

**International
Society for the
Performing Arts**



**A Strategic View
2023 - 2025**

January, 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following plan is an update to the five-year strategic plan introduced in 2017. With the advent of the global pandemic in 2020, the Board of Directors proposed an update to the plan which embraced a three-year time horizon and stressed ISPA's commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity along with the organization's acknowledgement of climate change.

The mission of the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) is to strengthen the performing arts globally through the advancement of leadership, the exchange of ideas and by fostering a diverse and engaged membership.

We seek to achieve this mission through three key strategic aims:

- Encouraging and Extending Participation
- Facilitating Learning, Capacity Building and Professional Development
- Extending Communication, Information and Values

ISPA has three primary tools or opportunities to achieve its mission:

The membership itself, the annual congresses held in New York and annually in different regions of the world, and though other programs and activities designed to advance the performing arts globally.

Our priorities over the course of the next three years include:

- Extending participation in the membership and activity in accordance with ISPA's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Increasing accessibility by minimizing barriers (e.g. financial, linguistic, cultural)
- Enabling all members to develop themselves professionally and personally regardless of career stage
- Contributing to furthering the sector's contribution to reducing our carbon footprint
- Developing ISPA's role as a global thought leader in the cultural sector

ISPA is committed to delivering its mission within a context of financial stability and managed growth.

STRENGTHS

MISSION

To strengthen the performing arts globally through the advancement of leadership, the exchange of ideas and by fostering a diverse and engaged membership.

VISION

To be a leading global network of diverse cultural professionals, reflecting the entire ecosystem of the performing arts. This network will strengthen communities, and further develop and promote the appreciation and recognition of the importance of the arts to society.

VALUES

As an organization we uphold a set of commonly held values as follows:

Professional Integrity and Excellence

- Acting with honesty, integrity, and openness to achieve the highest quality in our own work and in that of our members'

Collaboration and Cooperation

- Promoting collaboration, cooperation, and partnership among members and with others globally

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Proactively ensuring the right of all members to participate without discrimination, including with respect to: political and/or religious beliefs, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic circumstances, national origin, race, age, or disability

A Commitment to Sustainability

- Recognize that we're in a state of global climate crisis and on the brink of causing irreversible damage to our planet, its atmosphere, its inhabitants, and our future. We commit to develop and implement a set of intentions and actions to minimize ISPA's global carbon footprint

STRENGTHS

ISPA WILL CAPITALIZE ON ITS IDENTIFIED STRENGTHS, WHICH INCLUDE:

Membership

- A vibrant community with a very engaged, active, and growing membership, including both established and emerging leaders (with a healthy renewal rate).
- The sharing of knowledge and skills across the membership
- Strong personal inter-connections, including with new members
- An expansion in diversity over recent years, including both organizations and individuals, from its historically mono-cultural base

Congresses

- Members' positive perceptions of ISPA, in particular ISPA's leadership and the congress offer
- Growing participation in the NY Congress
- The strong inter-personal aspect of face-to-face events
- Members' contributions to the development of event content
- Diverse locations for the international congresses which are responsive to the local/regional context

Programs

- Enabling the sharing of knowledge and skills across the membership
- The development of Global and Regional Fellowship programs, funded through self-generated income and partnerships
- The emphasis on leadership development and the support of emerging and established leaders around the world

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

IN CONSIDERING THE STRENGTHS OUTLINED ABOVE, ISPA SHOULD:

Extend participation in the membership and activity in accordance with ISPA's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion;

Increase accessibility by minimizing barriers (e.g. financial, linguistic, cultural);

Attract funds from international sources for developing membership and other initiatives in under-represented regions and backgrounds;

Enable all members to develop themselves professionally and personally regardless of career stage;

Develop ISPA's role as a global thought leader in the cultural sector;

Keep the broad base of members engaged year-round;

Strengthen and communicate the offers that ISPA makes to all sectors of its membership;

Recognize the impact of climate change and actively engage to reduce its carbon footprint

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE AND EXTEND PARTICIPATION

In order that ISPA reflect its values through its membership and engagement, it must facilitate broader and accessible participation in all aspects of the organization's programs.

Objective	Strategy	Priority
Membership		
1.1 Attract currently under-represented leaders across cultures and regions in accordance with our values of equity, diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage board and staff in anti-bias training Arrange regional events regularly Increase participants from underrepresented areas 	2023 2023 2023
1.2 Increase retention and new members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize new leadership models and leaders in different stages of their career to extend the membership Focus on ensuring retention following international congresses Further engage Fellows following program participation Consider additional categories of membership Develop effective, flexible financial models to facilitate engagement 	2023 2023 2023 2024 2025
1.3 Ensure members with differing abilities can access our programs and congresses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate participation of members/delegates with differing abilities Establish mechanisms for addressing issues of mobility and sense-impairment 	2023 2023
Congress		
1.4 Hold congresses and/or initiatives in regions identified for strategic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure consecutive international congresses take place in strategic target regions/cities 	2023

