NEXT GENERATION IMPACT ASSESSMENT
IAIA Strategic Plan 2022-2026

Introduction

It is time to develop the next generation of impact assessment. This is necessary in order to tackle challenges facing the mid-21st Century such as climate change, gender issues, cultural heritage, and human health, as well as the physical environment in our urban areas. As the leading organization that provides guidance on impact assessment best practice, and promotes its use across all decision-making contexts, the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) is in a prime position to lead the effort.

IAIA and its members are continually searching for ways to enhance practice. In successive symposia, conferences, and publications our members have asked questions: how can impact assessment be better, where should it go next, and how can it be more effective? For example, in the past few years, the organization has held a conference on impact assessment revision entitled "Evolution or Revolution: Where Next for Impact Assessment?" It published an entire issue of *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* on the same topic, as well as the article "Next Generation Impact Assessment: Exploring the Key Components." In addition, IAIA recently commissioned the development of a publication outlining the building blocks for impact assessment independence. The foundation for next generation impact assessment has been laid. Now it is time for IAIA to take action.

Over the next five years, IAIA will take these threads and work with the legal community to define next generation impact assessment in terms specific enough that it can be developed into model legislation to be used as tool to communicate with policy makers and political leaders.

The IAIA programmatic platform will also be strengthened, not only to provide a firm launching pad for next generation impact assessment, but also to bolster traditional impact assessment.

This document is IAIA's strategic plan to reframe impact assessment, raise its profile among high-level policy makers, and expand its usage in all environmental and societal decision-making venues. An accompanying document outlines the timeline, elements, and tactics to implement this plan.

Vision Statement

IAIA's vision statement is "A just and sustainable world for people and the environment."

Mission Statement

IAIA's mission statement is "IAIA provides the international forum to advance best practice and innovation in impact assessment and advocates for its expanded use for the betterment of society and the environment."

Values

IAIA promotes the application of integrated and participatory approaches to impact assessment, conducted to the highest professional standards.

IAIA believes the assessment of the environmental, social, economic, cultural, and health implications of proposed policies, plans, programs, and projects to be a critical contribution to sound decision-making processes, and to equitable and sustainable development.

IAIA is committed to the promotion of sustainability, the freedom of access to information, and the right of citizens to have a voice in decisions that affect them. When we assess impacts, we promote the free flow of complete, unbiased, and accurate information to decision makers and affected parties. We believe that impact assessments should be inclusive and comprehensive, addressing the broader social and health impacts as well as any impacts on the biophysical environment and earth systems, including climate and biodiversity. Respect for human rights and human dignity should underpin all assessments. We acknowledge that we have a duty of care to both present and future generations.

For more on IAIA's values, please refer to its Code of Ethics (https://www.iaia.org/downloads/Code-of-Ethics_21.pdf).

Nonprofit Theory Applied to IAIA

Nonprofits are established for the purpose of doing good, and making the world a better place. IAIA's founders defined its purpose as "the betterment of society through the encouragement of improved policy-making processes concerning the analysis of the future consequences of present decisions." As such, IAIA must balance its inherent dedication to global improvement with its need to provide service to its members.

Programs are the reason many people start nonprofits, work for them, join them, or donate to them. Historically, those in nonprofit leadership positions have downplayed the need to effectively communicate about their programs. Developing good communications vehicles and strong relationships with funders and supporters have at times been ignored by these nonprofits, or are viewed as separate activities that are not part of the good works of the program.

Healthy nonprofits know that programs, communications, and support must be fully integrated and work in tandem with each other. In addition, communications and support efforts must be funded and allocated staff time in proportion to programs. This is the model that IAIA has adopted. Bottom line: while it is essential that programs are providing beneficial results, it is equally important that those results be communicated via media to the wider world. Those communications attract supporters who may be members, funders, or partners who fund additional programs – and the cycle begins again. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Nonprofit Model
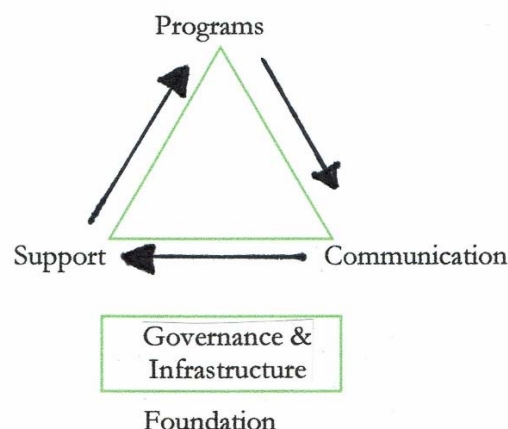
Underpinning these three elements is a strong foundation of governance and organizational infrastructure. This includes a dedicated Board of Directors, talented staff, excellent legal framework, good policies, and financial accountability. For a listing of IAIA program, communications, support and foundation elements, see Table 1.

