in the partner institution. Hence, boundary partners shall be involved in project design processes.
- ✓ A neutral external facilitator may have a role to play in facilitating dialogue between local actors but must allow them to identify local solutions to their challenges. In this way external partners can build ownership and trust and empower local partnerships.
- ✓ International experiences and tools are likely to be useful in democratic reform processes, but the way forward should build on local knowledge and energy. Therefore, International IDEA has learned to work with a non-prescriptive approach, presenting comparative examples and options (or a 'choice architecture'), rather than solutions, to local stakeholders.
- ✓ Democratic processes are shaped by volatile and ever-changing power relations which are shaped by culture, context, political interests, and personal motivations. This illustrates that change processes in societies are complex and unpredictable. To maneuver effectively in complex contexts, work plans should continuously be revised, while drawing on local knowledge and feedback in evaluative processes.

Figure 2. Designing best-fit interventions. Summary.



Lessons learned on the Democracy Support Cycle

Learning to deliver innovative capacity development approaches



Key lesson learned: Capacity development projects should use mixed approaches to learning and not rely on trainings only. Such approaches may include e.g. on-the-job trainings, mentoring, and peer to peer learning.

Over the last few years, the Budget and Programme Performance Team (BPP) at International IDEA has undertaken several evaluations which have accumulated evidence on how capacity development can be most effective. These lessons mirror learnings generated from implementation of projects, which are shared in project reports, and at the Institute's brown bag lunches and Communities of Practice. **A key learning that emerges from evaluation and practice is that capacity development projects should combine approaches to learning**, as this leads to deeper learning and helps embed new processes and tools within institutions. For example:

- In Nepal International IDEA has worked with a mentoring approach model in several projects. **The idea is to embed mentors in organizations, who can promote innovative approaches and practices in the institutional culture and develop staff capacities at the same time.** Lessons learned from the mentoring approach are positive, as it enables International IDEA to combine inspiring and supportive approaches over time, and thus gradually embed new practices in organizations.
- One of the key lessons identified in a handbook published by the Inter Pares Programme is that **real change happens when informal networks, critical actors, and champions work together to transform both culture and practice.**
- In Bhutan International IDEA applied a training of trainers approach where **international trainers trained local boundary partners to provide training to peers:** for example, local journalists were trained to provide training to CSOs and Parliament on the role of media in a democracy. The peer-to-peer approach increased the project's impact and sustainability as the trainers were able to tailor the training to the local stakeholders' needs and to strengthen their own knowledge and skills in the process.
- In another innovative approach in Bhutan, **trainings to CSOs on advocacy were complemented with opportunities for sub-grants for advocacy projects.** This proved to enhance insights gained from training and generated tangible outcomes.
- In Nigeria, **study visits with peer-to-peer learning have been well received and seem to lead to results.** International IDEA's Programme team in Nigeria also reports that **convening people to share experiences** is particularly useful.
- Inter Pares' **hands-on exercises with EU Member State parliaments' staff strengthened Inter Pares' peer-to-peer learning model.** Moreover, Inter Pares' Staff

Members have found that **practical formats like roundtables which encourage peer-to-peer dialogues on real-world experiences, foster mutual learning.**

- In Inter Pares' project in Zambia, the Youth Parliamentary Academy (YPA), introduced **an innovative model that prioritizes direct youth engagement over traditional civic education.** By bringing together young people, parliamentary staff and experts, the initiative fostered meaningful dialogue and co-creation of educational materials.
- In The Gambia, International IDEA supported political parties to develop a Code of Conduct to guide responsible election campaigning. **The participatory way in which the Code was developed facilitated ownership and thereby behavioural change,** which was reinforced by the appointment of local moral guarantors, who intervened if the Code was breached.
- In the Philippines, a project aimed at strengthening Indigenous peoples' rights **provided both duty-bearers¹ and right-holders² with the tools they needed to constructively engage with one another.** This contributed to results as it helped both sides overcome knowledge, capacity, and network constraints.

For International IDEA these global learnings imply that:

- ✓ Capacity development projects should use mixed approaches to learning. Such approaches may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job training, mentoring, peer-to peer-learning, study visits, networking, and dialogues.
- ✓ Projects shall ideally work on duty bearers and right holders in parallel and attempt to strengthen the interaction between these groups.

Learning to utilize synergies between core and restricted funding streams to support elections

As the Institute increasingly utilizes restricted funding from its Member States and other major donors, new ways to unlock synergies between core funding and restricted funding are discovered. The [Protecting Elections Project](#), implemented by the Electoral Processes team (EP), is on a particularly steep learning curve. Mid-way into its journey, the project has generated several important lessons.

