



## 2024 Work Plan Proposal International Observatory on Participatory Democracy

### Introduction

The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) is a network of local and regional governments, research centres, and organisations from civil society that work to defend, boost and improve local democracy.

The IOPD has collaborated with UCLG since 2006. UCLG is the main global network of cities and local governments, representing their voices globally. Its main principles are proximity, decentralisation, and political leadership. This work plan aims to reinforce the relationship with UCLG by framing the IOPD's action more clearly within UCLG's domain, aligning their strategies. The IOPD should be the group that promotes reflection on democratic renewal and the defence of democratic values within the world organisation.

The Pact for the Future of Humanity, adopted at the 2022 UCLG Congress in Daejeon, and the final declarations of Grenoble and Rio de Janeiro should be our reference guides for 2024 and the years to come.

In this work plan, we want to define the strategic priorities, thematic priorities, and lines of action, as well as the tasks and an approximate activities schedule. The IOPD Steering Committee, the Technical Secretariat, and the rest of the network members must implement the work plan.

The IOPD working plan is divided into four parts:

**PART 1.** *Strategic priorities*

**PART 2.** *Thematic priorities and axes of action*

**PART 3.** *Tasks to impulse networking*

**PART 4.** *Agenda*

### **PART 1. Strategic priorities**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Strengthen IOPD actions.
2. To expand the network and improve its utility.
3. To frame IOPD activities in the UCLG network and its action plan.

To achieve these objectives, we define the following strategic priorities:



- ❖ **PRIORITY A. Communication and awareness campaign.** Involves, on the one hand, improving both the internal communication and the IOPD community management, including its organs and its members. On the other hand, it also includes enhancing the external communication and awareness raising activities. Here the priority is to make IOPD activities more visible, to raise awareness among the general public about the importance of participatory democracy and to share the existing local and regional participatory experiences.
- ❖ **PRIORITY B. Evaluation of practices.** This kind of action has always been present in the IOPD and some activities have been developed along these lines, such as the Best Practice Awards. This kind of action would now be one of the four IOPD priorities as an observatory. The aim is for it to become not only a repository of experiences and a space for exchange but also a tool for promoting the quality of participatory democracy by developing new actions.
- ❖ **PRIORITY C. Strengthening: growing the network.** This priority includes identifying criteria to widen the network, e.g., the kind of organization/institution, the geographical location, etc. In addition, it involves new types of members, like, for example, social movements and informal platforms. Strengthening the network: to get new promoter members, governments, or organizations that would co-leading the network
- ❖ **PRIORITY D. Learning: decentralized cooperation.** It is a priority not only to promote the growth of the network, but also to improve the quality of exchanges between members to incentivise decentralized learning through our own activities and project collaborations with our international partners.

## **PART 2. Thematic priorities and axes of action**

Democracy is in crisis in many countries, according to the rise of populist political parties, the diminution of electoral participation and the trust indicators towards political parties and institutions. On the other hand, the emergence of new forms of participation and political mobilizations are channelled through communication technologies. Certainly, local and regional governments have a key role in developing democratic innovations carrying out public policies that strengthen social and community ties, as well as defending human rights. The IOPD considers this local governments' role and wants to contribute to weaving this network of cities and municipalities that promote, defend, and increase local democracy.

[The agenda for local democracy](#) is the IOPD reference guide for local governments to develop democracy.

### **Thematic priorities:**

Two themes will continue to be priorities this year: ***“the role of public participation in regaining trust in the face of authoritarian threats”*** and ***“inclusive public participation.”***



Other priority topics of the network are:

- Strengthen the network's narrative by recovering the origins and history of the IOPD.
- Monitoring and analysis of practices compiled by the IOPD.
- Establish a working group of professionals facilitating participatory processes.
- Develop a quality index of participatory democracy.

