

LIGHTHOUSE STRATEGY

INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS





10 YEARS OF IGC.

WHAT IS NEXT?

THE PROBLEM

Gender equality is facing an unprecedented global pushback, with well-organised and well-funded movements and action coalitions undermining past progress and blocking new efforts.

Without coordinated, impactful action, the world risks backtracking on critical gains, jeopardising the achievement of the Agenda2030 (in particular SDG5) and the broader vision of equality and justice.



THE QUESTION

How can the IGC mobilise its unique community of leaders for gender equality across sectors to deliver coordinated, impactful actions that counter the global pushback and accelerate progress toward SDG 5 - all within a context of shrinking financial support for gender equality and growing competition for resources and funding?



THE VISION

Our vision is to position the IGC as a driving force for lasting, transformative social change — one that **reclaims momentum for gender equality and focuses our efforts where we can deliver the greatest impact**. We are committed to sharpening our priorities, articulating IGC's unique value proposition, and aligning our actions accordingly.



WHAT TODAY IS ABOUT

We are holding a series of consultative meetings to design an IGC 'Lighthouse Strategy' - a strategic plan for the next **5 years**.

This strategy will clarify where IGC can lead with purpose, strengthen the case for action, mobilise partners, and ensure that our actions deliver meaningful impact in a challenging and crowded landscape.



WHY A 'LIGHTHOUSE STRATEGY'?

A lighthouse strategy is a focused, guiding approach used to illuminate a clear path forward in complex or uncertain situations. The term draws inspiration from how a lighthouse emits light and serves as a reliable beacon for navigation, particularly in rough or unclear waters.

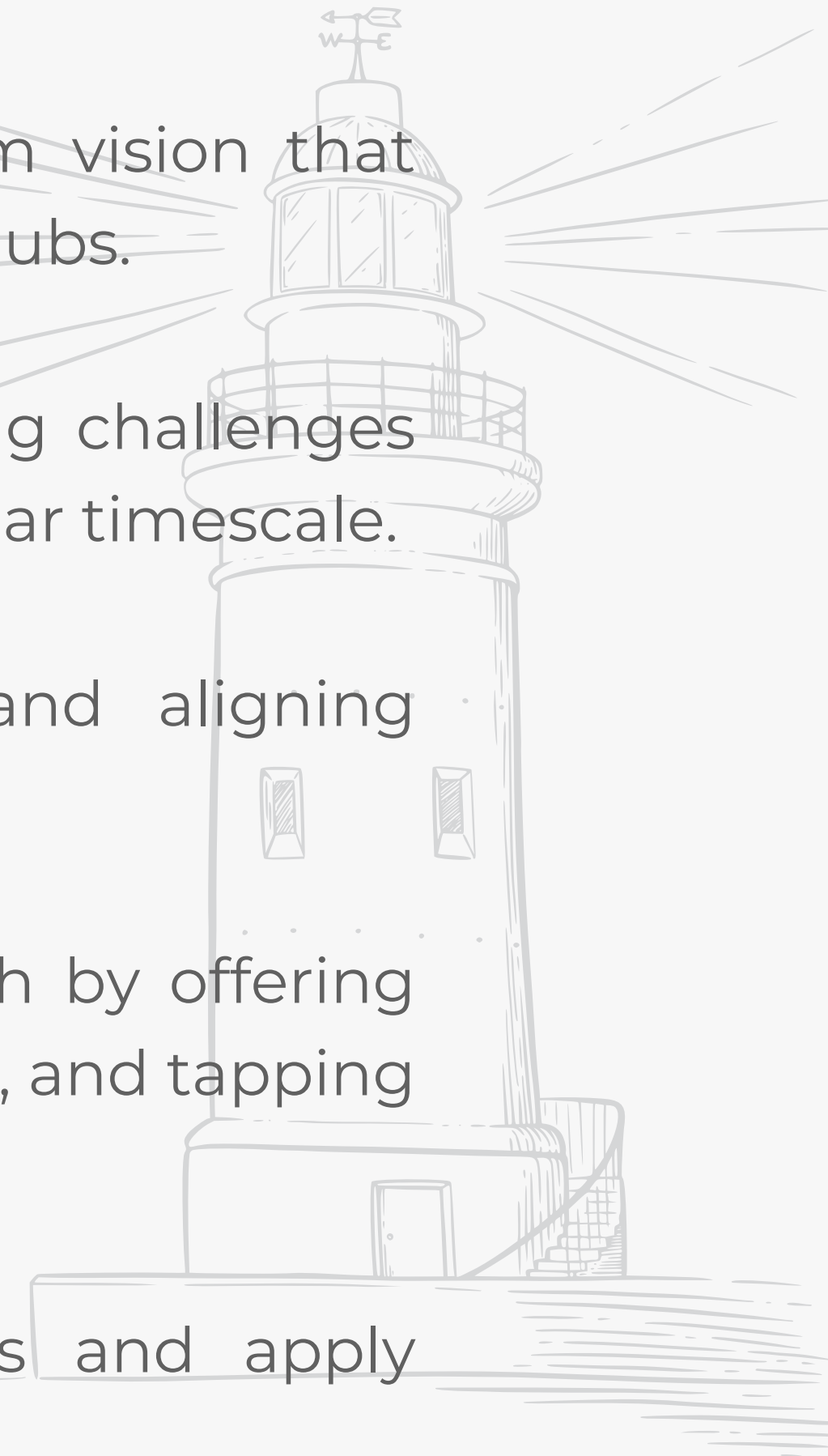
A lighthouse's effectiveness is determined by its height above water in relation to its distance from the horizon.