First, the Canadian funds came with the recognition that global public goods can strengthen and complement projects implemented in countries. **For the EP team, Canadian funds were thus an opportunity to scale up core-funded work by expanding the team's research scope and conduct multiple tests and pilots in partnership with national stakeholders across**

¹ Duty-bearers are those actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. The term is most used to refer to State actors, but non-State actors can also be considered duty-bearers.

² Rights-holders are individuals or social groups that have entitlements in relation to duty-bearers.

continents. Such engagements help advance the quality and strengthen the credibility of the resources produced while making genuine impact.

Second, whereas restricted funding is usually confined to specific countries, core funding is more flexible, allowing much-needed agility in responding to emerging needs. During implementation of the Protecting Elections Project, there have been several situations where these synergies worked remarkably well. For example, when the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Ukraine expressed interest in strengthening its risk management processes International IDEA's Regional Europe Programme and Global Programmes pooled funds to make it happen, under the umbrella of the Protecting Elections Project. **Core and project resources were combined to deliver [training for select CEC senior staff in Stockholm](#), which was later scaled up in Ukraine. This approach was possible only by combining multiple work streams and funds.**

Similar examples of synergy in action has taken place across Africa, where the EP team and International IDEA's Africa and West Asia (AWA) regional office have combined restricted and core resources to respond to specific requests for [building the capacity of electoral management bodies \(EMBs\)](#) of Cameroon, Ethiopia, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Zambia, as well as [new election commissioners in the SADC region](#). **By unlocking synergies between the EU-funded project "Strengthening Pan-African Capacities for Electoral Observation and Assistance", the Canada-funded "Protecting Elections Project" and core funding, International IDEA's regional and HQ teams were not only able to ensure responsiveness to various demands but also to introduce new cutting-edge methods and tools.**

Finally, in 2024, International IDEA developed a new version of the [Electoral Risk Management Tool's \(ERMTTool\) software](#). The ERMTTool has been one of the flagship resources for supporting peaceful elections worldwide since 2013. However, substantial software updates have been delayed as the costs for these have exceeded the core resources available for EP. However, given increasing demands from electoral management bodies and other boundary partners in regions, International IDEA's Africa and Europe Programmes secured restricted funds for software development, whereas EP contributed core expertise and time to manage the development of ERMTTool 2.0.

For International IDEA these learnings imply that:

- ✓ Combining core and restricted funds facilitate effective interventions that address immediate challenges and enable the development of global knowledge resources.

Lessons learned on Connecting and Institutionalizing Knowledge

How do we strengthen and enhance our learning across Programmes and Teams and share findings with donors and partners?

Communities of Practice, brown-bag lunches, and internal evaluations

International IDEA has two existing Communities of Practice (CoPs) which share experiences and learnings across regions and workstreams. One CoP targets Programme Managers and the other financial and administrative Staff Members. In 2024 both CoPs met four times. The meetings are virtual and typically 20-30 Staff Members participate.

These CoPs are used, *inter alia*, to communicate key learnings including an understanding of what works where and how, or what is challenging. Topics may include lessons learned from implementing projects and project evaluations, discussions on findings and conclusions from external and internal audits, and feedback sessions on draft policies and procedures. In addition, an annual regional Heads of Finance and Operations meeting is held in person in Stockholm to tease out challenges experienced in project implementation and develop solutions.

The Institute also organizes hybrid brown-bag lunches (BBLs) on a regular basis to share experiences across regions and teams, and to get input from external actors. In 2024, International IDEA hosted a series of 12 BBLs covering topics related to democracy, governance, and political participation. Discussions included the role of the Ukrainian Institute in raising awareness about Ukraine's cultural diplomacy, the governance of electoral disinformation, and methodological debates on V-Dem's democracy measurement models. The series also highlighted key institutional learnings from International IDEA's 2023 Learning Agenda, insights from the Perceptions of Democracy Survey (PODS), how people experience democracy worldwide, and lessons learned on how to undertake effective advocacy strategies. Other sessions explored the intersection of religion and authoritarian politics, the evolving landscape of democratic innovation, and women's political participation through International IDEA's gender and inclusion programming. Additionally, Staff Members shared lessons from democracy-strengthening initiatives in Sierra Leone, and the role of ethnographic approaches in democracy assistance.

