

**International
Science Council**

The global voice for science

**Members' Forum
Paris, 2023**



THE COMPLEX ROAD AHEAD FOR POLICY, SOCIETY AND SCIENCE



COVID 19
and future
pandemics



Climate
change and
sustainability
(food, water,
energy,
biodiversity
loss)



Social
cohesion
and mental
health



Conflict,
nationalism
and a failure of
multilateralism



Humans
and
societies
coexisting
with
technology



Loss of trust
in elites
including
academia
and science



A very
complex
ecosystem

INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE COUNCIL 2022 - 2024

- The ISC was formed in 2018 by the merger of ICSU (natural sciences) and ISSC (social sciences)
- ISC was formed because the two legacy organizations had recognized that their impact could be strengthened with an integrated, stronger and more effective voice
- **ISC's mission is to be the global voice for (and of) science**
- **But to be an effective voice, those whom you talk to must be willing to listen – ISC's priority must be to *build the audience***
- From 2018-2021 the focus was on merger, then progress slowed by Covid
- ISC is now progressed beyond its merger phase and is focused on implementing its priorities and building a more effective role with multiple external and internal stakeholders



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BOARD'S AGREED PRIORITIES MAY – OCT 2022

- Building meaningful and sustained relationships with core components of the multilateral system
- Building more effective relationships with host government and its agencies
- Building and leveraging the fellowship
- Building a sustainable financial basis including
 - Charitable trust and fundraising, investigate legal status change
- Strengthening ISC's global presence
 - Establishing focal points, addressing gaps in membership, engaging members in UN related activities
- Delivering on the action plan with a tighter focus where the ISC can add value
 - Role of science in issues of public and common good
 - Disinformation, trust in science, science-societal interactions
 - Evolution of science systems, nature of science and relationship to other knowledge systems,
 - Future of scientific publishing, open data, open science
 - Sustainability/ Mission led science
 - Science education
 - Private Sector relationships
- Reviewing affiliate bodies and ISC programs for added value and optimal use
- Building members' capacity in science policy and science diplomacy interfaces
- Building profile with relevant stakeholders and building effective relations with them
- Constitutional reform

