

IOPD 2023 General Assembly

**8 November 2023: 10:00-13:00 hours
Cidades das Artes, Rio de Janeiro
Sala de Ensaio**

Elements of information and adoption:

- I. Agenda
- II. 2023 Management Report
- III. Proposed Rio de Janeiro Final Declaration
- IV. Proposed 2024 Work Plan
- V. Proposals concerning the direction and organisation of the IOPD
- VI. Minutes of the 2022 General Assembly

[To see the internal regulations of the IOPD click here](#)

[IOPD Africa Activity Report](#)

I. Agenda

1. Welcome to the Assembly – 10 minutes

- Intervention by President Eduardo Paes (Mayor of Rio de Janeiro), Co-President Éric Piolle (Mayor of Grenoble), the Secretary General of IOPD (Barcelona City Council)

2. Management Report – 20 minutes

- Presidency – 5 minutes
- Technical Secretariat – 10 minutes
- IOPD Africa – 5 minutes

3. Political Declaration of Rio de Janeiro – 15 minutes

- Presentation of the text, deliberation and adoption

4. IOPD 2024 Conference Presentation – 10 minutes

- Valongo

5. IOPD 2024 Work Plan – 40 minutes

- Presentation of the Work Plan proposal
- Session/activities proposals
- Adopt a Permanent Scientific Committee of about 5-6 people, of recognised experience, with balance of geographical origin and gender (modification of the regulations)
- Intervention time opens to propose sessions, activities or topics to incorporate into the Work Plan – 30 minutes

6. IOPD Leadership – 40 minutes

- Nominations for the Coordination Committee – 10 minutes
- Regional Antenna Proposals – 10 minutes
- Election of the female Co-president of the IOPD to promote gender equality in local participatory and deliberative democracy (modification of the regulations)
- IOPD 2025 Conference Venue Election – 20 minutes

7. Open floor for interventions – 15 minutes

II. 2023 Management Report

During 2023, the IOPD continued its mission as an international network for the exchange of experiences and discussions on participatory democracy and other practices to deepen local democracy. The IOPD aims to be a useful space for its members, the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and the global ecosystem of municipalism, activism for democracy, and human rights.

Here is a summary of the activities carried out during this year. The IOPD Technical Secretariat performs fundamental tasks of coordinating and energising the network, with the aim of being the international showcase for experiences and innovations in participatory democracy at the local and regional levels. Thus, the IOPD is responsible for maintaining and updating the member database, the website, the Technical Secretariat's email, social media profiles, and the monthly newsletter to keep the membership updated and encourage their active participation in the co-construction of our space.

In this line of communication and knowledge exchange, the IOPD disseminates the practices and experiences of participatory democracy of its members. The IOPD's work includes identifying, translating at least into the three main working languages (Spanish, English, French), systematising, publishing, and disseminating best practices of local and regional governments, as well as publications and activities of interest. Additionally, this year, three

webinars have been conducted for knowledge exchange on participatory democracy, from which public policy documents have been derived.

Likewise, the IOPD is responsible for organising the Coordinating Committee and facilitating the relationship between members and the host city of the IOPD Annual Conference.

We highlight the main activities carried out during 2023:

❖ **IOPD Conference**

The Technical Secretariat has supported the host city, Rio de Janeiro, in organising the event with the following tasks: sharing all the necessary information, managing communications about the conference (social media campaign, website news, development of the event-specific website), co-creating the program, and managing invitations to participants and the involvement of award winners. Regarding communication, informational bulletins have also been produced with all the conference information, the call for activities, and the General Assembly's convocation. In terms of content, themes and speakers have been proposed, and member requests to be part of the program have been coordinated. The IOPD Technical Secretariat has held virtual meetings and continuous communications with the local organising team.

❖ **Series of three webinars on participatory democracy**

In preparation for the IOPD 2023 Conference, three virtual sessions of knowledge exchange among local and regional governments, as well as experts, have been conducted on topics of innovation in participatory democracy: municipal feminism, citizen co-creation for the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and solutions through participatory and deliberative local democracy to address the rise of distrust, polarisation, and extremism. The Technical Secretariat has been responsible for organising these virtual sessions by convening speakers, disseminating events through social media and among IOPD partners, as well as facilitating the day of the event.

