

THIRD ISC GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Muscat, Oman 2025

Provisional 2025–2026 budget

Document 14a

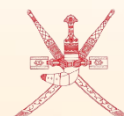
The provisional budget presented in this document (prepared November 2024) may be updated by mid-January 2025.

For approval



**International
Science Council**

وزارة التعليم العالي
و البحث العلمي والابتكار
Ministry of Higher Education
Research & Innovation



Provisional 2025–2026 budget

Introduction

The ISC Governing Board recommends this provisional high-level budget for the period 2025–2026 for the approval of the membership, with the following caveats.

1. Timeline for approval

The Governing Board would normally propose a multi-annual budget for the approval of the General Assembly before the beginning of the first financial year of the planning period. However, as the next General Assembly is exceptionally being held in January 2025, rather than in the last quarter of 2024, the Members have been asked to allow the Secretariat to operate to a provisional budget in January, pending the formal approval of the provisional budget at the General Assembly on 30 January 2025.

2. Budget period

Previous multiannual budgets have covered a period of three years, in line with the former three-year cycle of the General Assembly. As the General Assembly will henceforth meet at four-year intervals, it is proposed by the Governing Board that multiannual budgets cover a period of two years. The nature of ISC's income, with approximately 50% coming from relatively short-term external grants, furthermore makes it difficult to present a budget for a longer period with a high degree of confidence. The Committee for Finance, Audit and Risk and the Governing Board monitor the budget and develop appropriate annual budgets within the framework of the multiannual budget.

The 2026 budget is furthermore provided with a relatively high degree of uncertainty, due to the likely revision of the membership dues structure over the course of 2025.

3. Expected near-term developments

Between the end of November and the General Assembly at the end of January, it is expected that new income (grants and other forms of contribution) will be secured. An updated budget for the approval of the membership will be shared in mid-January.

For comparison, the projected end-of-year data for 2024 are also provided.

General outlook and risks

As discussed in the Report of the Vice-President for Finance, Compliance and Risk to the General Assembly, the ISC has passed through a period of expansion, emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic over the course of 2022, beginning to convene in-person meetings again, including the Midterm Membership meeting in May 2023, and building its capacity in line with invigorated ambitions and arising opportunities. Over the period 2022–2024 the ISC used its accumulated reserves to the planned level, bringing them down to the target region (250-300k EUR), in line with the recommendations of the auditors to reflect the ISC's non-profit status. With the reserves now in the target region, multiannual budgets must aim to be neutral, i.e. producing neither a major deficit nor a major surplus and maintaining a safe level of reserves.

The years 2025–2026 will therefore be a period of consolidation after the expansion of 2022–2024. As can be seen in the report of the Vice-President FCR to the General Assembly, the cost of operating is

increasing faster than the increase in core income.

Continuing risks for the ISC include our Members' own increasing difficulty to pay dues and the short-term nature of external grant income.

Fundraising efforts continue, and the establishment of the ISC Foundation will be key to the ability of the ISC to attract philanthropic and charitable funding. The ISC leadership is working to secure additional sources of core (no-strings-attached) income to maintain delivery and support growth.

The lack of a permanent hosting agreement with France is a risk that the leadership aims to resolve in 2025, with the aid of the ISC–France Liaison Committee that is to be established.

Income

Core income

Income from membership dues in 2025 is based on the existing dues structure. It is a conservative estimate, based on an informed estimation of likely non-payment of dues. A high degree of uncertainty affects the dues from the ISC Member the Russian Academy of Sciences as of 2025 because of the barriers to international transfers of funds.

An adjustment of 2% per annum is applied to partially compensate for inflation. The membership will be asked to explicitly agree to an annual adjustment for inflation.

Income from dues in 2026 is based on projected 2025 income plus 2% adjustment for inflation, in the knowledge that the revision of dues over the course of 2025 will produce some change in 2026. While it is not intended that the revision of the dues structure will produce a significant increase in income from dues, it could be expected to raise it slightly.