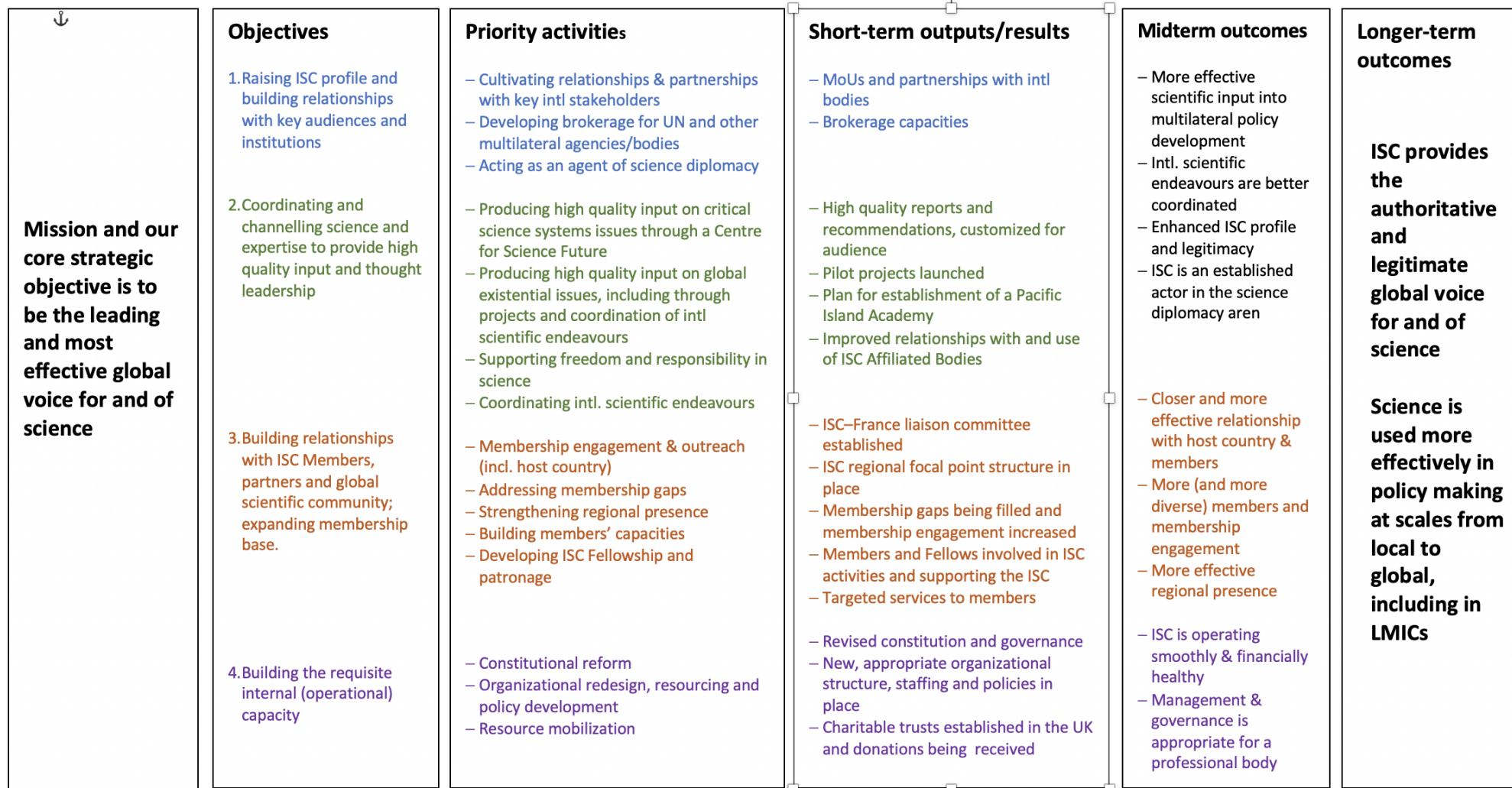
FROM THE 2024 ACTION PLAN

Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transformations to sustainability - Mission led science for sustainability - Covid report - Sendai review of risk and hazard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completed - Report almost finalized, pilots being planned - Second edition to be released soon - Completed
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital transformations - Digital technologies for sustainability - Convergent and rapidly moving technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open science, open data - CoDATA partnership - Discussion starting with partners
Science in policy and society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The public value of science - Science policy interface at global level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Almost completed, to be reframed with issues of trust etc - Major progress at UN - Partnership with INGSA
Evolving science and science systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open science and open data - Engaged science - Evaluation of science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Much progress - Transdisciplinary paper launched - Trust in science project under planning - Report to be released
Freedom and Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity, inclusion and freedom - Responsible science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CFRS very active - Ukrainian issues a focus - continues
Enabling success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging more effectively with members - Expanding membership - Increasing the ISC visibility and influence - Accelerating resource mobilisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular QA, newsletters, requests - Is being prioritised - Fellowship created - Many relationships enhanced - Presidential activity - Trust being established

Activities alluded to in plan and underway:

- **Science education**
Working group established
- **Regional office development**

Vision/goal: Science is used effectively to advance the global public and common good.



Principles: Excellence and professionalism, inclusivity and diversity, transparency and integrity, innovation and sustainability

Partners: ISC members, Affiliated Bodies, UN and agencies, development banks, funders, etc.

