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Background

Since our founding in 1973, Ipas has improved women’s health by increasing access to safe abortion care and protecting individuals’ rights to make their own reproductive health decisions. **Our mission, to ensure that “women and girls have improved sexual and reproductive health and rights through enhanced access to and use of safe abortion and contraceptive care” remains steadfast.** Today, as in 1973, this mission challenges one of the most deeply entrenched power imbalances that exists in almost every society: the human right of women and girls to end a pregnancy and do so on their own terms.

In a world marked by global shifts, such as climate change, worldwide pandemics, migration, political instability, plummeting economies, and the rise of anti-rights movements—and as the funding and development sectors evolve in response, Ipas will alter strategies and outcomes necessary to achieve our mission. Access to safe abortion and contraceptive care through systems alone can no longer largely determine our success. Instead, whether and how individuals can exercise self-care is a fundamental priority. We will support abortion self-care by facilitating direct access by women and girls, ensuring an enabling political and legal environment and by supporting sustained pathways to care, even in the face of broader health system challenges. This strategic framework articulates the principles and spirit that will guide our operational and programmatic decision making over the next three years. It is designed to adapt as changes continue to unfold.

**OUR VISION**

A world where every woman and girl has the right and ability to determine her own sexuality and reproductive health.

**OUR MISSION**

Women and girls have improved sexual and reproductive health and rights through enhanced access to and use of safe abortion and contraceptive care.

**GUIDING VALUES**

We are Driven, Principled, Bold, and Interdependent. For more detail, please refer to Annex 1.

Introduction

Ipas remains committed to safe abortion as our primary focus, building on nearly five decades of experience addressing unsafe abortion and its consequences. We will continue to center our work on the needs and perspectives of women and girls who seek abortion care, and we will strive to better center
the needs and perspectives of all people who become pregnant. We will continue to use a comprehensive approach to abortion programming—working across institutions, social groups and the close contacts that influence abortion access and rights.

We define a sustainable abortion ecosystem as “a dynamic condition in which resilient local stakeholders and systems are actively accountable and committed to abortion rights and responsive to everyone’s abortion needs.”

We are guided by factors that inform and support (or undermine) the abortion ecosystem around an individual who seeks to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Sustaining the abortion ecosystem involves sustaining social change—which can only be done by learning about what individuals need and prefer in order to better meet their needs, including abortion self-care, and improving the social norms around them as they seek care. Sustainability of abortion also depends on closely related reproductive health issues, like ensuring availability, acceptability, and free choices for people seeking contraceptive services and supplies to avoid unwanted pregnancy. We will further strengthen the use of evidence-based solutions with user insights at the forefront, through the use of our social norm and behavior change framework. Shared stewardship of the abortion ecosystem means we partner to improve and expand abortion access and rights. Thoughtful collaboration with strategic partners helps us guard collective progress and ensure the sustainability of all our combined efforts.

In line with existing partnership principles, our work and impact continue to be achieved by:

- **working through effective partnerships.** The change that Ipas creates has always been through strategic collaboration and capacity-strengthening support with a diverse range of local and community-based partners, including the women and girls we serve. This will remain a key focus for Ipas, and we are more committed than ever to strengthen our participatory approach, to ensure mutual accountability, and promote equitable work with these partners and stakeholders.

- **strengthening intersectional partnerships** to situate the abortion ecosystem within the local context realistically, and to expand and grow the impact of our work in sustaining that ecosystem. Increasingly, we will look for opportunities to integrate abortion into broader health, gender equality, and social justice movements. This not only widens the existing support base for abortion access and rights, but it also strengthens our own work by better reflecting the diverse perspectives and approaches of these broader movements.

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1 Throughout this narrative, we use the terms “women, girls and, at times, the gender-neutral “people”, to refer to those who have had – or may someday have – an abortion. We seek to acknowledge the full range of gender identities held by people who have abortions. While abortion stigma affects everyone, we name women, girls, gender non-conforming, and people who are pregnant – rather than exclusively using gender-neutral language – to recognize that abortion stigma is rooted in female sexuality and contributes to gender inequity and oppression. We recognize that the language to express a richer diversity of gender identity and expression is evolving, and we seek to contribute to more inclusive language in the abortion field.

