



International Foundation  
for Electoral Systems



# Rising to the Challenge

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2020-24 Strategic Plan

**ELEMENTS OF OUR**

# **Strategic Plan**

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Front cover photo: A happy voter displays her inked finger after casting her ballot in the 2019 Malawi general elections. Photo Credit: Kumbukani Kuntiya

## A NOTE FROM IFES LEADERSHIP

With democracy and electoral integrity increasingly under pressure around the world, the work of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is more important than ever.

For IFES — and all champions of democracy — “business as usual” is not an option. Democracy’s adversaries are working tirelessly to tear down democratic institutions and norms faster than we can build them.

**The world is changing, and IFES is changing with it.** In 2019 we embarked on an ambitious strategic planning process. The resulting vision, mission, values and strategic outcomes highlighted herein reflect our institutional learning and unique understanding of what is required to deliver credible elections and responsive governance in this unprecedented era.

Despite the many difficulties, this is an exciting time, ripe with opportunities to innovate and strengthen existing approaches, while forging collaborative ways to empower all people to have a voice in how they are governed.

We are proud to lead IFES into this new decade and achieve what is required of us at this transformative moment in history. Together, we can overcome the greatest of challenges.



**Amb. J. Kenneth Blackwell**  
*Co-Chairman*



**Donald R. Switzer**  
*Board Member*



**Anthony N. Banbury**  
*President and CEO*

## OUR VALUES AND CULTURE

# How we do our work *matters.*



### **We embody diversity, equality and opportunity.**

We build inclusive relationships based on trust and mutual respect.



### **We believe in the power of people.**

We develop individual, institutional and collaborative capacities to strengthen democracy.



### **We pursue excellence and innovation.**

We learn and adapt to best serve the people and principles we support.



In Kyiv, an IFES Ukraine employee casts her ballot. IFES' diverse workforce includes hundreds of local employees in offices around the world.

## CULTURE STATEMENT

**We are here to advance democracy's promise.** Every day, we choose the path that furthers our mission and exemplifies our values. We apply thoughtful, rigorous solutions to complex problems. We take informed risks and view setbacks as opportunities for reflection and growth. Our people drive IFES and prize inclusion, trust and accountability. We conduct our work with integrity. **We are IFES.**



An accessible press conference takes place at an election media center in Tunisia. Election media centers are an IFES innovation, and serve to cultivate trust and communication between journalists, election commissions, observers and the general public.

## NEW VISION

# Democracy for a Better Future



Political participation is a human right and makes the world a more peaceful, prosperous and equal place.  
**Democracy for a Better Future.**



During Kenya's 2017 elections, the IFES-supported "Youth Vote" (Yvote) digital media and outreach initiative reached over 1 million Kenyans.



## NEW MISSION

# Together We Build Democracies That Deliver For All



Representative government, at its core, is a recognition of the great collective power of individual voices. IFES' expertise is nothing without the will of people and societies to achieve responsive government, and the support of our donors and partners all over the world. **Together, we are better.**



IFES' strategic planning process began with listening to our partners around the world, policymakers, donors, thought leaders, our Board and staff, including — critically — our field leadership.

After collecting and distilling the viewpoints of our global stakeholders, we developed **four strategic outcomes** that reflect the highest priority needs in the democracy promotion and electoral integrity space. They are designed to focus our efforts, highlight areas for increased investment and help IFES best align our capabilities and services to today's dynamic world.

The strategic outcomes are not intended to be an exhaustive description of all our important work — they are guidelines, not guardrails. IFES strives to become increasingly agile and adaptive, able to pivot in new directions as needed.

**We are proud to share the following strategic outcomes, which position us to provide the highest value and impact to our partners in 2020-24, and beyond.**



## STRATEGIC OUTCOME #1

# Trusted Electoral Institutions Deliver Credible Elections

**The heart and soul of IFES' work is leveraging global best practices to build credible, resilient election management bodies (EMBs).** This supports:

- Transparent, inclusive elections that deliver in crisis situations and resist manipulation by malign actors;
- Outcomes accepted by voters and peaceful transfers of power; and
- Empowered electoral officials who can proactively address emerging challenges and sustain public faith in elections.