Impact: Reduced existential risks – resilience & sustainability – greater appreciation of science all over the world – science systems have evolved to meet societal needs

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE ISC: *PROFILE*

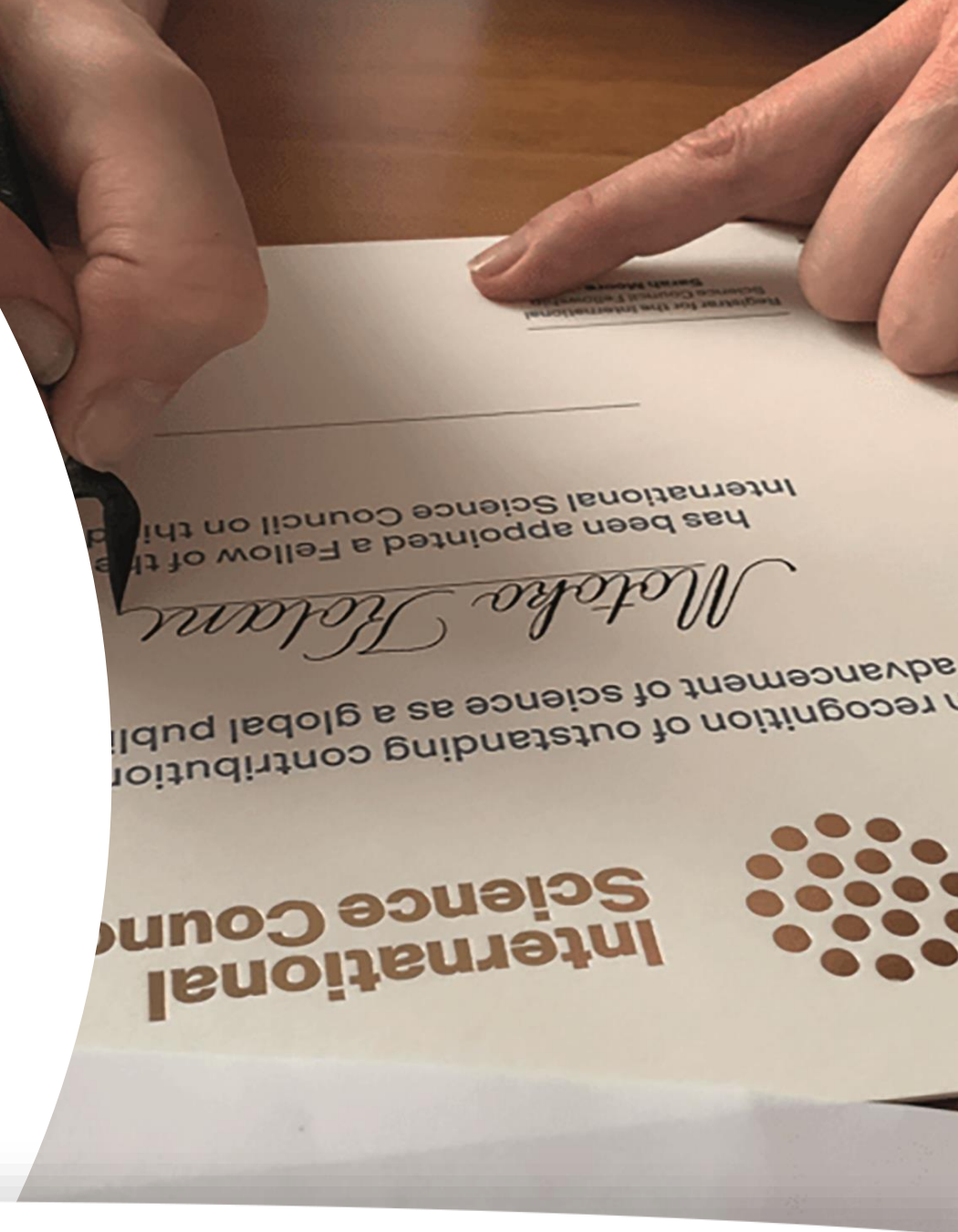
- ISC is an umbrella organisation
- It is poorly understood with key external stakeholders
 - the value proposition needs to be clearly stated
- It is poorly known to the science community beyond the members' secretariat
- It is not known to the broader scientific community

***Addressing this profile gap is challenging but essential
if the voice of science to be both legitimate and well heard.***

ISC FELLOWSHIP

Recognizes individuals for their outstanding contributions to the promotion of science as a global public good. The Fellows include eminent scientists, engineers and thought-leaders from the science-policy sphere who have made remarkable contributions to furthering understanding of and engagement with science.

