

**Stichting  
International Center for  
Future Generations**

**Policy Plan 2021-2025**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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In March 2021, Steven Schuurman and Laurens de Groot launched the International Center for Future Generations (hereafter referred to as ICFG). In March 2022, ICFG became operational, recruited the first team members and opened two offices in Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

ICFG is a think-and-do tank based in Europe and focussed on the European Union. Our mission is to strengthen society's resilience in the face of exponential technological developments and existential threats.

## **We live in the Exponential Age**

Technological development moves exponentially: digital, biomedical and energy innovations are evolving at an ever increasing speed. It is unclear how these breakthroughs will alter the lives of people, influence cultures and impact communities. On the one hand, there are major advances working towards universal access to clean energy, global connectivity and improved standards of living. On the flip side, deployment of new technologies in the absence of effective, value-based governance systems comes at a high price: the climate crisis, unaccountable monopolies and advanced (biological) weapons pose a major threat to humanity.

## **We aim for effective governance**

Governments need to get up to speed with technological change. This is a prerequisite for effective, value-based governance systems. We focus on the science-policy interface providing democratic governments with the data and support they need to tackle challenges related to current and future technological progress. Political leaders can benefit greatly from scientific expertise to navigate the complex landscape of modern-day technology. It can help them decide which innovations to embrace and which ones to avoid.

## **We are a network organization**

ICFG focuses on linking stakeholders and building partnerships: how else can we solve the major challenges of our time? We aim to be a neutral networking organization facilitating linkages and transmitting information required to tackle complicated problems. Linkages must be established between stakeholders from different sectors to come to more inclusive and hence, more effective solutions. Information must be easily accessible and comprehensible to serve broader audiences. Data and research can be translated into recommendations and eventually, policy outcomes.

## **Our commitment**

The aim of ICFG is to improve the ability of democratic governments to deal with the challenges of the Exponential Age by enhancing their resilience and flexibility. We take a top-down approach connecting them with (scientific) networks of expertise and providing them with reliable information. Simultaneously, we take a bottom-up approach connecting them with social movements. This improves the public debate and endorses laws and solutions that are based on facts and fit with this exponential era. ICFG will back studies that look at the long-term effects of these policies on people and the planet. It will also support actions, laws and regulations that protect people's rights and freedoms in rapidly changing societies. ICFG aims to realize its aim by being a devoted, positive, open and reliable partner. Our commitment is to ensure that every (human) being alive today as well as future generations can experience and enjoy life on Earth.

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## 2. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

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### 2.1 Goal and mission

The International Center for Future Generations is a European think-and-do-tank for improving societal resilience in relation to exponential technologies and existential risks. The aim of ICFG is to improve the ability of democratic governments to deal with the challenges of the Exponential Age enhancing their resilience and flexibility. We take a top-down approach connecting them with (scientific) networks of expertise and providing them with reliable information. Simultaneously, we take a bottom-up approach connecting them with movements. This improves the public debate and endorses laws and solutions that are based on facts and fit with this exponential era.

### 2.2 Strategic principles

We believe that a collaborative approach is most effective to tackle problems and implement solutions.

The following four strategic principles underpin the work of ICFG:

- Policies are crucial
- Building bridges
- Top-down and bottom-up approach
- Long-term thinking

#### **Policies are crucial**

Policies and legislation are crucial drivers for transformation of societal systems. Well-designed legislation can have a profoundly positive and strong effect on behavior of all societal stakeholders. Societal change becomes solidified when turned into policies and any policy needs societal support. Therefore, changemakers always need to work closely together with law- and policymakers to achieve large-scale transformations. Our activities focus on tangible change such as the adoption of a new policy or modification of existing laws.

#### **Building bridges**

ICFG helps to build bridges between corporate and government leaders, policymakers, citizens and (academic) experts. The aim is to bring these actors together to reach scientific consensus on exponential technologies and existential risks. We believe large-scale multidisciplinary issues can only be tackled when working in partnerships, hence we focus on building and fostering long-term relationships.

#### **Top-down and bottom-up approach**

Our theory of change focuses in particular on the linkages between scientists and policy makers as well as social movements and policy makers. A strong Science-Policy interface ensures policies are science-driven and based on the latest insights from experts. A strong relationship between social movements and policymakers ensures that policies become more value-based. Our combined top-down and bottom-up approach is designed to trigger a flywheel effect and accelerate change.

#### **Long-term thinking**

ICFG accepts the long-term nature of its mission, as there are no quick wins in the area of existential risk. Modern societies have allowed short-term gains to overshadow long-term consequences. A paradigm shift is required to revive long-term thinking across nations. We believe that political consensus for science- and value-based policies can arise once people understand how their current

actions in the present influence the lives of future generations. Vice versa, as policymakers prioritize the importance of long-term decision-making, more people will be familiarized with this line of thought.