External income

External income is from grants which are secured or for which we have reasonable assurance that an agreement will be signed in due course. All grants from now on should cover the real costs of executing the activity.

1. CAST Early- and Mid-career Researchers Grant (2024-2025)
2. Frontiers Foundation Grant (2022-2026)
3. IDRC Science Systems Grant (2024-2027)
4. International Institute of Education grant (2025-2027)
5. IRDR ICoE Taipei funds (2010-2026)
6. New Zealand CFRS support (2020-2025)
7. NSF Sustainability Grant (2024-2028)
8. University of Bergen / Stein Rokkan Prize (ongoing)

Expenditure

Governance

The costs of the Governing Board meeting in 2025 are under General Assembly 2025 expenditure (which are paid for from a set-aside fund of 200k EUR).

There will be no in-person meetings of advisory committees, with the exception of a meeting of the CFRS in 2025, for which hosting and sponsorship will be sought.

Regional Presence

150k EUR for Regional Focal Points in 2025 comprises 75k EUR for Latin America and the Caribbean (agreement runs to end 2025) and 75k EUR Asia and the Pacific, and 75k EUR in 2026 for Asia and the Pacific only (agreement runs to 2027). Efforts are being made to ensure that the regional presence in Latin America and the Caribbean continues and that Africa and the MENA regional have an ISC presence.

ISC Representation

A travel fund for ISC staff and occasionally other representatives of the organization, for meetings and engagements which are not covered by Science and Policy project budgets.

Membership Engagement

Membership engagement includes the support for Early- and mid-career researchers from the CAST grant, and a modest amount for a membership meeting in 2026, conditional on hosting and sponsorship. 50k EUR as a core contribution is proposed for the 2026 meeting, and thereafter an annual provision of 25k EUR is suggested, which would create a fund of 100k EUR for each four-yearly mid-term meeting.

Science and Policy

Science and Policy covers our activities in the following areas:

1. Freedom and Responsibility in Science
2. ISC Affiliated Bodies – covered by the NSF sustainability activities grant
3. Science systems, science futures (incl. Centre for Science Futures)
4. Social and environmental sustainability – covered by the NSF sustainability activities grant.
5. Hazard and risk – covered by the IRDR-ICoE grant
6. The Science-Policy interface – covered partially by the NSF sustainability grant

ISC Fellowship, Prizes and Sponsorship

Costs of supporting prizes, awards and the ISC Fellowship.

Communications

Costs of digital communications, subscriptions, etc. and the production of publications.

Operations

The salary envelope reflects the following:

1. The staff complement is stable at 24 people, unless fundraising permits recruitment.
2. Adjustment of salaries in 2025 and 2026 by 1.5% each year to partially compensate for inflation the previous year.

Result and reserves

This budget produces a small surplus in 2025 and a somewhat larger deficit in 2026, with the reserves ending at about 250k EUR.

The statutory reserves of the ISC (1.5m EUR) remained untouched.

2025-2026 budget, updated 29 Nov 2024

	2024 (provisional)	2025 budget	2026 budget
INCOME	EUR	EUR	EUR
STRUCTURAL INCOME	3,133,564	3,146,287	3,207,013
EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTIONS	2,950,948	1,955,455	877,957
TOTAL INCOME	6,084,512	5,101,742	4,084,970
EXPENDITURE	EUR	EUR	EUR
GOVERNANCE	217,794	114,072	120,000
REGIONAL STRUCTURES	227,172	150,000	75,000
ISC REPRESENTATION	58,000	50,000	58,000
MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT	137,808	146,667	50,000
SCIENCE AND POLICY	885,918	1,213,188	428,609
FELLOWSHIP, PRIZES AND SPONSORSHIP	31,554	49,488	16,500
COMMUNICATIONS	135,278	97,000	95,000
OPERATIONS	3,527,820	3,262,951	3,286,622
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	5,221,344	5,083,366	4,129,731
Dedicated funds	1,360,567	-	-
OVERALL RESULT (INCOME – EXPENDITURE)	- 497,399	18,376	- 44,761
Reserves at end of year	274,990	293,366	248,605