### PART 3. Tasks to promote networking

<b>PRIORITY A. Communication and awareness campaign</b>	
Internal communication	
Task 1	Diagnosis of the existing communication mechanisms with members and proposal of new mechanisms to maintain permanent channels of exchange with them.
Task 2	Administration of e-mail accounts and sending of a monthly newsletter and periodicity as required.
Task 3	Updates on activities and events, both to network members and to political representatives in the IOPD's internal bodies.
External communication	
Task 4	Repository of experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establishment of new criteria to systematize information about existing experiences according to topics.</li> <li>b. Reflect upon the added value of this repository compared to others.</li> <li>c. Active search of new experiences, activating the network.</li> <li>d. Co-production of the description of experiences, jointly with local actors.</li> </ul>
Task 5	Maintenance and update of the website and social media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Definition and implementation of communication strategies for the promotion of participatory democracy experiences, own activities, participation in events of our partners and initiatives of our social partners to promote participatory democracy.</li> </ul>



Task 6	Publication of reports (related to tasks 10 and 11): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Publication of the annual report (coinciding with the annual conference).</li> <li>b. Publication of special reports and policy papers with recommendations for advancing local participatory and deliberative democracy.</li> </ul>
Task 7	Annual conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Annual conference organisation and communication support.</li> </ul>
Task 8	Organization of three international events (according to priority contents, task 19).
Task 9	Participation in international events jointly with UCLG.

### **PRIORITY B. Evaluation of practices**

Task 10	Participation in the partnership between UCLG and the Global Coalition for Democracy.
Task 11	Special reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Fundraising.</li> <li>b. Assignment (in relation to the priority contents).</li> <li>c. Production of the report.</li> </ul>
Task 12	Best Practice Award: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Revision of the criteria and process for awarding prizes.</li> <li>b. Call for nominations.</li> <li>c. Receipt of nominations: translation and publication on the Participate ODP digital platform.</li> <li>d. Selection process: convening of the juries and management of communication with them.</li> <li>e. Publication of results.</li> <li>f. Preparation of a digital publication compiling the practices received.</li> <li>g. Search for funds to be able to award a monetary prize.</li> </ul>
Task 13	Coordination of mutual evaluation mechanisms (between members).

### **PRIORITY C. Strengthen: widening the network**

Task 14	Clean up of the current list of members (previous contact with inactive members).
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Task 15	Identification of strategic criteria for the addition of new members.
Task 16	Incorporation of new members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identification of potential members.</li> <li>b. Contact and addition of new members.</li> <li>c. Ask for information about their needs.</li> <li>d. Ask for an authorization to publish their data.</li> <li>e. Ask for contacts.</li> </ol>
Task 17	Admission of new promoter members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Contact with local governments leaders in participatory democracy.</li> <li>b. To improve the new promoter members' role definition.</li> </ol>

**PRIORITY D. Learning: decentralized cooperation and joint actions**

Task 18	Study of the collaboration forms (existing forms, incentives, technical resources and new proposals): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Assignment of the study.</li> <li>b. Production of the study.</li> </ol>
Task 19	Identification of priority content.
Task 20	Development of the online platform PARTICIPATE ODP.
Task 21	Establishment of a Standing Scientific Committee of about 5-6 expert persons with broad experience, with a balance of geographical origin and gender.
Task 22	Development of learning materials: policy documents, news and articles published on our website, videos, infographics and other audiovisual materials.

**PART 4. Calendar**

<b>January</b>	Preparation for the launching of the 18th edition of the IOPD Award
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<b>February</b>	<b>15 February</b> Call for nominations for the 18th edition of the IOPD Award <b>19-23 February</b> UCLG Retreat and Campus
<b>March</b>	
<b>April</b>	
<b>May</b>	<b>13 -14 May</b> ALDA General Assembly in Barcelona <b>15 May</b> Deadline for nominations for the ODP Award <b>15-18 May:</b> Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy, Bucharest <b>16 May:</b> Start of the Selection of IOPD Award finalists process
<b>June</b>	<b>12-14 June:</b> VI Encuentro Ibérico <b>18 June:</b> End of the Selection of IOPD Award finalists process <b>20-30 June:</b> Open public vote IOPD Award UCLG Bureau
<b>July</b>	<b>1-3 July:</b> 8e Rencontres Européennes de la Participation - France Second phase of the IOPD Award Jury
<b>August</b>	Second phase of the IOPD Jury – Final Deliberation Last week of August: Last meeting of the jury
<b>September</b>	<b>First week of September:</b> IOPD Award winner selection <b>15 September:</b> International Day of Democracy
<b>October</b>	<b>17-19 October:</b> 23 <sup>rd</sup> IOPD Conference and Assembly in Valongo
<b>November</b>	
<b>December</b>	

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