## 2.3 Operating Principles

Our ultimate goal is to safeguard future generations and democratic processes. In order to reach this goal:

- We embrace the development and deployment of (technological and policy) solutions.
- We remain cause-neutral and solution agnostic.
- We base our actions on scientific evidence and reasoning. Meanwhile, we recognize the world is a complex and unpredictable place. Hence, we remain cautious, open to informed critique as well as appreciative of unusual ideas and alternative points of view.
- We operate as a catalyst for positive change. Governments and markets shift once it makes political or financial sense to do so. Philanthropy can be used to incentivize these larger players to act and have unparalleled leverage by 'leading the charge.'
- We remain flexible and change our direction and priorities when presented with new insights. Future advancements (in academia) will tell us where our blind spots are and we might come across existential risks of which we are currently unaware.
- We want to make others thrive and take on the role of facilitator. Our reward is to see real-world impact.
- We treat people kindly and respectfully regardless of their worldview, values, background and identity. In this way, we seek to encourage cooperation between people with widely varying circumstances and ways of thinking.

## Real-world change

Most importantly, our activities must always aim for a real-world, observable change in policies in the form of adoption of a new policy or modification of existing ones. Other acceptable outcomes to be considered acceptable could be significant changes in the practices of institutions that are important in setting or implementing cause-related policies such as:

- the formation of a new public or private entity to address a specific development policy or finance issue;
- alterations to related policies;
- a shift in the official position on a major international treaty or agreement;
- new grantmaking related to development by major foundations.

One of the most holistic ways to see our impact is to contribute to an issue's understanding and, if necessary, to engage in the decision-making process as one of numerous external actors at a critical moment.

## 2.4 Focus & programs

ICFG operates as a catalyst for change focusing on the development and deployment of solutions within focus areas: Climate Crisis, Technology Governance and Biosecurity. We aim to work with stakeholders within the EU and national governments providing them with expertise, insights and concrete policy suggestions.

To do this, we:

- engage closely with experts and organizations in our cause areas;
- facilitate access for politicians to the expertise of leading academics and entrepreneurs;
- develop concrete, actionable policy recommendations together with a network of expertise;
- build public and political support for science-driven and value-based policy solutions, which may have been underserved;

Our theory of change asserts that social movements, young voices, leading academic and technical experts can and should have a more notable and expedited impact on EU policy and practices than is currently the case on issues, such as the Climate Crisis, Advanced Technology and Biosecurity.

Our priorities and actions are based on scientific evidence and reasoning. The themes listed below are the current focus areas of ICFG: these were identified as the most pressing and underserved challenges to be addressed.

### **Climate crisis**

We need to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C. Simultaneously, the world needs to cope with a growing population and raise the living standards of many. Hence, scientists and policymakers also need to work on scenarios in case humanity does not manage to halt global warming. ICFG aims to identify and accelerate the implementation of climate crisis solutions by building public pressure, changing the political perception of lesser-understood, yet potentially valuable solutions and the risks of climate overshoot.

### **Technology and democracy**

The (autonomous) capabilities of artificial intelligence systems and other technologies are expanding. Tech companies are becoming increasingly powerful as their business models benefit from the accumulation of data, technology, skills and capital. In the digital realm, a redistribution of power has taken place impacting public health and safety. The effect of these business models on societies remains unclear. ICFG aims to ensure the development and application of new systems and technologies are aligned with human rights and democratic values.

### **Biosecurity**

Systemic pandemic risk mitigation and preparedness need to be enshrined in modern societies. COVID-19 has clearly shown our vulnerability to biological threats. Besides naturally occurring pandemics, there is also the threat of man-made disasters posed by deployment of biological weapons or laboratory leaks. Risk levels continue to increase due to the dual-purpose nature of technology. Innovations in synthetic biology and biotechnology can be used to cure and contaminate. ICFG seeks to improve the effectiveness of governance systems to mitigate biological threats.

### **Key Programs**

The two key programs of ICFG are: 'Building Social Movements and Advocacy' and 'Strengthening the Science-Policy Interface'. ICFG supports cross-cutting activities and new explorations to address issues of fundamental concern within our three focus areas, which are currently: Climate crisis, Biosecurity and Technology and Democracy.

The goal of ICFG is to be able to rapidly adapt to changing circumstances and gain expertise around emerging topics. In this way, ICFG can provide credible evidence and policy recommendations in our focus areas.

ICFG seeks to distinguish itself from other organizations through its combined top-down and bottom-up approach, flexible way of working and ability to develop open, organic relationships with different stakeholders including leading decision makers and social movements.