- They have been asked to assist the ISC in progressing its mission as part of agreeing to be a fellow.
- Fellowship Council of 13
- Responsible for fellowship selection
- Chair of Fellowship Council attends board meetings
- Fellowship Council acts as one strategic advisory input
- 123 appointed by end of 2022, 700 by 2026
- 3 honorary fellows



Continue to enhance capacity within the scientific community

- 1: Map the competences of the ISC
- 2: Invest in an ambitious capacity building programme
- 3: Partner with other organisations to deliver scientific advice
- 4: Engage in existing intergovernmental scientific mechanisms.

Strengthen relationships in the intergovernmental system

- 7: Advocate for the establishment of a scientific advisory mechanism to the UN General Assembly.
- 8: Seek Permanent Observer status to the UN General Assembly.
- 9: Set up a liaison office in New York.
- 10: Establish a group of ISC Ambassadors

Report adopted at 2021 GA ISC and the Multilateral System



Connect the national and global levels

- 5: Strengthening connections of scientists with global processes.
- 6: Encourage the creation of a coalition of countries.

Champion science as a global public good

- 11: Strengthen the public understanding of science
- 12: Develop regular engagement with scientific and mainstream media
- 13: Support the recognition and raise the profile of transdisciplinary science

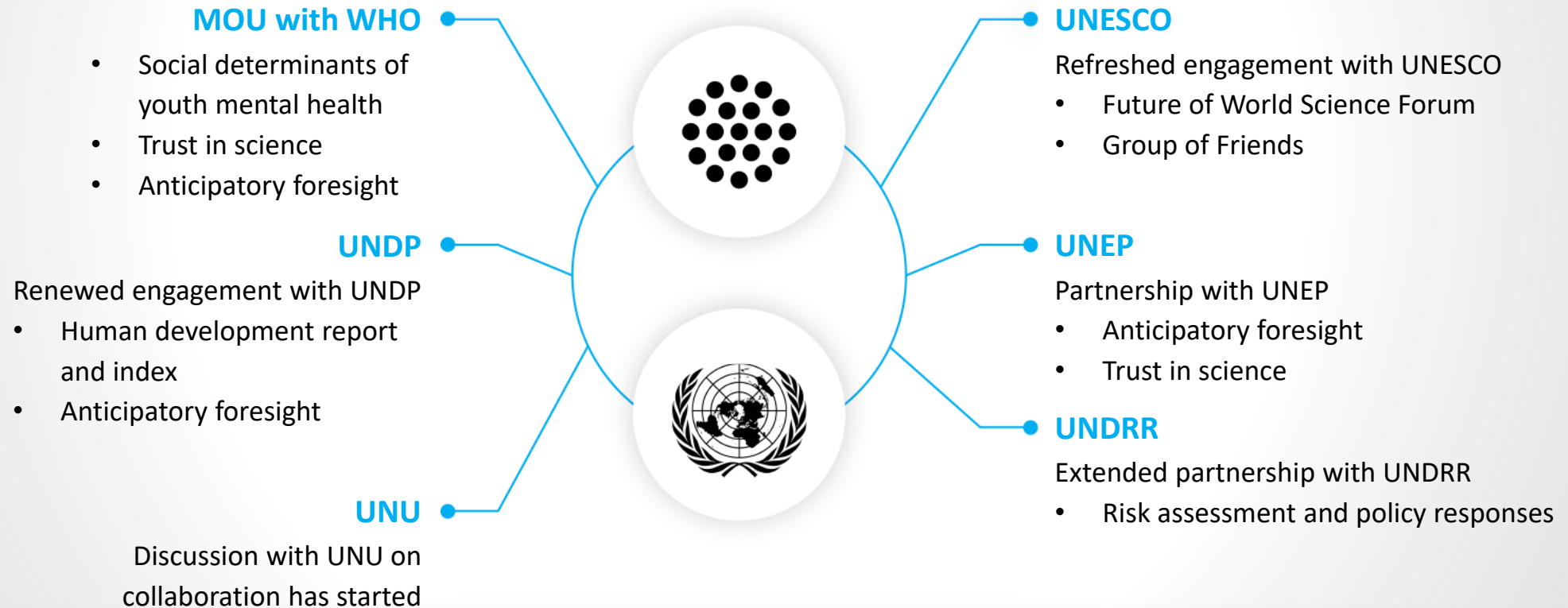
ISC IN NEW YORK

- Established a presence in New York to liaise with UN system
- Extending the well beyond its traditional and somewhat minor role as co-chair of the Major Group on Science and Technology
- Liaison with president of General Assembly
 - Inputs unto General Assembly special sessions
- Establishment of the Group of Friends on Science for Action
 - ISC to be the secretariat jointly with UNESCO
 - Strengthen use of evidence in UN policy
 - More effective links to science community
- MOU with UN DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)
 - SDG summit and Summit of the Futures
 - Foresight
- Discussions with Office of Secretary General (OSG) on a Science Advisory Mechanism
- Partnership with OSG on trust in science



ISC AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER UN AGENCIES

Continued relationship with WMO, UNEP, UNESCO, etc. over affiliated bodies



OTHER COMPONENTS OF MULTILATERAL SYSTEM THAT WILL REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT EFFORT IN RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- UN agencies and funds
UNICEF, FAO, UNITAR, ITU, WIPO, UNWomen, WMO, UNCTAD etc.
UN Foundation
- World Bank and regional Development Banks
- OECD
- World Economic Forum
- G7/S7
- G20/S20