❖ **IOPD "Best Practice in Citizen Participation" 2023 Award**

In a new edition of the IOPD "Best Practice in Citizen Participation" Award, the Technical Secretariat has prepared all the documentation and communication strategy: candidate sheets, award bases, materials for disseminating the call to participate and vote. This year, we set a new record with 149 submissions. The Technical Secretariat was responsible for translating (into the three working languages of the IOPD) and uploading the summaries of the applications to the ParticipateIOPD platform. Additionally, we have coordinated the jury in two phases: an initial selection of up to 40 finalists and a final phase of evaluating these 40 finalists, including a virtual meeting. The finalist applications were also subjected to public evaluation through the ParticipateIOPD platform. Finally, the winners were contacted, the trophy and diplomas were prepared, and the publication of the award was arranged.

❖ UCLG

The IOPD Technical Secretariat, which is also part of the World Secretariat team of UCLG, has collaborated in all dimensions related to local democracy and participation. We highlight participation in the UCLG Retreat in February, the entry point for the Future Vision Exercise on Trust in May, the Executive Bureau in Brussels in June, and representation in the Coalition for Democracy and relationship with the Open Government Partnership (OGP).

Main activities:

- 2023 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy, Mexico City (1-4 March)
- 4th Summit of Democratic Cities in Merida, Yucatan (5-6 March)
- IOPD Webinar on Participation and Gender Perspective/Feminist Municipalism (31 March)
- International Congress on Citizen Participation and Decentralization in Cordoba, Argentina (25-27 April, virtual participation)
- 17 Rooms initiative "Room 16: Transforming Democracy Together," Mexico City (5-6 May), plus other virtual meetings throughout the year.
- 7th European Meetings on Participation, France (26-28 June, workshop organised by the IOPD Technical Secretariat)
- IOPD Webinar on Co-creation in the Localization of SDGs (5th July)
- 4th International Forum on Participatory Democracy in Mozambique (12-15 July)
- Congress of Participatory Budgets organised in Bogotá (26-29 July)
- OGP Summit in Tallinn, 5-7 September
- International Day of Democracy - IOPD virtual meeting (15 September)
- 22nd IOPD International Conference (6-8 November)

III. Proposed Rio de Janeiro Final Declaration

Awaiting draft proposal

IV. Proposed work plan

The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) is a network of local and regional governments, research centres, and organisations from civil society that work to defend, boost and improve local democracy. The IOPD has collaborated with UCLG since 2006, and this work plan aims to reinforce this relationship by framing the action of IOPD more clearly in the network domain and aligning their strategies. UCLG is the main global network of cities and local governments. It represents these voices globally; its main principles are

proximity, decentralisation, and political leadership. The IOPD should be the group that promotes reflection on democratic renewal and the defence of democratic values within the world organisation.

The Pact for the Future of Humanity, adopted at the UCLG Congress, and the final declarations of Grenoble and Rio de Janeiro should be our reference guides for 2024 and the years to come.

In this Work Plan, we want to define the strategic priorities, thematic priorities, and lines of action, as well as the tasks and an approximate activities schedule. The IOPD Steering Committee, the Technical Secretariat, and the rest of the network members must implement the Work Plan.

The IOPD Work Plan is divided into four parts:

PART 1. *Strategic priorities*

PART 2. *Thematic priorities and axes of action*

PART 3. *Tasks to impulse networking*

PART 4. *Agenda*

PART 1. Strategic priorities

Objectives:

1. Strengthen IOPD actions.
2. To expand the network and improve its utility.
3. To frame IOPD activities in the UCLG network and its action plan.

To achieve these objectives, we define the following strategic priorities:

- ❖ **PRIORITY A. Communication and awareness campaign.** Involves, on the one hand, the internal communication and the IOPD community management, including its organs and its members. It aims to improve this kind of communication. On the other hand, it also includes external communication and awareness raising. Here the priority is to make IOPD activities more visible, to raise awareness among the general public about the importance of participatory democracy and to share the existing local and regional participatory experiences.
- ❖ **PRIORITY B. Evaluation of practices.** This kind of action has always been present in the IOPD and some activities have been developed along these lines, such as the Best

Practice Awards. This kind of action would now be one of the four IOPD priorities as an observatory. The aim is for it to become not only a repository of experiences and a space for exchange but also a tool for promoting the quality of participatory democracy by developing new actions.

