

# **Stichting International Center for Future Generations**

**Our Governance Plan 2021-2025**  
Updated September 2023

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Strategy and Operations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Organizational Structure</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Financials and Accountability</b>	<b>8</b>

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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 an office in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. In September of 2023, ICFG opened its headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

ICFG is a think-and-do tank based in Europe and focussed on the European Union. ICFG aims to equip EU policymakers with the knowledge and tools to rapidly address technological change, while simultaneously promoting and contributing to global governance frameworks that effectively address the challenges and threats posed by emerging technologies to fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, societal safety and stability.

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

Emerging technologies play an unprecedented role in our lives. Innovations accelerate, and the complexity, scale, and scope can be incomprehensible and elusive to many people that are nevertheless confronted with their impact. There is a particular need to equip and empower legislators to deal with the impact of today's and tomorrow's emerging technologies. A failure to do so poses a catastrophic, or even existential threat to the strength of the democratic processes and even to humanity as a whole.

Emerging technologies have the potential to either exacerbate or mitigate these crises, depending on how they are regulated and managed. It is therefore imperative that we ensure emerging technologies operate with respect for the rule of law, and that we address risks posed before they cause harm. By promoting the practice of anticipatory governance and foresight, the EU-based think tank can help ensure that these risks are mitigated and technologies are developed and implemented in ways that align with societal needs and values.

## **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 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 nonpartisan 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 governments to deal with the challenges and threats of the rapidly changing technologies 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 civil society partners. 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 to provide insights and policy recommendations to lawmakers and policymakers in relation to emerging technologies and the challenges and threats they encompass. Our objective is to enhance their capacity by supporting them with information to address current and future high-risk technological advancements. The aim of ICFG is to improve the ability of governments to deal with the challenges of the Exponential Age enhancing their resilience and flexibility. We do this by helping countries and institutions develop sustainable, rights-based regulatory approaches to emerging technologies to ensure they benefit both present and future generations

### 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 policymakers as well as civil society and policy makers. A strong Science-Policy interface ensures policies are science-driven and based on the latest insights from experts. 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 catastrophic and 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 outcomes 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 or shifting investment priorities 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 executes rigorous, independent, and policy-oriented research, and uses foresight tools to create awareness about emerging technologies that require the urgent attention of political decision-makers. The programs listed below are the current focus areas of ICFG: these were identified as the most pressing and underserved challenges to be addressed.

- Advanced Artificial Intelligence
- Neurotechnology
- Biotechnology
- Climate Engineering Technologies
- Quantum Technologies

### **Our cross-cutting programs**

- Foresight
- Governance

We aim to work with stakeholders within the EU and national governments providing them with expertise, insights and concrete policy suggestions.

Intellectual humility is essential to our considerations. We will remain vigilant in identifying emerging technologies that pose a threat to societal resilience. If necessary, we will update our programs accordingly.

### **Our objectives are:**

- Enhance the capacity of political decision-makers by providing well researched information to address current but particularly future technological advancements and their implications for democracy and society.
- Ensure existing law is clearly and effectively enforced and, where needed, to propose innovative policy solutions to deal with new threats to freedom, equality, and democracy.

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;

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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 in The Netherlands by a board consisting of founder Steven Schuurman (chair) and Cressida Pollock (secretary) and Ian Goldin (Treasurer). In Belgium, ICFG is governed by a board consisting of Stichting ICFG, represented by Steven Schuurman and Laurens de Groot.

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 € 50,000.

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 Brussel.



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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 governance 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

##### The Netherlands

- Statutory name: Stichting International Center for Future Generations
- PO address: Stationsplein 45, 3013 AK 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.

##### Belgium

- Statutory name: International Center for Future Generations
- PO address: Avenue des Arts, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
- Registration number: BE 0801.920.576
- Since May 2023, ICFG has been established as a Non-Profit Association under Belgium law (ASBL/VZW)
- Composition of the Board: Stichting ICFG, represented by Steven Schuurman and Laurens de Groot