2 Intersectionality is a reproductive justice framing that broadens the perspectives informing our work by helping us understand abortion through a wider lens. This strategic framework does not define but rather emphasizes the heightened need to cultivate meaningful local partnerships with groups whose social justice work could or already does intersect with access to abortion.
• **deepening our partnerships with governments and the overall health sector.** Governments and policymakers will continue to be key partners for our work. We will look to strengthen our work across the overall health sector in the countries where we work, building on current opportunities with private sites, providers, and pharmacies.

### Organizational Identity Statement, Unique Value and Distinctive Capabilities

In our strategic framework evolution, we’ve taken a close look at our value in the world:

**Who are we?** [Identity statement]

*Ipas is a pioneering global health and rights organization of multidisciplinary experts, focused on amplifying, defending and advancing safe abortion access.*

**What is our unique value?** [Value proposition]

Ipas adds special value by:

• grounding our approach in the belief that sustainable abortion access requires a comprehensive and intersectional approach;
• amplifying local, regional, and global efforts on policy platforms that support movement-building and knowledge-exchange; and
• our unwavering and unapologetic commitment to abortion, and our deep knowledge and technical expertise on the evidence and norms surrounding it.

**How will we deliver on our value?** [Distinctive capabilities]

As a backbone organization supporting the abortion ecosystem, Ipas's distinctive capabilities reinforce and enable our ability to deliver on our value proposition. We are:

• **Bold, reliable, and trustworthy technical experts and partners.**
• **Driven by human-centered insights to produce resources, tools, and interventions that are adaptable, responsive, and evidence-based, focused on protecting and defending access to diverse pathways to safe abortion.**
• **Recognized leaders in strengthening the understanding and skills of partners to effectively address abortion in service provision, advocacy, and intersectional programming**
• **A catalytic convener between diverse partners in intersectional areas to expand access to safe abortion and contraception.**

In the next section, we provide a comprehensive overview of the key aspects of our revised strategic framework.
Revised Strategic Framework and Accompanying Measurement Plan

The graphic below illustrates changes to the organizational outcomes and clarifies the critical relationships across and between key programming and operational outcomes.

Strategic Framework Graphic

**VISION:** A world where every woman and girl has the right and ability to determine her own sexuality and reproductive health.

**MISSION:** Women and girls have improved sexual and reproductive health and rights through enhanced access to and use of safe abortion and contraceptive care.

Our **Ultimate Outcome** is to ensure that our work and our collaboration with partners creates and maintains a sustainable abortion ecosystem. Using the Ipas sustainability framework as the basis for revisions, we reinforce the interconnectedness between all outcome levels, as well as the principles that guide everything we do. The sustainability framework and this strategy recognize the dynamic and interdependent nature of each pillar within the abortion ecosystem.

**Intermediate Outcomes**

Organizational **Intermediate Outcomes** (formerly outputs) remain largely unchanged from our current strategic plan. Each intermediate outcome reflects the longer-term change that we expect for the abortion ecosystem from our work with partners. Measurement of intermediate outcome level indicators will occur over the life of the strategic plan.

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3 See page 5 of the Ipas sustainability framework for more on how we understand the interplay of these pillars within the abortion ecosystem.
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED POLICIES, LAWS, AND FINANCING

In a sustainable abortion ecosystem, laws and policies respect and protect abortion as a human right, without unnecessary or harmful barriers limiting access. Financing for sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion care, ensures resilient, affordable, and equitable access to abortion care across the health sector. Mobilized communities engage in advocacy on financing for abortion access, and effective legal and policy advocacy strategies support political leaders to expand and improve gender-responsive policies, legislation, and financial commitments on safe abortion care.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 2: ENHANCED AGENCY AND SOCIAL NORMS

In a sustainable abortion ecosystem, individuals demonstrate confidence and autonomy in exercising reproductive choices, informed by reliable information about safe options, including abortion self-care. Social norms are gender-responsive, inclusive and are regularly supported by empowered community-based and civil society organizations, as well as other community members.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 3: IMPROVED ACCESS, AVAILABILITY, QUALITY AND ACCEPTABILITY

In a sustainable abortion ecosystem, abortion rights are realized as part of the broader right to health. This means that health-related principles of accessibility, availability, acceptability, and quality (AAAQ) are met across all abortion pathways, supporting the total needs of anyone seeking abortion care. Health outcomes directly inform quality and accessibility improvements, meeting community needs and informing political decision-making.