Table 1. IAIA Organizational Elements

Programs	Communications	Support	Foundation
Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Conference Training Online Training Professional Development Program (PDP) Policy Papers Work for Others	Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads	Memberships Partnerships Affiliates Funding	Board Committees & Sections Staff Finances

Methodology

The methodology used to develop this plan is a variation on Appreciative Inquiry (AI) that asked participants their opinions. The participants in this process were the IAIA Board of Directors and the IAIA staff. For more information about methodology, please see Attachment A to this document.

The outcomes of all of these discussions were combined and organized by subject and then analyzed to determine the common themes and how IAIA can further build on its 40 years of success.

Results

The results of the Appreciate Inquiry approach were remarkable in uncovering IAIA's strengths and demonstrating the similarity in perspective among all participants, even between Board and staff. The positives were emphasized, but at the same time, while no one was asked about weakness or threats, those naturally came out in the conversations as well. IAIA's strengths, future forecast, and themes for action moving forward are listed in this section.

IAIA Strengths

The strengths of IAIA are seen as:
- Global nature of organization—real international organization covering five continents, not only in advanced countries, but also developing countries.
- Good leadership position in relation to national organizations.
- Professional organization, profile is high, people believe what it says.
- IAIA covers all of the various kinds of "impact assessment," such as environmental, social, technical, strategic, health, and human rights.
- Membership is diverse and has deep expertise—it is less prone to simply react when encountering new issues, but takes time and provides a thoughtful response.
- Qualifications of members—through networking, one can learn from the best.
- Staff are dedicated and everyone working as a team.

Assessment of IAIA Future

The consensus is that IAIA's future is bright, even though the world is changing rapidly both environmentally and socially. This makes it difficult to navigate the minefields, including sifting through it all to determine what is important. Most felt that IAIA will grow and will have great impact as the reference for good/best practice in impact assessment.

IAIA's reliance on its in-person conference as its primary funding source is a concern, and the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and accelerated IAIA's need to diversity its income and support. However, that was seen in a positive light, as the move to hybrid and virtual events is a new path forward to make greater impact in parts of the world where travel costs to an IAIA event have been prohibitively expensive.

Themes Moving Forward

In sifting through all the conversations among Board and staff, certain recurring issues or related topics began to surface. The key areas of focus and themes that came out of the discussion are listed below.

- Create a searchable database of IAIA publications, conference papers, and case studies by topic for easy access by the user and to more readily identify gaps in publications resources that need to be developed.

- Establish a systemized series of courses that will provide credentialing, via certificate of attendance and certificate of accomplishment, as well as continuing education courses to assist IA professionals in seeking employment.

- Develop partnerships with organizations around the globe, both national groups and multi-lateral banks, in offering international IA certification.

- Keep IA professionals abreast of changes in the professions including those that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as increased use of remote data gathering technologies and techniques as well as those focused on public participation.

- Focus IA programming beyond just projects and more into Sustainable Development Goals and urban issues.

- Assist IA practitioners with how to transfer skills to Environmental and Social Governance (ESG), and represent the IA profession on ESG Boards.

- Start to define the next generation of impact assessment, including model legislation.

- Expand communications and media networks to better deliver the IAIA message.

- Increase membership and make member benefits more obvious by providing more products only behind a member paywall.

- Decrease reliance on conference revenue by increasing funding from governments, corporations, foundations, and individuals.

- Create partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (environmental, human rights, etc.).

- Increase regional activity to fill gap between Affiliates/national groups and global perspective through partnerships with multilateral banks (World Bank (WB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), African Development Bank (AfDB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) etc.), relationships with private banks (Equator Principles), and increased communications about bellwether actions in those regions.

- Improve Board governance by increasing member institutional memory, reviewing existing policy notes, and reducing the number of managerial decisions requiring votes.