2024 also saw the continuation of the Democracy Exchanges for Member States (DEMS) on Electoral Integrity between Electoral Management Bodies of IDEA Member States, championed by Australia and Sweden, as well as a series of three Exchanges on gender, in close collaboration with Luxembourg. These Exchanges are a trusted platform for participants to discuss, debate and exchange on substantive issues connected to democracy, in a structured manner and on a continuous basis. As such, they served to enhance networks, spread good practices, stimulate further thinking and offer opportunities to build and learn. The exchanges highlighted, for example, that openness to experiences and practices from across the diversity of IDEA's membership is – to some participants surprisingly – rewarding. Participants confirmed that it takes time to build the trust required for frank exchanges, especially in online environments and on topics that involve different types of institutions and

agendas. This multi-dimensional character of the Exchanges also proved to be an important factor in enabling closer collaboration between and across International IDEA's Programmes and Teams.

Another tool in the learning toolbox are evaluations. The Institute includes, wherever possible, internal mid-term or annual evaluations of restricted projects. The purpose of these evaluations, which are led by BPP, is both to provide semi-independent assessments of projects with recommendations intended to improve the individual projects, and to identify learnings that emerge during the implementation of projects. These learnings are shared in the Communities of Practice or as recommendations in other evaluations. To enhance institutional learning BPP may include colleagues from other teams in the evaluations.

The evaluations are shared with the donors and are thus a tool for evidence-based discussions with them. They are also made available on the intranet for all Staff Members. In 2024 BPP finalized internal evaluations in Albania, The Gambia, Peru, Nepal, Myanmar, and Nigeria, and undertook a desk-based review of the Institute's three projects in Sudan. In addition, International IDEA commissioned external evaluations in Chad and for its regional Women's Political Participation programme in Africa.

How do we regularly update/refine policies and procedures to reflect new knowledge gained?

2024 report from the Executive Division



Key lesson learned: Policies, standard operating procedures, templates, and user-guides are key for documenting lessons learned. Trainings and coordination meetings are key to integrate the learnings into institutional practices.

The Executive Division regularly update policies, standard operating procedures, templates, and user-guides to facilitate institutional effectiveness on accounting and treasury, annual planning and reporting, human resources, learning-based management, partnerships, procurement, project management, resource mobilization, and risk management. These updates are based on continuous lesson learning from practice, internal and external audits and evaluations, and feedback from Staff Members and the Institute's Finance and Audit Committee.

As an example, International IDEA's Resource Mobilization Policy and Procedure was adopted in 2021. Subsequently various templates aimed at facilitating the resource mobilization process have been developed. These templates include a pre-award assessment template, which aims to ensure that the regions and HQ agree on what project proposals the Institute

should present to donors. The template is continuously updated based on lessons learned about, for example, the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of ongoing projects.

During 2024, SGO and BPP developed a training handbook on resource mobilization and undertook trainings on the Resource Mobilization Policy and Procedure, including on the updated templates, with all Programmes. The trainings enabled constructive discussions and joint learning between HQ and regions, which resulted in further revisions of the Policy and Procedures. A key learning was that the Institute must be better at prioritizing where and with whom it should undertake fund-raising efforts. In response to this learning, an effort will be made to operationalize Programme's Resource Mobilization strategies in the 2026 annual planning process.

Joint learning processes between various functions at the Institute are similar regarding other policies and procedures. For example, to improve procedures for monitoring and evaluation, International IDEA advocates for the adoption of its outcome focused learning-based management system in all projects. The uptake of this has, however, been inconsistent. This has contributed to external reviews and evaluations finding projects to be too focused on activities and recommending that they adopt an outcome focused approach. Some examples include:

- A Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Review of the EU funded project "Supporting Libya's House of Representatives" found that the project's logframe indicators did not measure meaningful outputs or outcomes, but rather the achievement of planned activities. Linked to this, the Review noted that the annual project report was adequate at the level of activities and outputs but does not provide analysis of outcomes.
- A ROM Review of the EU funded project "Support to Consolidation of Democracy in Mozambique" found that the project's logframe focused on immediate results and deliverables rather than holistic behaviour changes and impacts. It thus recommended that the project revise its internal M&E system accordingly, in line with IDEA's Learning-Based Management methodology.
- An external evaluation of the EU funded project "Support to Electoral Processes and Democracy" in Myanmar, found that the while collection of data captures the rollout of activities, reporting has been too focused on activities and outputs rather than on outcomes. Based on this observation it was recommended that consideration should be given ways of capturing changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour, and relationships of beneficiaries.

These short-comings can to some extent be addressed by staff training on learning-based management, but a major challenge is to persuade some donors to accept International IDEA's approach to results reporting. According to a study published by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, the reasons for this are that there has been a tendency for donors 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).³

The following significant strategies, policies, procedures, user guides and templates were reviewed in 2024, based on lessons learned from implementing previous policies and procedures.