Immediate Outcomes

Additionally, technical Immediate Outcomes reflect the shorter-term changes to the ecosystem that we create through implementation of program activities. The descriptions are offered below to provide information on the nature of our programming and vision for sustainability in each immediate outcome.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1: INCREASED POLITICAL SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP

In a sustainable abortion ecosystem, government stakeholders prioritize sexual and reproductive health and rights by respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights obligations. They commit to ensuring meaningful access to comprehensive abortion care for all who need it, informed by available health information and including funding of services. To sustain political support and leadership, there must be effective and reliable champions for abortion access at all levels of government and the public and private health sector, and an effective civil society movement mobilized around advocacy and political accountability for abortion access.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 2: IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

In a sustainable abortion ecosystem, social norms support people’s ability to exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights and are free from abortion stigma and discrimination. Community-based and civil society organizations, community health workers and volunteers, and other commu-
nity members are informed and empowered to uphold women’s and girls’ human rights and are committed to holding accountable those who could limit access to those rights. In a sustainable abortion ecosystem, women and girls seeking care have access to social support from a diverse range of community members and society at large.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 3: STRENGTHENED PATHWAYS

In a sustainable abortion ecosystem, accurate information on abortion is available in an uninterrupted manner, and people have access to medical abortion drugs with or without a prescription. Abortion decisions are based on need and preference, and pathways to abortion are clear and accessible. Universal access to abortion is readily available and integrated throughout the health care system, with services that are free of stigma, respect human rights, and are available through a trained and supported health workforce that meets service delivery standards.

We have elevated our focus on reducing abortion-related stigma. Persistent abortion stigma means our programs consistently experience a resistance to progress. Even where progress is gained, if it is not firmly rooted and carefully guarded, it can be easily lost. Ipas has a unique understanding of where and how abortion stigma is most pervasive and harmful within the abortion ecosystem. This cross-cutting outcome requires tailored stigma-reduction strategies that support the overall reduction of stigma across the ecosystem.

Operational Outcomes

Operational Outcomes (formerly outputs) form the foundation for our framework. We recognize the critical importance of being an effective organization and valued partner, and we include a new operational outcome dedicated to recognizing the importance of being a learning organization.

OPERATIONAL OUTCOME 4: EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

To accomplish our technical outcomes and achieve our mission, we will keep building internal strength. We are:

- Adapting the governance and structure of our organization to better serve our strategy;
- Striving for greater efficiency and value for money;
- Creating and sustaining a staff that is exceptional in its performance, as well as passionate and diverse; and
- Increasing our fundraising efforts in a push for more diversified and sustainable funding.

OPERATIONAL OUTCOME 5: VALUED PARTNER

Ipas will continue to focus on partnerships—globally and locally. We aim to either remain, or become, a valued partner for donors, governments, advocacy groups and health organizations. We will nurture mutually beneficial and intersectional partnerships that amplify safe abortion care as a human right. At the national level, Ipas has unique relationships with governments and community organizations in many of the places where we work, and we will continue to build those relationships and support capacity-strengthening to increase and sustain gains in safe abortion and contraception.
OPERATIONAL OUTCOME 6: STRENGTHENED LEARNING AND INNOVATION

Ipas will solidify our ability to create and transfer our knowledge and expertise on abortion, both within and outside of the organization. To do this, we will enhance our use of evidence, learning, and program experience. Specifically, and in line with leading research on building learning organizations and supporting innovation, we will:

- Use evidence-based and data-driven programmatic and technical approaches with adaptive management of program activities;
- Pursue innovation in internal processes, as well as in external work, with an emphasis on scalability and impact;
- Promote ongoing collaboration and learning with the abortion field by systematically applying lessons to our work; and
- Contribute to learning in the field through effective communication and dissemination of successful innovations and lessons learned.

