



## Consultation on the ISC Strategic Plan 2025–2028

*Communication from the President*

9 APRIL 2024

*The next General Assembly in Oman will be asked to approve a high-level strategic plan for the period 2025–2028. This communication outlines and launches the process ahead of developing the strategic plan. We are asking for initial input from Members to inform the first draft that will be prepared by the Governing Board in May–June 2024. This is the first phase in an iterative process of consultation with the Members in the second half of 2024.*

In 2022 the ISC Governing Board concluded that, given the rapidly changing environment, having a detailed action plan was unhelpful. The Board agreed that the ISC needed a high-level strategic plan with clear and updatable priorities to guide decisions and actions. In a first move toward this, in late 2022/early 2023, the Governing Board developed a ‘Theory of Change’ which was presented at the [Mid-term meeting of ISC Members](#) in May 2023<sup>1</sup>. The Governing Board is now beginning the process of developing a strategic plan for 2025–2028. The plan should be high-level and responsive to the rapidly changing contexts in which science operates and makes its contributions to society.

The recently revised [ISC Statutes and Rules of Procedure](#) reaffirm that the vision of the Council is of *science as a global public good* and that that our mission is to be *the global voice for science*. The revised Statutes break down that mission into seven key Domains (with two new ones and some modifications to the others as compared to the founding statutes) that reflect the changed context in which science operates (e.g. declining trust in scientific expertise and institutions, changed information environment, threats to scientific freedom), changes within science (e.g. changing publication practices, the emergence of AI) and ongoing threats to a sustainable planet (climate change, conflict, social cohesion, mental health).

The current Statute 6 states:

*“The Council seeks to provide a powerful and credible global voice that is respected in both the public and policy domains and within the scientific community. It will use that voice to:*

- i. *speak for the value of all science and the need for evidence-informed understanding and decision-making at all levels, from local to global;*

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://council.science/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ISC-Theory-of-Change-Feb2023.pdf>

- ii. *stimulate and support international, interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly among members of the Council, on scientific research and scholarship on issues of global concern;*
- iii. *articulate scientific knowledge on issues of global concern in the public and policy domains;*
- iv. *promote and assist science diplomacy, particularly where it advances the common good and addresses global challenges;*
- v. *promotes the continued and equal advancement of scientific rigour, creativity and relevance in all parts of the world;*
- vi. *assist the scientific community and relevant stakeholders in their respective roles in the conduct of science and in the face of the evolution of science systems;*
- vii. *defend and promote the free and responsible practice of science.”*

These Domains illuminate the unique and critical role of the ISC in the global science ecosystem and provide a clear value proposition for the membership of all major, active scientific organizations. In context of strategic planning, Statute 6 can be interpreted as the main Domains of the mission that the ISC should strive to accomplish. The Governing Board agrees that they should be the foundation on which the strategic plan for the next period is built.

Given our limited resources, it is logical that the ISC should focus primarily on those activities which can either *only* be done by an international body or are more effectively achieved through the *collective action* of the scientific community. This recognizes that the Council’s 250+ Members are active in their own contexts on many of the same issues, and that the Council must support those efforts where it can.

As the ISC has a relatively small secretariat and limited budget, the organization must use its limited resources wisely to achieve its complex and critical mission on behalf of its Members. For this we need the Members’ input.

The ISC Governing Board is herewith launching a cycle of consultation with Members to inform the development of the strategic plan that will be presented to the General Assembly in 2025 in Oman. At this stage what the Board is seeking is **open-ended input from the Members regarding the ISC’s priorities, what we should do more or less of, and what is missing from the ISC’s current portfolio of activities**. We would appreciate Members’ initial high-level input against the seven Domains of the mission to inform the development of a first draft of the strategic plan by the Governing Board at its May meeting and in the weeks following. This draft will form the basis of subsequent iterative consultation with Members, ISC advisory committees, the ISC Fellowship Council and other stakeholders.

To support Members’ contributions to the elaboration of the strategic plan, also noting that many of our activities serve more than one domain, the CEO and I have produced a [situational analysis](#) to assist in identifying our strategic challenges and opportunities and a catalogue of current actions, both illustrating how the actions undertaken by the ISC can be organized according to the seven domains. (Please note that the lists of actions provide Members with an overview of the broad scope of work and partnerships that the Council undertakes or is engaged in based on examples of the work accomplished during the past 18 months but do not replace the comprehensive three-year report that will be produced for the General Assembly in 2025).

Using Statute 6 as a framework, and considering the catalogue of actions listed under these domains, Members are invited to answer the following three questions:

- A. What should the ISC’s strategic priorities be over the next few years, given the seven Domains of the ISC’s mission?
- B. Which existing areas of work should be developed further, and why?
- C. Which existing areas of work should be reduced, and why?
- D. In which areas should new initiatives be considered?

We look forward to receiving Members’ input by 1 June 2024, through the form found at <https://council.science/members/consultation-isc-strategic-plan-2025-2028/>.

With thanks in advance for your valued inputs to the **ISC Strategic Plan 2025–2028**.



Sir Peter Gluckman  
President, International Science Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Gluckman".