- Growth Strategy – this was approved in July 2024.
- Staff Rules and Regulations – a second draft review was completed.
- The Cost Recovery policy was reviewed and the revision approved.
- The Standard Operating Procedure governing our online presence (websites) was institutionalized and all websites are now housed on a secure server with clear backup and recovery procedures in place, with a defined service level agreement for restore in case of a cyber-attack. Penetration testing for new websites is now mandatory.
- Cyber security was enhanced with the implementation of patch management, secure software edge and a security operations center.
- User guides - to support checking for sanction, learning based management, setting up substitutes in UBW; were prepared.
- X21 – an online portal for operational partners to input transactions and the related documentation was developed and piloted with ten partners.
- A standard operating procedure for honoraria was approved.
- Direct Appointment and promotions procedures were revised and approved.
- Procurement policy and procedures were revised and approved.

The Human Resources and Organizational Development team also reviewed the provision of eLearning and identified Linked-In Learning for Staff Members.

Several user guides and templates were also updated to reflect lessons learned derived from implementing previous versions. For example, the User Guide for Learning-Based Management was updated, and a User Guide for Project Design (including various templates), and a User Guide for Development of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plans for projects (including various templates), were developed.

³ For reference, see OECD, “Learning from Results-Based Management Evaluations and Reviews” (OECD 2019).

Annex A: Workplan

Thematic Priority 1: Context Matters

Learning Question	Status Analysis – Current Situation	Work plan		
		What	By When	Who
1.1 How do we learn about and address the complexity of the environments in which we work?	--Understanding of each context is developed locally through expertise, knowledge gathering and contacts of project teams in each country. --Information is shared informally within a region through meetings and discussion.	Establish a process to develop context/power analysis for each new environment in which IDEA enters – how to do this at the ground level. This should include a process of how this information can be refreshed at regular intervals for all environments in which IDEA works.	Not achieved	Regional Directors to develop regional/context-sensitive approaches. BPP to support, e.g. provide options and consider if/how to leverage outside guidance.

Learning Question	Status Analysis – Current Situation	Work plan		
		What	By When	Who
	--Information is shared occasionally across the Institute through Community of Practice events.	Dedicate at least two Community of Practice meetings annually to sharing learning across the Institute on working in specific contexts.	Achieved	BPP in collaboration with project leads working in relevant contexts
		Learning about relevant context is included as a learning objective in two restricted and two core projects across Institute.	Included in earmarked core funding from the Netherlands.	Project leads (with consultation from BPP as needed).
1.2 What are the best-fit interventions for the complex contexts in which International IDEA works?	--Many if not all restricted projects undergo ongoing, midterm and/or final evaluations which examine relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of interventions in meeting stated outcome objectives. --Evaluations are shared with project Staff Members, donor and posted on intranet. --Findings are shared across Institute through Community of Practice events.	Document learnings in an annual learning report as an integrated part of the Annual Outcome Report and conduct CoP on findings and how to integrate into new projects. Report to be shared with MS, donors, Staff Members, Directors, partners. Consider a webinar for MS and external partners.	Achieved	BPP
		Conduct at least one learning session with Member States, external stakeholders and donors in targeted contexts to share learnings.	Achieved	Project leads starting with: --BPP to support coordination, meeting structure

Thematic Priority 2: Democracy Support Cycle

Learning Question	Status Analysis – Current Situation	Work plan		
		What	By When	Who
2.1. How does the work of International IDEA lead to improved democratic outcomes for our boundary partners and stakeholders?	-- International IDEA follows a Learning Based Management approach, with full buy-in to this approach from leadership. -- A results framework with standardized theories of change, goals and objectives has been developed and is continually updated. This is the basis for project design, though used inconsistently. --Outcome harvesting is conducted during annual planning meetings with all programme Teams. --Evaluations are conducted for most restricted projects to examine success in achieving outcomes.	Establish regular training in LBM for Staff Members.	On-going	Heads of Team responsible for scheduling BPP to deliver
		Include learning objectives in majority of new restricted projects.	Not achieved, as some donors are reluctant.	Project leads with guidance/support from BPP
		Have Staff Members more involved in restricted projects evaluations – at least two non-BPP staff attending evaluations per annum.	Achieved 2024 On-going	Regional Directors & Staff Members
2.2. How do we leverage and combine all International IDEA's	--IDEA's established results framework with standardized theories of change, goals and objectives reflects capacity development,	Develop advocacy guidelines	Achieved	SGO in collaboration with REP and DC offices