Guiding Principles

Finally, the graphic above includes Ipas’s Guiding Principles, which represent the key “drivers” toward sustainability of the abortion ecosystem. These drivers apply to all Ipas interventions, but they are represented here too, in recognition of their underlying importance in informing all aspects of what we do.

WOMAN-CENTERED (WITH INCREASED EMPHASIS ON ABORTION SELF-CARE):

We must understand and improve the abortion ecosystem based on what women and girls want and need. Self-care for abortion is of profound significance as health systems and communities respond to the current global pandemic. It is likely that resilient women and girls have already found solutions or workarounds to meet their abortion needs when stakeholders and systems around them fail. We will learn from them, and by centering them in the ecosystem, we can more clearly understand the environment in which they are making abortion decisions. We are currently strengthening our gender and stigma analysis and strategies given global and local trends—this will inform all aspects of our work, especially woman-centeredness.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY:

Human rights are universal and indivisible. Our approach requires human rights-based analyses, framing and implementation strategies that are tailored for the local context and regularly reflect an understanding and prioritization of human rights principles, especially equitable access to safe abortion for all who need it.

LOCAL EXPERTISE:

Without local expertise to guide progress, an abortion ecosystem will not survive. Our programs will regularly offer technical support, assistance and capacity-strengthening where it is needed for local partners and stakeholders.
PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION:
To ensure the ecosystem can maintain a solid network of relationships, effective partnerships and collaboration over the long term, it is crucial that we collaborate early and often with key partners for strategic planning and to inform our evolving intersectional approach.

OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY:
Successful approaches to ownership and accountability will mean bringing policymakers and health authorities into the planning and implementation process early to ensure their buy-in from the start; it will also mean working with local communities, health professional associations and human rights bodies to hold these stakeholders accountable to meet the needs of the individuals being served.

Evaluating and Localizing the Strategic Framework
Ipas will use a balanced scorecard approach to support localization and evaluation of our revised strategic framework over the next three years. The balanced scorecard is a planning and management system that helps organizations look at their work holistically and focus on big-picture strategic goals and the measures of success for those goals. This approach will also be the primary reporting method for the Board. This approach allows us to clearly state outcomes for the strategic plan period for all areas of our work and focus on key indicators that let us know whether we are effectively advancing in our plans. This approach also allows us room to be nimble, with flexibility to adjust our strategy as the global landscape evolves. The balanced scorecard approach ensures that outcomes and measures are owned by the full organization. As with planning for a sustainable abortion ecosystem—which requires context-specific programing—measurement and evaluation of our work will also be context-specific, with each country team setting their own 1-year measures across the balanced scorecard and contributing to the overall organizational impact. Details on our measurement and evaluation framework and the balanced scorecard approach for monitoring our progress and impact can be found in Annex 2.

The Way Forward
This is a moment of introspection, an inflection point in Ipas’s history where we have an opportunity to re-imagine our role and contribution to the global, regional, and local movements for reproductive autonomy and self-determination. This framework, along with changes in our operational model and management approach, lays the foundation for Ipas to be a change agent and leader in access to abortion care.

Unlike previous strategic plans, this framework aims to guide—without directing—local strategies and intersectional partnerships, while reinforcing our comprehensive approach and collective expertise.

We are determined to get this moment of global transition right. Ipas is well-poised to help lead our sector through the chaos and disruption of the current moment. With others, we will move into the next moment with renewed clarity, intention, and efficiency, and always staying true to a collective vision for global reproductive justice.
Appendix

Annex I: Core values

Driven
We are impatient for a world where women and girls’ sexual and reproductive rights are fully realized and unsafe abortion no longer exists. We are focused and disciplined in our mission. We make the most of our time, energy and resources and push ourselves to keep moving forward despite obstacles. We are outcome oriented, not process obsessed. We care deeply about the impact and quality of all that we do while remaining aware that women and girls need safe abortion today.

Principled
We believe sexual and reproductive rights are basic human rights. Access to safe abortion is an integral and unassailable part of those rights. Safe abortion is also a fundamental part of basic health care. Our work on safe abortion promotes gender equity. Our actions are founded on these core beliefs. We have integrity when we do not compromise these principles and when we trust in women’s decisions.