- Regional policy groupings e.g. African Union, European Union
- Other NGOs and Foundations with overlapping or complementary interests
- Governmental ODA programs
- Global assessments (eg IPCC)

Second edition
May 2023

UNPRECEDENTED AND UNFINISHED: COVID-19 and Implications for National and Global Policy



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THE ISC GLOBAL COMMISSION ON SCIENCE MISSIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

In 2019, ISC convened the Global Forum of Funders to review science and lack of progress on sustainability.

This led to a 2-year consultation and the report – *Unleashing Science* - suggesting the general need for new approaches

As a result, the ISC established a Commission was formed in 2022

Chairs: Irina Bukova, Helen Clark

Chairs Technical Advisory Group: Albert Van Jarsveld, Pamela Matson

New form of research funding needed:

- Global south-north partnerships
- Systems focused
- Transdisciplinary
- Actionable knowledge focused
- Evaluated for broader lessons

Initiative will be announced at High Level Political Forum, July 2023

Hope to launch pilots after global call in 2023, funding being sought



RELATIONSHIP WITH HOST COUNTRY

- The current legal status is not optimal
- The merger was associated with a significant loss of financial support from the French Government
- The synergies between the host country and ISC need to be redeveloped and recognized
- The profile of the ISC in France policy circles is low
- We have been building relationships with the key players
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 - Ministry of Higher Education and Science
 - Académie des Sciences
 - Agence Nationale de la Recherche
 - Sciences Po, etc ,
- We are establishing a host country liaison group
- Paris as a 'city of science': UNESCO, ISC, OECD



TRUST IN SCIENCE

Through CFRS, the ISC and predecessors have had a leadership role in ensuring the integrity and trustworthiness of science.

But the perceptions of science as a trustworthy input into policy and public decision making have been compromised by multiple factors, both internal to the science system and by external factors.

Covid, politics, disinformation, weaponized narratives, fake news, generative AI and the 'post-truth' gestalt have all contributed alongside a generalized decline in elites.

Science must learn better how to live alongside other knowledge systems while not compromising its principles.

The ISC has been requested to address this issue alongside the Office of the Secretary General, and the leaders of UNDDR, UNEP and WHO.

In next few weeks we will be establishing an expert group to oversee this critical project. Members can soon expect requests for nominations and assistance.