- Examine from an operational standpoint the functioning of Committees and Committee Chairs, as well as the focus and structure of Sections.

- With more technical-related programming, it may be necessary to bring on a staff member with IA experience and another with project-level management/administrative skill.

- Maintain financial integrity through independent audits, strengthen internal administrative polices, grow Sustainability Fund, and review Committee/Section organization to ensure it aligns with current needs.

Focus Areas, Rationale and Strategy, Programs, and Measures of Success

The themes listed above have been aligned by topical focus area and the program elements that will be required to carry out in order to provide a better sense of how the themes may be operationalized. This has been done for: (1) Programs, (2) Communications, (3) Support, and (4) Foundation. In addition, one or more measures of success have been outlined per theme to provide IAIA leadership with a sense of whether the organization is making progress toward the goal.

This is an ambitious agenda with numerous exciting initiatives on the horizon for the next five years. That said, it is important to continue the good work that needs to done on current initiatives and not overwhelm staff with new ones. As mentioned previously, the IAIA membership is a deep resource. Part of the success of this plan will be harnessing that expertise and initiative, where necessary, and possibly realigning current organizational structures of the membership or creating new ones.

Programs

Resources			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Create a searchable database of IAIA publications, conference papers, and case studies by topic for easy access by the user and to more readily identify gaps in publications resources that need to be developed.	IAIA has produced numerous publications over the years, but they can be difficult to locate on the website. In addition, the presentations made at conferences, symposia, and other meetings are not catalogued except on the meeting site. IAIA will create a searchable database of	Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Website	Functioning website database of IAIA resources by 2025.

	IAIA resources as detailed in the theme.		
Training			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Establish a systemized series of courses that will provide credentialing, via certificate of attendance and certificate of accomplishment, as well as continuing education courses to assist IA professionals in seeking employment.	IAIA offers world-class training, but it has been developed on an ad hoc basis. IAIA will establish a systemized series of courses among its in-person training, online training, PDP, and continuing education courses.	Conference Training Online Training Professional Development Program (PDP) Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads	Three PDP Courses training 150 students per year per course by 2026. Five online courses offered more than once a year, training 200 people per year by 2026. A series of continuing education videos available by subject area by 2024.
Certification			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Develop partnerships with organizations around the globe, both national groups and multi-lateral banks, in offering international IA certification.	Numerous national organizations provide certification of professionals in country-based competency schemes. IAIA will develop partnerships with those organizations and develop an IAIA certification program.	Partnerships	An international certification program overseen by IAIA by 2026 Or Three partnerships with national organizations providing an international badge with their country-based certification by 2026.
Best Practice			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	
Keep IA professionals abreast of changes in the professions including those that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as increased use of remote data gathering technologies and techniques as well as those focused on public participation.	The IA profession continues to evolve and the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated those changes. While IAIA does not endorse totally remote impact assessment, it does need to provide guidance on best practice in using remote and virtual technologies that support the impact assessment process. In addition, addressing	Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads	A number of publications and presentations on best practice in operationalizing IA as a remotely-practiced profession would be released each year.

	climate change through impact assessment will become more important. IAIA will use multiple programmatic elements to keep IA practitioners abreast of changes in the profession.		
Sustainable Development			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Focus IA programming beyond just projects and more into Sustainable Development Goals and urban issues.	IA has been focused for too long on just the regulatory elements of project approval. IAIA will use multiple programmatic elements to expand its programming beyond projects into Sustainable Development and urban issues.	Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Conference Training Online Training Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads	A number of publications and presentations on deploying IA in advancing Sustainable Development Goals would be released each year.
ESG			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measure of Success
Assist IA practitioners on how to transfer skills to ESG, and represent the IA profession on ESG Boards.	ESG has exploded across the corporate landscape and employs many of the same skills as IA. However, the nomenclature and standards differ, and in some cases, ESG may be closer to greenwashing without competent IA professionals being involved. IAIA will assist IA practitioners to how to use their skill in the ESG marketplace, and will move forward to represent the IA profession on ESG Standards Boards.	Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Conference Training Online Training Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads Partnerships	A number of publications and presentations on interpreting ESG for IA professionals each year.