Bold
We are unapologetic and unconditional in our commitment to a woman’s right to bodily autonomy. We solve problems through creative thinking, curiosity, and we challenge assumptions that might otherwise limit us. We make decisions based on experience and evidence, and feel safe in taking calculated risks both in our communication and our actions. We always seek to challenge our own biases and assumptions and we are not afraid to create new pathways for women to exercise their right to safe abortion. We believe that this requires honest, direct communication and we are not afraid to tell the truth. We are also not afraid to laugh at ourselves and have moments of joy in our work.

Interdependent
Our goals are ambitious and larger than us. We are dedicated to advancing the abortion field and the rights of women, not just Ipas. We share information, expertise and responsibility, and we strengthen our entire field as a result. We have a collaborative spirit and recognize when we are stronger together. We respect our colleagues, internal and external, by giving each other the benefit of the doubt and celebrating and supporting the work of others.
Annex 2: Balanced Scorecard

The balanced scorecard (BSC) is a strategic planning and management approach that helps organizations create a holistic strategy focused on big-picture outcomes and measures of success. The BSC approach will help clarify how we execute our strategy by defining clear organizational outcomes and measures for our programmatic and operational areas in the strategic plan. It provides a way to translate strategic outcomes into yearly plans to help deliver on the overall strategy. And finally, it also provides a framework for monitoring progress to determine how well strategic outcomes are being delivered.

Ipas has adapted the BSC approach to work for our strategy process (see Ipas’s BSC, included below), which will be used as the primary reporting method for the Board. Due to the focus on information at the strategic level, the balanced scorecard will provide the Board with a better picture of how the whole organization is progressing against strategic goals. Ipas will be using 3-year outcomes to define what the organization needs to achieve for the programmatic and operational outcomes described in the strategic framework narrative. Measures and associated milestones will be determined for each strategy outcome and will include both leading and lagging indicators of success. These 3-year outcomes will be measured on an annual basis. A few key measures will be selected for more regular monitoring to ensure the overall strategic plan is on track.

Ipas will be using 1-year outcomes to cascade the BSC to each office. Each office will have the ability to determine the 1-year outcomes and measures that contribute to the overall strategic plan outcomes for each area of the BSC. Teams will also have the ability to identify key initiatives that are contributing to the achievement of the outcomes.
## BALANCED SCORECARD

**VISION**: A world where every woman and girl has the right and ability to determine her own sexuality and reproductive health.

**MISSION**: Women and girls have improved sexual and reproductive health and rights through enhanced access to and use of safe abortion and contraceptive care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3-year strategic outcomes</th>
<th>3-year measures (targets to be developed)</th>
<th>1-year outcomes</th>
<th>1-year measures</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUSTAINABLE ABORTION ECOSYSTEM</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect and advance abortion ecosystems</td>
<td>• Abortion advances report (Ipas contributions)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved laws, policies, and financing</td>
<td>• Number of improved laws, policy, and financing commitments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhanced agency and social norms</td>
<td>• Increased self-efficacy, social support, or social norms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved access, availability, quality, and acceptability</td>
<td>• Increased and improved services</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHENED LEARNING AND INNOVATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning processes and innovation culture embedded throughout the organization</td>
<td>• % of teams embedding learning practices within team functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognized leadership in technical resources and innovative programming</td>
<td>• # of high impact* technical resources and research publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrated excellence in communications</td>
<td>• Evidence of high impact* communications and events</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective, adaptable systems and management processes deliver on-time results, within budget, and optimum allowable cost recovery</td>
<td>• Actual vs. effective indirect/fringe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective functioning of shared leadership governance structure</td>
<td>• Burn rate year-to-date / inception-to-date vs. target burn rate over life of project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthen adaptable, diverse, skilled Ipas workforce</td>
<td>• To be determined after transition plan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VALUED PARTNER</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grow and maintain sustainable funding base</td>
<td>• Total funds raised</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish reputation as “backbone” organization for abortion ecosystem</td>
<td>• Feedback from partners on “backbone” measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embed user-centered, participatory approaches and insights at the center programs and partnerships</td>
<td>• % of teams routinely incorporating user insights and feedback into program design</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*High impact definition: Coverage in top tier industry publication, uptake/use by donors and partners, publication or event with social/political/fundraising impacts.