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1.5 Increase the accessibility of Congress	• Strive for best practices to enhance physical access not just minimum standards	2023
	• Develop online initiatives based on technological developments (social media etc.)	2023
	• Develop a toolbox to address issues of language accessibility (e.g. simultaneous translation, multi-lingual interpretation, web-based resources)	2023
1.6 Reduce carbon footprint at congresses	• Eliminate use of non-recyclable materials	2023
	• Encourage delegates to purchase carbon offsets	2023

Programs

1.7 Develop and extend our leadership development initiatives	• Establish a year-round program of activity (in both real and virtual space)	2023
	• Engage Fellows at the end of their Fellowship	2023
	• Multi-year programmatic activity in strategic regions	2024

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (CONT'D)

GOAL 2: FACILITATING LEARNING, CAPACITY BUILDING & PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT

ISPA is often referred to as a marketplace of ideas—an offering for which professional and personal development is the priority and goal. This learning should be equally targeted to people in all stages of their career and development.

Objective	Strategy	Priority
Membership		
2.1 Foster Skills /knowledge exchange and learning across different regions, cultures and disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target past and present members to contribute through webinars, mentoring and live events Engage expert external input as appropriate Extend the mentoring system and other connections throughout the year 	2023 2024 2023
2.2 Enhance our digital presence to foster engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify new digital and live platforms to facilitate exchange Enhance electronic communications with members and interested parties Build an archive of congress and other programs on demand 	2023 2023 2023
Congress		
2.3 Build member input into content and format for congress and other events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop programs that showcase different regions in the membership Program small group discussions, identified by membership through Open Space, break-outs etc. 	Ongoing 2023
Programs		
2.4 Create professional enhancement programs (live and virtual), linked to targeted regional development – for mutual support and learning and to develop debates and collaborations within ISPA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend engagement with regions post congresses Create online groups for younger/ emerging leaders and mid-career leaders Other online programs (e.g. webinar/masterclass program and regional panels) Ensure links to strategic regions take place regularly Endeavor to maintain projects with congress partner city or regional governments 	2023 2023 2025 2024 2023
2.5 Provide information/resources to members regarding climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update website with information of reducing carbon footprints 	2024

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (CONT'D)

GOAL 3: COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION & ENGAGEMENT

A broad base of support and learning will benefit from ISPA's offering and ISPA will benefit from a broader audience.

Objectives	Strategy	Priority
Membership		
3.1 Create meaningful partnerships to extend membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an established circle of external partners (associations, funders) Create strategy groups for mid-year congress participation Explore linked data opportunities 	2023 2023
3.2 Develop communication programs that engage the membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote online public access platforms (ISPAstreams) Expand presence to regional platforms (We Chat) 	Ongoing
3.3 Preserve and honor ISPA's institutional memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote ISPA's 75th Anniversary Issue Publications/media reflecting ISPA's history Utilize online platforms as a source for archives / Build an online repository for sharing the collected wisdom of the membership 	2023 2023 2023
Congress		
3.4 Facilitate accessible, affordable participation/consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake high quality recordings and varied viewing opportunities 	2023
3.5 Disseminate congress video sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post videos of congress on ISPA website and public domain Provide ongoing web-based resourcing including translation (sub-titled) 	2023 2023
Programs		
3.6 Establish mechanisms for staying in touch with the membership and potential members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase engagement on social media and other platforms 	2023
3.7 Raise ISPA's profile & awareness of its values through an outward-facing communications strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document and share media coverage of ISPA from all sources Create events targeted for local New York Community 	2025 2024

GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONS

IN DELIVERING THE PLAN OUTLINED ABOVE, ISPA SHOULD:

Ensure that future board and committee recruitment focuses on individuals who commit to the key goals and associated strategies;

Consider creating time-limited task groups (within the overall Strategy Group) to have oversight of each goal;

Review and build ISPA's staff complement to ensure it is fit for purpose;

Explore the potential of developing long-term strategic partners with other cultural organizations or networks with compatible values and objectives;

Review if, when and where ISPA might develop other physical presences (perhaps in association with a member organization or strategic partner) to extend its global reach;

Raise funds to support strategic objectives;

Review pricing structure to minimize financial barriers to membership of ISPA and participation in its activities;

Determine the optimal size of membership ISPA can support to achieve its aims and reconcile its objectives of reach and personal contact.

ISPA'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In 2013 a small group was assembled to develop a statement of ISPA's strategic vision. This brief one-page document was adopted as ISPA's Strategic Position. In 2014, a larger group including staff was brought together to begin a formal strategic planning process. This process led to a consultant, Graham Devlin, being hired to facilitate the realization of a strategic plan. In 2022, a task force of ISPA members came together to revisit the plan launched in 2017. In recognition of the volatility due to the ongoing pandemic, the plan was revisited with the intention of an update for a three-year period ending in 2025.

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