Doing outreach and relationship building to secure IAIA representation on at least two ESG Standards Boards by 2026. |

Next Generation IA			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Start to define the next generation of impact assessment, including model legislation.	IA has been a procedure in law for over 50 years. Given its evolution, it is time to start to define the next generation of impact assessment. IAIA should lead this charge, both because we are the leading global practice org, and because if we do not define the future of the practice, others will. IAIA will accomplish this by tapping the expertise of its membership and in forming partnerships with international legal organizations, including model legislation, based on past conferences, *IAPA* special issues and A. John Sinclair's *IAPA* paper, "Next Generation Impact Assessment: Exploring the Key Components."	Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meeting Webinars Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads Partnerships Policy Papers	Adopt a model piece of legislation for Next Generation Impact Assessment. A series of publications and presentations on: Sustainability Assessments, Cumulative Effects, Co-governance with Indigenous Nations, Transparency, Independence, etc. each year.

Communications

Communication Network			
Theme	Rationale & Approach	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Expand communications and media networks to better deliver the IAIA message.	Effective communication requires a wide diverse and primed media network readily able to accept and disseminate messages. IAIA will continue to develop relationships with traditional media reporters around the globe. It will enhance its Internet ad presence through its $10,000 per	Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads	Two quotes per year in traditional media worldwide. Spend $___ of Google Ad Grant and number of specific webpages click throughs. Increase social media followers ____ LinkedIn ____Facebook ____Twitter

	month Google Ad grant and its social media following. However, portraying IA is more than just promoting IAIA programs. It is important that the public have some understanding of how IA can positively affect social equity, disadvantaged populations, human health, nature, and wildlife. Case studies will be developed on how IA connects to real people's lives to be featured in social media and, hopefully, earned media.		One case study featured per year in earned media and promoted on social media.

Support

Membership			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Increase membership and make member benefits more obvious by providing more products behind a member paywall.	IAIA membership has been steadily declining for more than five years. IAIA intends to increase membership by (1) providing services on a wider range of topics relevant to the mid- 21st Century, (2) translating them into more languages, and (3) making member benefits more obvious by providing more member-only products found only behind a member paywall. Membership is an income stream, but possibly more importantly, it provides legitimacy regarding the	Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Conference Training Online Training Professional Development Program (PDP) Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads Funding	1,000 members by Dec 2022. 1,250 members by Dec 2024. 1,400 members by 2026.

	constituency IAIA represents.		
Diversify Revenue			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Decrease reliance on conference revenue by increasing funding from governments, corporations, foundations, and individuals.	IAIA has been heavily dependent on conference revenue for the past two decades. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated IAIA concern about its reliance on in-person events. However, at the same time the pandemic has forced new models on conference attendance that may ultimately increase IAIA's impact worldwide. That said, IAIA should still decrease its reliance on conference revenue by increasing funding from governments, corporations, foundations, and individuals.	Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Conference Training Online Training Professional Development Program (PDP) Policy Papers Work for Others	$150,000 in non-conference revenue by Dec 2022. $300,000 in non-conference revenue by Dec 2022. $500,000 in non-conference revenue by Dec 2026.
CSO Partnerships			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Create partnerships with CSOs (environmental, human rights, etc.).	IA, and to a lesser extent IAIA, is associated with the developers of projects. As IAIA intends to demonstrate independence and alignment with sustainability goals, it is necessary to create partnerships with CSOs (environmental, human rights, etc.), and exchange memberships rather than paying each other's dues.	Publications *IAPA* Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Conference Training Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads	Five significant partnerships with CSOs by 2026.
Regionalization			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Increase regional activity to fill gap between	IAIA has long represented best	Publications *IAPA*	Teams of Board members and staff

| Affiliates/national groups and global IAIA perspective. | practice and advocacy for IA. Its Affiliates have served the same function at the national level. IAIA will build its regional activity to fill the gap between Affiliates/national groups and global perspective through partnerships with multilateral banks (WB, IDB, AfDB ADB, etc.), relationships with private banks (Equator Principles), and increased communications about bellwether actions in those regions. | Conferences Symposia Special Meetings Webinars Conference Training Online Training Professional Development Program (PDP) Social Media Newsletters Earned Media Website Google Ads Funding | would be divided into teams working in six regions around the globe in conjunction with the multilateral banks.\n\nTwo regional symposia a year.\n\nFive publications translated in other languages. |