To strengthen our efforts in 2020-24, IFES will innovate more data-driven programs, facilitate global information-sharing and design new tools and methods that build trust in election results.



**“ The work of building and sustaining democracies requires persistence and it requires cooperation. Since its founding over 30 years ago, IFES has brought both of these attributes to the fight for freedom.”**

**— Dr. Madeleine K. Albright,**  
*2019 Charles T. Manatt Democracy Award recipient*

## STRATEGIC OUTCOME #2



# Effective governing institutions are accountable to the people they serve

**IFES amplifies the efforts of public officials and civil society to promote good governance and rule of law.** IFES empowers:

- Civic groups to fight corruption and the abuse of state resources, and to reform political finance systems;
- Public transparency and accountability mechanisms; and
- Global and regional peer networks of judges and election commissioners.

In 2020-24, IFES will continue to expand its anti-corruption and good governance portfolio. IFES will also innovate approaches to preserving electoral integrity, security and rule of law in conflict situations.



**A Guatemalan couple shows off their inked fingers after voting. IFES works alongside the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to conduct inclusive, credible and peaceful elections.**

## STRATEGIC OUTCOME #3



# All people safely participate in civic and political life on an equal basis

**When all groups of society are represented, democracy thrives.** Throughout its work, IFES promotes an informed and empowered citizenry by:

- Mainstreaming an intersectional approach to traditionally underrepresented groups;
- Promoting peaceful participation through conflict mediation and mitigation activities; and
- Innovating culturally tailored civic education and leadership programs.

IFES will further its award-winning inclusion programming by exploring new approaches to the political inclusion of youth and displaced people.



Youth learning about leadership, democracy and elections at a Democracy Camp in Kathmandu. Photo Credit: Mohammad Shahid Reza.



“ I think a true democracy must be inclusive.  
It must represent everyone.”

— Nayeem, a young man with a disability who participated in IFES’ “People Against Violence in Elections” program

## STRATEGIC OUTCOME #4



# Technology, information and data positively serve elections and democracy

**Adapting technology to advance — not degrade — democracy and elections is both a universal responsibility and complex challenge.** IFES will do its part by:

- Delivering technology and information integrity solutions for civic engagement and electoral management;
- Working with electoral stakeholders to counter hate speech and use social media to promote tolerance, accessibility and inclusivity;
- Researching the evolving relationship between elections and technology, and developing cybersecurity and disinformation toolkits.

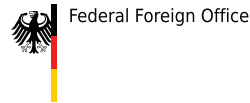
In 2020-24, IFES will achieve these goals with the support of the Technology for Democracy (T4D) Fund and its dedicated technology team.



The T4D Fund supports IFES efforts to develop tools and conduct research on the positive use of technology in democracy and elections. Core contributors to the T4D Fund include social media and technology companies.

# Our donors make our work *possible*.

- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Danish International Development Agency
- Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- German Federal Foreign Office
- Global Affairs Canada
- Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- U.S. Embassy in Panama
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- USAID via Global Elections and Political Transitions
- State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations
- State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
- State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
- State Department Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
- African Union
- Facebook
- Microsoft
- India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management
- Instituto Electoral - Ciudad de Mexico
- Open Society Foundations
- United Nations Development Programme





IFES has supported disabled persons organizations and others to conduct election access observation in 12 countries, including Nepal. In 2019, IFES received an Innovative Practice Award from the Zero Project for its Election Access Observation Toolkit.

## LEARN MORE

# About IFES



### **IFES advances democracy for a better future.**

We collaborate with civil society, public institutions and the private sector to build resilient democracies that deliver for everyone. As a global leader in the promotion and protection of democracy, our technical assistance and applied research develops trusted electoral bodies capable of conducting credible elections; effective and accountable governing institutions; civic and political processes in which all people can safely and equally participate; and innovative ways in which technology and data can positively serve elections and democracy. Since 1987, IFES has worked in more than 145 countries, from developing to mature democracies. IFES is a global, nonpartisan nonprofit organization based in Arlington, Virginia, and registered as a 501(c)(3).



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