The ISC will explore other more direct initiatives, e.g. the role that faith leaders can play.

SCIENCE FUTURES

Science systems continue to evolve.

The ISC needs to serve its members by reflection on emergent issues and opportunities:

- Where, by whom, and how science is conducted
- Private and public sector science
- The emergence of transdisciplinarity
- The evolution of research assessment
- The impact of generative AI etc. on the science processes
- The long-term future of science publishing

While the operational aspects of these issues are addressed through CSP and CFRS, the longer-term issues will be the focus on the ISC's Centre for Science Futures to be launched tomorrow.

The Centre's first product is a discussion paper on

- what is science
- how it related to other knowledge systems (e.g. indigenous knowledge)
- how to evaluate transdisciplinary research



ISC AND SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

ICSU had a major role in track 2 diplomacy in the first cold war.

We now live in a more complex multipolar world with a hot conflict between two of those poles.

- ISC has been encouraged to prepare to again have a role in bridging matters once the acute conflict settles.
- We have been active in the issues of displaced scientists and reflecting on rebuilding shattered science systems

But there are many other science diplomacy issues ahead including particularly those *generated by technological developments*.

- Synthetic biology, generative AI and other rapidly emerging technologies are becoming points of diplomatic interest.
- Early discussion has started on whether some form of international assessment process for technologies is needed.



ISC MEMBERSHIP

Our legitimacy as a global voice depends on being comprehensive in our membership.

We have geographical and disciplinary gaps.

There are a large number of potential disciplinary bodies that are not yet members. Many do not fit the 'union' model.

But we also have a very complicated constitution regarding membership and the rights and obligations (voting, dues, nominations etc.) associated with it. The merger deferred resolution on a number of related issues

The scope of membership merits reflection.

The range of members does not easily fit into two categories plus affiliates.



MEMBERSHIP-LED INITIATIVES 2023

We have resolved the legal issues over seconding staff to the secretariat.

We will launch the *Heide Heckmann Fellowship*. This will provide for ISC members to second a staff member to the ISC secretariat in Paris for 3-6 months. The fellowship will provide an airfare and an accommodation/ living allow allowance of € 1500 per month. We would hope to support 1-2 fellows each year. The member is expected to continue the individual's salary during their secondment. Application details will follow.

We are proposing to the GB next week that the appropriation made in the budget to support members be used as follows:

For grants of 15-20 K for a group of 2 or more members who do not normally work together to develop a project linked to strategic priorities. The funds would be awarded in 2023 rather than drip-feeding the funds so that progress can be reported to the GA in Oman in Jan 2025.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