Learning Question	Status Analysis – Current Situation	Work plan		
		What	By When	Who
approaches effectively to drive improved outcomes?	knowledge building and inspiring approaches to developing outcome objectives but the framework is not fully utilized by all Teams. --GP Teams often attend at least a portion of regional annual planning sessions and vice versa to bridge “think” and “do” efforts. --GP Teams often participate in regional projects as experts/facilitators/knowledge sharing. --Regional Teams continually contribute to knowledge development. --Advocacy/convening offices (REP, UN) increasingly attend regional and GP planning sessions to increase cross-pollination.	Ensure that our LBM approach is utilized to reflect all 4 of the approaches/kinds of interventions IDEA undertakes. Document what we are learning from combining different approaches.	Achieved	BPP in collaboration with all Programmes
		Conduct feedback sessions with stakeholders on usefulness of knowledge products and pilot refined ways of sharing knowledge based on stakeholder needs.	Not yet systematically implemented	GP
2.3. How do we adapt programmes during their implementation to reflect ongoing learning?	IDEA’s approach to learning based management is utilized in many projects, but implementation is uneven.	Ensure that our LBM approach is utilized in all projects.	Achieved On-going	BPP in collaboration with all Programmes

Thematic Priority 3: Connecting and Institutionalizing Knowledge

Learning Question	Status Analysis – Current Situation	Work plan		
		What	By When	Who
3.1. How do we institutionalize a process to use the knowledge and to revisit that knowledge on a regular basis to make sure we stay relevant and effective?	--Staff Members are often unaware of the knowledge that the Institute already has. --New staff are not consistently onboarded, particularly in thematic areas. --There is no process for storing or managing knowledge.	Enhance onboarding processes – guidelines for teams on how to best induct and train Staff Members.	Significant work has been done and is showing results. On-going	HROD in collaboration with all Programmes.
		Each Programme develops their own induction manual with key knowledge information new Staff Members need from their own Team and across the Institute.	On-going	All Heads of Programme
		Map solutions to systematize, organize and store learning (e.g. knowledge management tools and systems)	This is a significant task that will take considerable time and financial resources. It will be addressed when funds permit.	BPP
		Locate and organize proposals & concept notes for sharing as examples across the Institute.	On-going	SGO & IT
3.2. How do we strengthen and enhance our learning across programmes and teams and	--Within small teams there is good learning via	During the planning process, help Teams utilize the existing tools for project design to encourage co-design processes.	On-going	BPP

Learning Question	Status Analysis – Current Situation	Work plan		
		What	By When	Who
share with Member States, donors and partners?	WhatsApp groups, weekly calls. --Limited learning across programme Teams and across regions. --Limited and irregular briefings to Member States on program findings and evaluation outcomes	Organize one annual Staff Member learning event, likely in Stockholm/hybrid, to include working level Staff Members to exchange programme findings, discuss challenges and lessons learned, co-design and evaluate opportunities.	Due to financial constraints no event has been organized for all Staff Members. However, EP organized an institutional learning event on elections.	ED (with support of Working Group?) to take lead in organizing
		Institute cross-Member State thematic learning opportunities, starting with sharing across Election Management Bodies in 2024	Member State exchanges is an on-going initiative, which started in 2024.	SGO and GP
		Invest time in cross-Team discussions, trainings, brown bag discussions.	Ongoing	All staff
		As budget allows consider Team members visiting or working remotely in another team/region in IDEA.	Ongoing, but challenging	All staff in conjunction with Head of Team
		Share learning findings with Member States, major donors, including EU, in strategic coordination meetings and regular interactions, and ask for their feedback and findings	Ongoing	ED, REP, SGO

Learning Question	Status Analysis – Current Situation	Work plan		
		What	By When	Who
3.3. How can we integrate our institutional learnings into project design and project implementation?	--Project evaluations (including learnings) are published on intranet and often shared in the Community of Practice --BPP and other HQ teams review project proposals as part of quality assurance to support integration of institutional learnings at project design phase	Document learnings in an annual learning report as an integrated part of the Annual Outcome report. Conduct CoP on findings and how to integrate into new projects.	First report 31 March 2024 and then annually	BPP
		Share learning report internally but also with MS and boundary partners regularly and ask for feedback to improve/refine learnings.	By 30 June 2024 and then annually	SGO, all Programmes
		Institutional learnings are integrated in templates for project proposals and relevant policies and procedures.	Ongoing	ED, BPP
3.4. How do we regularly update/refine policies and procedures to reflect new knowledge gained?	--Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated	The process of updating processes and procedures continues on a rolling basis, reflecting learnings from annual learning report, audits and evaluations. Training is instituted on project management, financial management and resource mobilization.	Ongoing	ED