Foundation

Board			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Improve Board governance by increasing member institutional memory, reviewing existing policy notes, and reducing the number of managerial decisions requiring votes,	The IAIA Board turnover is fairly high, so it only takes a couple of years for four of six members to depart, limiting the issues that can be dealt with. In addition, previous Board have passed policy notes that can burden Board members with votes on management items.	Board review	A select number of Board members are serving second three-year terms.\n\nReview of all policies with the intent to reduce Board burden on voting on management matters between meetings.
Committees & Sections			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Examine from an operational standpoint the functioning of Committees and Committee Chairs, as well as the focus and structure of Sections.	The professionalization of IAIA means that there needs to be integration of the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteer leadership. The Board will examine from an operational standpoint the functioning of	Board review	Align Committee and staff operations to reduce byzantine nature of structure.\n\nProactive development of annual conference location and focus, more targeted and international in plenary

	Committees and Committee Chairs, as well as the focus and structure of Sections. The membership-led nature of the organization in following members' interests has at times reduced its ability to be strategic, targeted, and opportunistic. This is true of the committees overseeing the annual conference as well.		speakers, and more permanent program committee. More vital and alive Sections focused on current issues of concern.
Staff			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
With more technical related programming, it may be necessary to bring on a staff member with IA experience and another with project-level management/administrative skill.	Less reliance on in-person conference income and the addition of a virtual conference component means staff needs have increased, not decreased, work load. In addition, more programmatic or work-for-others projects are needed to sustain the organization. With more technical-related programming, it may be necessary to bring on a staff member with IA experience and another with project-level management/ administrative skill. This may be done initially with contractual employees.	Executive Director review Work for Others	Hire IA staff member with external funds. Hire program manager/administrator with external funds.
Finances			
Theme	Rationale & Strategy	Program Elements	Measures of Success
Maintain financial integrity through independent audits, strengthen internal administrative polices, grow Sustainability Fund and review Committee/Section organization to ensure it aligns with current needs.	Good financial management and reporting is the keystone of any organization. In addition, having the resources to weather difficult financial times	Board and Executive Director Review Funding	Review of Annual audits. Track annual investment reports. Review of all Board-voted polices over the

	or to undertake a new program at an opportune time can be the difference between long-term success and failure. IAIA will maintain financial integrity through independent audits, strengthen internal administrative policies, and grow its Sustainability Fund. It would advantageous to the long-term survivability of IAIA to have a small disaster contingency fund in place for a future crisis.		years for relevance and consistency with good governance. Sequester $20,000 of funding in crisis contingency fund available to Executive Director and President.

Methodology

The methodology used to develop this plan is a variation on Appreciative Inquiry (AI). AI can be differentiated from other organizational visioning and change models, such as SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunity, threats), by focusing on the best of an organization, and using that as the basis to determine future directions. Eliminating the tendency of other methods that may focus too heavily on pitfalls and problems, AI asks participants to explore strengths and successes that already exist, both internally and externally. This positive approach can lead to extraordinary new directions by reinforcing relationships and culture, creating common vision and direction, promoting learning and innovation, and energizing action.

The participants in this process were the IAIA Board of Directors and the IAIA staff. Each Board member was engaged in a one-on-one discussion via a video platform. The IAIA staff, on the other hand, participated as a group in a virtual 12-hour retreat spanning four days. Staff engagement was more intense because their input is vital to the development of the accompanying Implementation Plan that lays out the timelines and actions to make the Strategic Plan a reality.

These were the questions asked of each participant:

1. *As we begin planning for the next five years of IAIA, what issues immediately jump to the front of your mind?*

2. *What do you consider the best attributes of IAIA?*

3. *If you were to dream forward five years from now, how would IAIA be perceived, what would it look like, and what would it be doing?*

4. *What are your thoughts about these aspects of IAIA activities and services? If there are those with which you are not that familiar or have no opinion, that is fine.*
   - *Membership*
   - *Partnership*
   - *Conferences, symposia, forums*
   - *Training*
   - *Certification*
   - *Communications—External*
   - *Communications—Members*
   - *Innovations and future of IA practice*
   - *Public policy*
   - *Publications*
   - *IAPA*
   - *Funding*
   - *Governance*

5. *Are there other aspects of IAIA, and/or its future over the next five years, that we have not discussed and that you want considered?*

The outcomes of all of these discussions were combined, organized by subject, and then analyzed to determine the common themes, and how IAIA can further build on its 40 years of success.