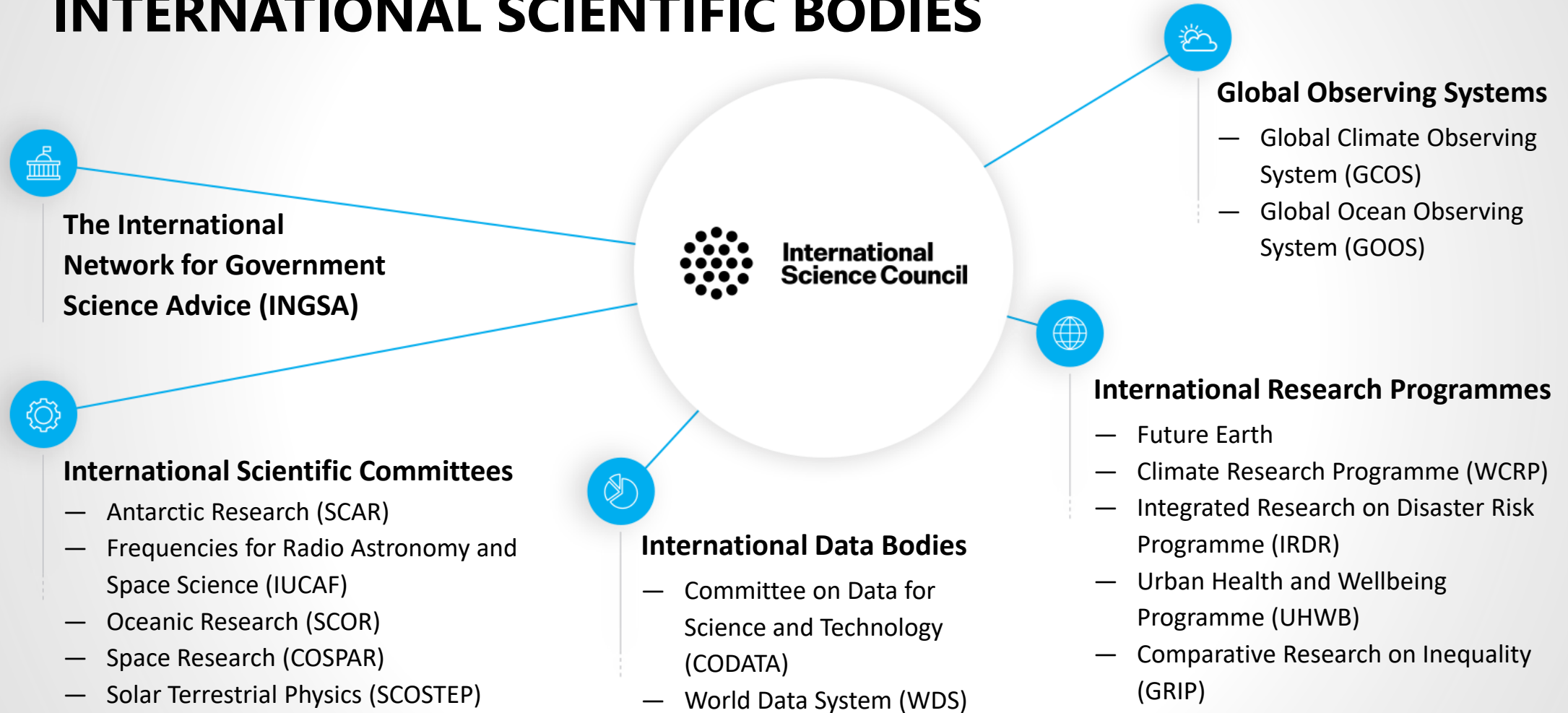
We have established new regional focal points in

- Latin America (Columbia)
- Asia Pacific (Australia) – subsidiary focal points are in discussion
- In Africa we have funded Future Africa to develop a strategy for ISC in Africa.

We are working to assist the establishment of the Academy of the Pacific to support the small island states of that region.

We have conducted a regional knowledge dialogue in Africa (Cape Town Dec 2022), planning an Asian dialogue in Malaysia (Oct 2023) and in LATAM (April 2024).

ISC SPONSORED AND AFFILIATED INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC BODIES



