

DRAFT IOI STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

MAIN PRIORITIES TO INFORM IOI OPERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The IOI is committed to promoting the Ombudsman concept and encourages the creation of Ombudsman institutions where they do not exist. It strives to increase its presence and strengthen its authority as **the** authoritative body on Ombudsman matters worldwide.

The IOI's strategic plan covers the period in between General Assemblies. Based on the first strategic plan, approved in Bangkok in 2016, the IOI will continue its **strategic focus** as outlined further down below for the period 2021 – 2024.

The IOI aspires to align its activities towards achieving these goals. Detailed activities to drive the different priorities forward will be developed and implemented by the IOI Board of Directors, and may change over time to reflect emerging trends, feasibility and resources.

STRATEGIC GOALS

RAISING VISIBILITY

The IOI will continue its efforts to increase its presence, enhance its influence, and strengthen its authority. As an organization, the IOI is the voice of Ombudsman institutions within the international community and it will continue its endeavours for recognition as **the** authoritative body on Ombudsman matters worldwide. The IOI is committed to promoting the Ombudsman concept. With this in mind, the IOI will further deepen its relations with international, multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations or the Council of Europe, to further strengthen its position as the only international organization for the representation and cooperation of Ombudsman institutions worldwide.

RAISING STANDARDS

The IOI will continue to advocate the effective application of the Venice Principles, as the internationally recognized standards for Ombudsman institutions. The IOI will work with members in their quest for continuing improvement. The IOI will assist members in reviewing their legislation in light of the Venice Principles and the UN Resolution on the Ombudsman through its peer review system, conferences and shared learning.

WIDENING MEMBERSHIP

Widening membership is a very high priority for the IOI and we have been able to welcome many new member institutions in the past four years (175 Voting members in 2015/2016; 205 Voting members in 2019/2020). With a view to becoming a truly pluralistic and international organisation, the IOI will strive to widen its membership further by applying the following approach: raise awareness about the IOI's services and advertise member benefit; strengthen cooperation with regional Ombudsman associations and international partner organisations; promote the Ombudsman concept, specifically the Venice Principles and the recently adopted UN Resolution on Ombudsman and Mediator Institutions.

SUPPORTING OMBUDSMAN UNDER THREAT

Unfortunately, the topic of "Ombudsman under threat" still has a very high priority in the IOI's daily operations. The IOI has lent its support and spoken out on behalf of colleagues operating under difficult circumstances on various occasions in these past four years and the topic will very likely continue to be a priority for some considerable time in the future. The IOI will continue to raise awareness about situations of specific offices, advocate the Venice Principles and the UN Resolution on the Ombudsman as globally recognized standards to inform strong and independent institutions and continue its cooperation with relevant international partner organisations (e.g. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, Global Alliance of NRHIs etc.).

TRAINING AND EXCHANGE

With the view to strengthen its members' capability and to foster the exchange of expertise among Ombudsman worldwide, the IOI acknowledges the importance of training, exchange and shared

learning as one of its key priorities. The IOI will continue to identify new training needs of specific concern to its members, utilise the existing experience with the IOI membership to develop training formats (i.e. encourage members to share their good practices) and identify new training providers (also to ensure multi-lingual options as well).

NEW CHALLENGES

The Covid-19 pandemic has confronted us all with new challenges. It also showed the capacity of Ombudsman around the world to be adroit and innovative, when such new situations present themselves. With this in mind, the IOI will continue to closely monitor emerging issues of concern and – as an organisation – seek to facilitate exchange on how such challenges / developments impact on Ombudsman colleagues and best practices to counter / solve such situations.

FINANCIAL GOOD HEALTH

In order to provide its members with the full range of services and the best assistance possible, it is essential that the organisation operates on a sound financial basis. Financial good health therefore remains one of the IOI's main strategic goals. Our stable membership base and our member's good payment morale will see us fiscally stable over the years of this strategic plan and our attention to membership widening will assist this positive situation as well.

COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS

The IOI acknowledges the need to bring itself to the attention of important stakeholders and to increase its standing as an international organisation representing Ombudsman institutions worldwide. In this area, the IOI introduced the series of Best Practice Papers on Ombudsman related topics and continues its series of comparative studies in the IOI regions. However, the IOI is also mindful of the exceptionally fast changing world and will seek to enhance its use of new communication formats and tools in his publication and communication strategy.