## **Funding projects**

When a potential project has been selected, the board of ICFG will agree on the manner of support and the further implementation of this. A project will only be supported if a majority of the foundation's directors agrees. For each selected project, ICFG will make concrete agreements with the relevant party about the manner in which the resources will be spent, the objectives to be achieved, timelines, etc. These agreements will be recorded in writing and monitored by the staff of ICFG.

The parties involved will periodically (as agreed in advance, or at the first request of the board if there is reason to do so) give account to ICFG about the way in which the funds are spent and the (partial) objectives achieved. The staff of the Foundation will have periodic contact with the selected goals about progress, interim adjustments where necessary, etc.

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## 3. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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### 3.1 Board of Directors

The board of The International Center for Future Generations Foundation consists of an odd number of members, at least three, with equal voting rights. The board itself arranges the appointment and dismissal of its members.

Currently, the foundation is governed by a board consisting of founder Steven Schuurman (chair) and Cressida Pollock (secretary), and Ian Goldin (Treasurer).

In due course, ICFG will also assemble a Board of Advisors.

### 3.2 Director

The foundation will have a managing director. The duties and powers of the director are laid down in the statutes and the internal regulations. The director will be appointed by the board and is supported in the performance of his function by the management team. The director of the foundation will be appointed for an indefinite period.

### 3.2 Roles and responsibilities

The directors are all jointly authorized to represent (with one other director). The operational management of the Foundation is in the hands of the managing director, who is therefore authorized to independently perform legal acts up to a maximum of € 25,000.

Board members will be primarily involved in the initial selection of the goals and projects of ICFG. After selection, a managing director will focus on making concrete agreements and objectives with these goals or projects. A managing director will focus on the further follow-up of the projects concerned and the operational management of the Foundation.

### 3.3 Geographic focus

The current home base of the ICFG Foundation is The Netherlands, but the scope of our activities is international. Initially, ICFG will focus primarily on Europe and the EU with offices in Rotterdam and Amsterdam.



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## 4. FINANCIALS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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### 4.1 Fundraising

As the ICFG builds on its achievements, the period from 2022 to 2027 will see increased efforts to secure additional funding arrangements in order to ensure financial sustainability and prosperity in the long term. ICFG will continue to perform activities in pursuit of achieving its organizational mandate by partnering with key stakeholders who not only contribute to the organization's prosperity but also act to enhance ICFG's capacity. ICFG will use its existing resources as leverage to strengthen its partnerships wherever possible.

We intend to raise a mix of individual, foundation and endowment funds to ensure a steady and sustainable income stream to ensure that programming continues at a high level.

To maintain its independence as a think-and-do tank, ICFG will not accept corporate donations or apply for government grants.

The basic funding will consist of an amount of € 2,000,000 per year for the first five years. This amount is provided by the Dreamery Foundation. The amount will be used to financially support concrete projects and ICFG goals. A reserve will also be formed to cover the ongoing operational costs.

### 4.2 ANBI

The requirements of the ANBI (charitable status) have been taken into account when drawing up this policy plan. ANBI status has the advantage that organizations and individuals can deduct their donations from tax and the foundation is exempt from paying tax on gifts and donations.

### 4.3 Spending policy

The funding will be used to support initiatives that meet the criteria defined by the Foundation as well as for the operational cost of the foundation.

### 4.4 Remuneration policy

Members of the board, excluding the founder, will receive an expense allowance or a not excessive vacation fee for preparing and attending board meetings. Members of the Advisory Board also receive an expense allowance. Directors and staff receive financial compensation that is in line with the standards in the sector.

### 4.5 Non-profit motive

The institution is not for profit, as is apparent from the articles of association and from the actual activities. The foundation does not strive for profit for the sake of profit itself. This is apparent from the fact that the institution allows any proceeds obtained from the activities to benefit its objective.

### 4.6 Liquidation balance

Any positive liquidation balance must be spent on behalf of a public benefit institution with a similar objective or of a foreign institution that exclusively or almost exclusively pursues the public benefit and that has a similar objective.

#### **4.7 Basic data of the International Center for Future Generations**

- Statutory name: Stichting International Center for Future Generations
- PO address: Stationsplein 45, 3013AK Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- Contact details: [info@icfg.eu](mailto:info@icfg.eu)
- Fiscal number (RSIN number): 862370279
- Number Chamber of Commerce (KvK number): 82190720
- Bank account details: NL24 BUNQ 2057 6592 75
- Composition of the Board: Steven Schuurman (chair), Cressida Pollock (secretary), Ian Goldin (treasurer).
- Composition of the Advisory Board: we are currently looking for members.