- ❖ **PRIORITY C. Strengthening: growing the network.** This priority includes identifying criteria to widen the network, e.g., the kind of organisation/institution, the geographical location, etc. In addition, it involves new types of members, like, for example, social movements and informal platforms. Strengthening the network: to get new promoter members, governments, or organisations that would co-leading the network
- ❖ **PRIORITY D. Learning: decentralised cooperation.** It is a priority not only to promote the growth of the network, but also to improve the quality of exchanges between members to incentivise decentralised learning through our own activities and project collaborations with our international partners.

PART 2. Thematic priorities and axes of action

Democracy is in crisis in many countries, according to the rise of populist political parties, the diminution of electoral participation and the trust indicators towards political parties and institutions. On the other hand, the emergence of new forms of participation and political mobilisations are channelled through communication technologies. Certainly, local and regional governments have a key role in developing democratic innovations carrying out public policies that strengthen social and community ties, as well as defending human rights. The IOPD considers this local governments' role and wants to contribute to weaving this network of cities and municipalities that promote, defend, and increase local democracy.

[The agenda for local democracy](#) is the IOPD reference guide for local governments to develop democracy.

Thematic priorities:

These themes were the IOPD priorities for 2023: "**the role of citizen participation in the climate emergency and environmental challenges such as the loss of biodiversity**" and the "**gender perspective in citizen participation.**"

Other priority topics of the network are:

- Strengthen the network's narrative by recovering the origins and history of the IOPD.
- Monitoring and analysis of practices compiled by the IOPD.
- Establish a working group of professionals facilitating participatory processes.
- Develop a quality index of participatory democracy.

Thematic priorities for 2024: TBC.

Proposals:

Valongo, IOPD 2024 President and host of our 23rd Conference, proposes to include as a **thematic priority the IOPD 2024 Conference: "Populist Threats: Building Democratic Resilience with Participatory Communities."**

PART 3. Tasks to promote networking

PRIORITY A. Communication and awareness campaign	
Internal communication	
Task 1	Diagnosis of the existing communication mechanisms with members and proposal of new mechanisms to maintain permanent channels of exchange with them.
Task 2	Administration of e-mail accounts and sending of a monthly newsletter and periodicity on an as needed basis.
Task 3	Updates on activities and events, both to network members and to political representatives in the IOPD's internal bodies.
External communication	
Task 4	Repository of experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establishment of new criteria to systematise information about existing experiences according to topics. b. Reflect upon the added value of this repository compared to others. c. Active search of new experiences, activating the network. d. Co-production of the description of experiences, jointly with local actors.
Task 5	Maintenance and update of the website and social media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Definition and implementation of communication strategies for the promotion of participatory democracy experiences, own activities, participation in events of our partners and initiatives of our social partners to promote participatory democracy.
Task 6	Publication of reports (related to tasks 10 and 11): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Publication of the annual report (coinciding with the annual conference).

	b. Publication of special reports and policy papers with recommendations for advancing local participatory and deliberative democracy.
Task 7	Annual conference: a. Annual conference organisation and communication support.
Task 8	Organisation of three international events (according to priority contents, task 19).
Task 9	Participation in international events jointly with UCLG.

PRIORITY B. Evaluation of practices

Task 10	Participation in the partnership between UCLG and the Global Coalition for Democracy.
Task 11	Special reports: a. Fundraising. b. Assignment (in relation to the priority contents). c. Production of the report.
Task 12	IOPD Award “Best Practice in Citizen Participation” a. Revision of the criteria and process for awarding prizes. b. Call for nominations. c. Receipt of nominations: translation and publication on the Participate OIDP digital platform. d. Selection process: convening of the juries and management of communication with them. e. Publication of results. f. Preparation of a digital publication compiling the practices received. g. Search for funds to be able to award a monetary prize.
Task 13	Coordination of mutual evaluation mechanisms (between members).

PRIORITY C. Strengthen: widening the network

Task 14	Clean up of the current list of members (previous contact with inactive members).
Task 15	Identification of strategic criteria for the addition of new members.