With that in mind...



KEY FEATURES OF THE STRATEGY

- **Clarity of Vision (*the beacon*):** Articulating a clear, long-term vision that serve as a guiding principle for members of our network across hubs.
- **Foresight and Strategy (*the distance to horizon*):** Anticipating challenges and opportunities, and positioning the IGC strategically on a 5-year timescale.
- **Key Priorities (*the lighthouse range*):** Clarifying values and aligning resources with key intended outcomes.
- **Influence (*the lighthouse keepers*):** Strengthening IGC's reach by offering inspiration and direction to individuals, teams, and organisations, and tapping into their potential to amplify IGC's work across hubs.
- **Precision (*the blueprint*):** Setting clear metrics for success and apply evidence-based approaches to decision-making.



WHAT'S BEEN DONE SO FAR

Between May and July, the IGC Secretariat has engaged in over 20 bi- or trilateral Lighthouse Strategy Consultations with members of IGC governance bodies.

Here is a summary of our main take-aways:



1) UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

Power through connection: IGC is a one-of-a-kind-network. Its strength lies primarily in relationships, not outputs - influence stems from linking power-holders to action.

- How can IGC leverage its network for structural impact beyond anecdotal influence?
- What criteria should guide decisions on which areas of engagement to prioritise?



2) VISION

Quality > Quantity: Prioritise fewer, sharper engagements with tangible outcomes. Mobilising leaders as co-creators, with a focus on political influence and operational accountability.

- How can we ensure Champions move from symbolic participation to active agents of change?
- What mechanisms can reinforce both individual and institutional commitment?



3) STRATEGIC FORESIGHT: NAVIGATING PUSHBACK

Inclusion > alienation: Mobilise the “moveable middle” and expand regional and ideological reach. Fine-tune IGC’s narrative, coordinate peer learning, and equip Champions with intelligence and clear, values-based messaging to counter regressive trends.

- Which specific strategies are most effective for engaging non-traditional actors?
- How should IGC adapt its messaging to balance political sensitivity with its core values?



4) LEVERAGING CHAMPIONS' LEADERSHIP

Stay lean and strategic: Design interventions for time-poor leaders, which are light-touch but high-impact. Prioritise diversifying the network.

- How can we most effectively engage Champions without overburdening them?
- How can we expand representation across the network?



5) COMMUNICATIONS

Communications as strategy: visibility drives legitimacy. Communicate IGC's impact clearly, using accessible language, compelling narratives and empiric evidence. Communications should centre on showcasing Champions and success stories.

- How can our communications best support Champions and their efforts?
- What types of stories or formats resonate most with target audiences, including Champions themselves?



6) NETWORK COORDINATION

From fragmentation to focus: aligning efforts through strategic engagement and sustained resourcing of hubs. Invest in strong local Steering Committees, revisit focal point meetings to make them more targeted.

- What practical steps can reduce silos and improve information flow between Board, Secretariat, hubs, Focal Points, and Champions?
- How can we ensure continuity and visibility for non-Geneva hubs while respecting limited resources?



7) PRIORITISATION AND FOCUS

Avoid mission drift and strengthen the foundation without going backwards. Resources must be concentrated on core initiatives and fewer, well-executed efforts with clear and visible impact.

- Which criteria should guide the decision to sunset underperforming initiatives?
- How can IGC balance the need for focused impact with the diversity of its constituency?
- Should IGC revisit its current strategic objectives?



8) NETWORK LEGITIMACY

IGC's perceived legitimacy rests on its membership – ensuring equitable representation and upholding accountability through clear standards is key. Assure quality even as network expands. Demonstrating impact through evidence and success stories is critical. Strengthen strategic partnerships.

- Should IGC adopt formal mechanisms, such as quotas, to ensure equitable representation?
- How can the network safeguard its credibility while expanding membership and influence?
- Which partnerships should be strengthened?



9) CHAMPION OWNERSHIP

Champions must be encouraged to (re)invest in the IGC. Create and curate more regular Champion-led spaces for exchange, including formats like salon-style meetings. Identify strategic moments for engagement.

- What incentives or structures encourage Champions to actively (re)invest in the network?
- Which strategic moments or milestones could be leveraged to boost engagement and visibility?



10) MEASURING IMPACT

Measure what matters through capturing progress with both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Adopt strategic metrics that reflect shifts in norms, increased visibility, and influence on policy, such as outcome harvesting.

- How can qualitative indicators like norm shifts or policy influence be captured and communicated effectively?
- What balance between storytelling and data ensures that evidence drives actionable engagement?