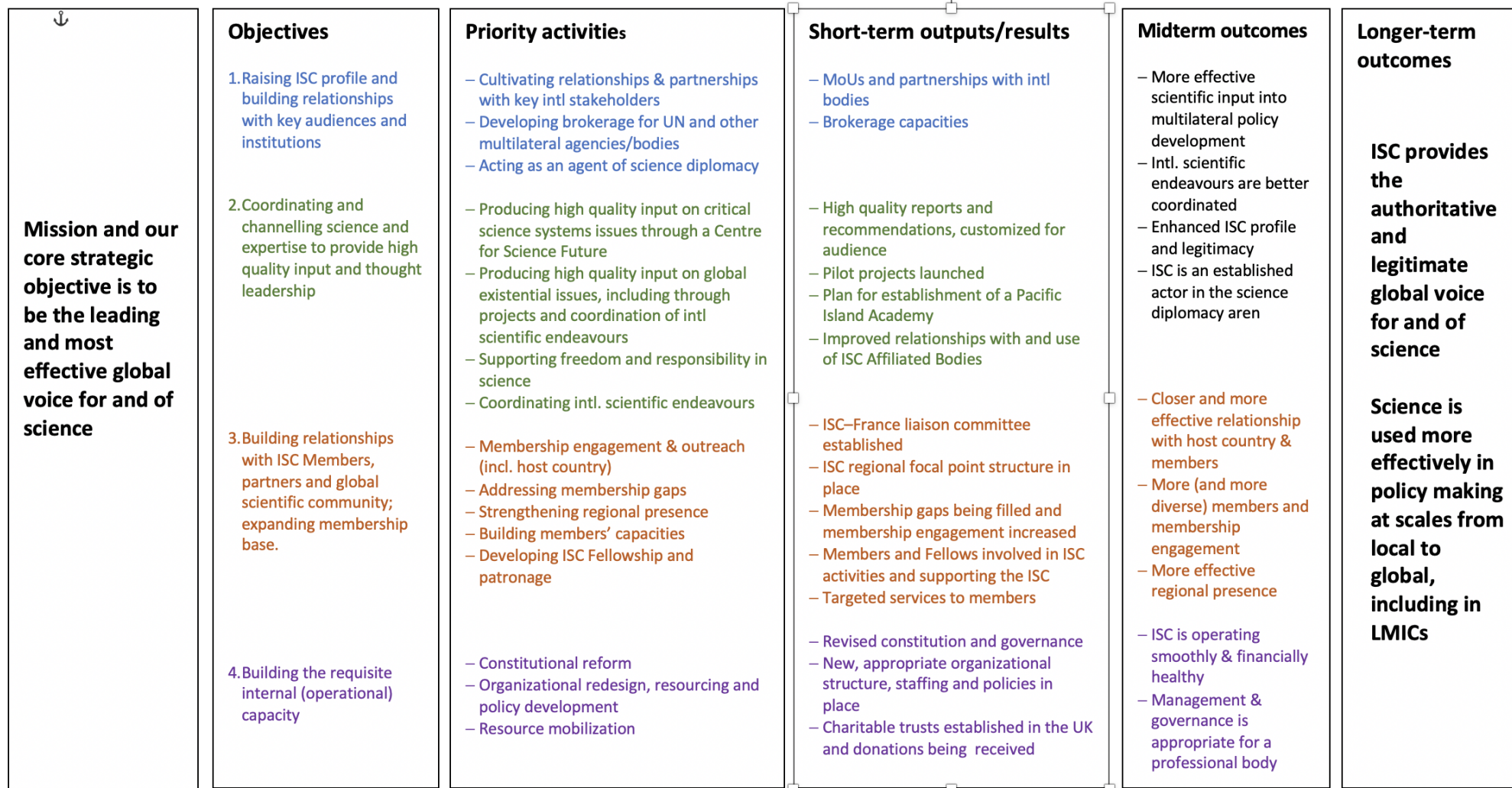
FUNDRAISING AND THE FOUNDATION

- The ISC needs a diverse income stream
- It cannot expect more from its members
- It also does not want to fall into the trap of undertaking activities simply because of income streams
- It was agreed last year to establish a Foundation/Trust to receive donations
- After legal advice this was established in the UK – it is awaiting final charities Commission approval
- Our goal must be at least Euro 2 million pa. in non-targeted activities
- The trustees have indicated that the ISC must get its profile and strategy clear before fundraising is likely to be effective at the scale desired.

A COMPLEX ECOSYSTEM – A BIG CHALLENGE

- The international policy space is complex
- All science is ‘political’ in some respect and more so when looked at through an international framing.
- The international science ecosystem is duplicative, competitive and yet leaves gaps.
- There is competition for access, influence, and funds.
- There is an extraordinary number of scientific organisations, funders etc. acting in an uncoordinated manner.
- Multiple voices are often weaker than a singular strong voice when dealing with the policy community.
- The question is whether more effective integration/coordination is possible.
- In some areas ISC already has a role (e.g. through its affiliate bodies, linkage to GRC, GFF etc).
- *Can the ISC play a greater role as a facilitator/broker/coordinator?*

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