Task 16	<p>Incorporation of new members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of potential members. Contact and addition of new members. Ask for information about their needs. Ask for an authorization to publish their data. Ask for contacts.
Task 17	<p>Admission of new promoter members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contact with local governments leaders in participatory democracy. To improve the new promoter members' role definition.

PRIORITY D. Learning: decentralised cooperation and joint actions

Task 18	<p>Study of the collaboration forms (existing forms, incentives, technical resources and new proposals):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment of the study. Production of the study.
Task 19	Identification of priority content.
Task 20	Development of the online platform PARTICIPATE OIDP.
Task 21	Establishment of a Standing Scientific Committee of about 5-6 expert persons with broad experience, with a balance of geographical origin and gender.
Task 22	Development of learning materials: policy documents, news and articles published on our website, videos, infographics and other audiovisual materials.

PART 4. Calendar

- Define and schedule 2 or 3 IOPD own actions: such as webinars or face-to-face meetings.
- Add main activities of IOPD partners that you want to link to our work plan.

January	<p>Coordinating Committee meetings (January or February) Preparation for the launching of the 18th edition of the IOPD Prize</p>
February	<p>UCLG Retreat and Campus Call for nominations for the 18th edition of the IOPD Award</p>
March	

April	
May	<p><u>15 May</u>: Deadline for nominations for the IOPD Award</p> <p><u>15-18 May</u>: Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy, Bucharest</p> <p><u>31 May</u>: Selection of IOPD Award finalists</p> <p>ALDA General Assembly in Barcelona (<i>May-June</i>)</p>
June	<p>Open public vote IOPD Award</p> <p>UCLG Bureau</p> <p>8e Rencontres Européennes de la Participation - France</p>
July	Second phase of the IOPD Award Jury
August	Second phase of the IOPD Jury – Final Deliberation
September	<u>15 September</u> : Democracy Day - virtual meeting IOPD ?
October	<p>IOPD Conference and Assembly in Valongo</p> <p><u>17, 18 and 19 October</u></p>
November	
December	

V. Proposals concerning the direction and organisation of the IOPD

a) Call for IOPD Promoting Memberships

Promoters undertake to participate in the political direction of the network and to make a financial contribution.

- Promoting members may be local or regional authorities or associations of local and regional authorities.
- Promoting members are part of the Coordination Committee, which oversees the implementation of the IOPD work plan and also plays a representative role.
- The identity of the promoting members will be displayed on all the media produced by the IOPD: website, newsletters, social media, publications.
- Promoting members undertake to contribute to the IOPD: contribution or contribution in kind.

b) Call for an elected woman to be Co-President of the IOPD to promote gender equality in local participatory and deliberative democracy

- Amendment of the IOPD's rules of procedure to include this new co-presidency.
 - Election of an elected woman from a city in our network, who may be a mayor, deputy mayor, councillor or any other elected position within local or regional government.
 - The IOPD co-president will act as the institutional representative of our network in the various activities we organise or take part in, and in the communications and content produced by the IOPD.
 - It will also be responsible for leading the line of work aimed at promoting equality between women and men in local participatory and deliberative democracy, proposing activities, themes and work actions.
 - The charge will have a two-year term, which may be renewed.
- c) **Setting up a Permanent Scientific Committee made up of around 5 to 6 experts with extensive experience, with a balance between geographical origin and gender.**
- Amendment of the rules of procedure to include it.
 - Promoting members will be able to nominate personalities.
 - This Permanent Scientific Committee will have a supporting role in the organisation of conferences, the selection of the jury for the IOPD Award and the development of knowledge products.
 - The aim of this Permanent Scientific Committee is to provide with greater continuity to the work of the IOPD and to maintain direct contact between the organising committees of the various conferences.
 - The term of office of the members of this committee will be 3 years.
 - The members of this committee will not be remunerated, but will be given priority for membership of the scientific committees of the annual conferences, the IOPD Jury of Distinction or for reports or consultancy contracts potentially contracted by the IOPD Technical Secretariat.
- d) **Applications for the 2025 host city**

At the end of the official deadline for submitting bids, the Technical Secretariat, despite several requests for information, had not received any formal bids to host the IDPO Conference in 2025.

VI. Minutes of the 2022 General Assembly

- Consult here: <https://www.oidp.net/docs/repo/doc1452.pdf>



Thanks to the contributions of:

