

2026 Priorities & Performance Targets for the IPPF Director General

The IPPF Board of Trustees is absolutely delighted to welcome Maria Antonieta Alcalde Castro as its new Director General (DG). This major opportunity for our organisation comes at a critical juncture for sexual and reproductive rights and health broadly and for IPPF itself. The Board is very mindful of both its duty of care to the new DG, and its governance responsibilities for IPPF at this crucial time.

So, to assist the DG's successful on-boarding and provide additional support during the leadership transition phase and the probationary period, the Board has established a **DG-Support Working Group (WG)**, co-chaired by the outgoing and presumptive incoming Board Chairs. Its additional members are the Board Vice Chair and Chair of the Membership Committee (MC), the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (C-FAR), and the Chair of the Strategy, Investment and Policy Committee (C-SIP).

The WG will work closely with the DG during her first months, based on a shared view of this leadership-transition period, with this document representing a mutual understanding of the Board's expectations of her and her priorities over this time.

It is further agreed that final assessment of the contracted probationary period will take place late August or early September 2026.

1. Context

1.1 External (macro) context:

The global political context in 2026 is defined by deep structural fragmentation, a decisive shift away from the liberal international order, and the consolidation of a more transactional, multipolar system.

Great-power rivalry, particularly between the United States, China, and a constellation of middle powers has accelerated a move toward geopolitical competition over cooperation. This is accompanied by a growing "securitization" of economic and social policy, where trade, technology, and even development assistance are increasingly subordinated to strategic interests.

Multilateralism, once the backbone of global governance, is under visible strain, with institutions facing paralysis, legitimacy crises, and declining compliance. At the same time, militarization, technological competition, and economic nationalism are intensifying, contributing to a world order where cooperation is selective and often conditional rather than universal.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is both a symptom and a driver of this transformation. After peaking in response to global crises, aid levels are stagnating or declining in real terms, with cuts to multilateral contributions and a reallocation toward domestic priorities and geopolitical objectives. This contraction is occurring precisely when financing needs in the Global South are expanding due to debt distress, climate vulnerability, and demographic pressures.

In some low-income countries, debt servicing consumes the majority of public revenues, crowding out social investment. Aid is also becoming more politicized and fragmented, with new actors reshaping development norms and practices. The result is a more complex and less predictable development finance landscape, where traditional donors no longer dominate and where concessional finance is increasingly tied to strategic alignment.

Simultaneously, inequality, both within and between countries, has reached destabilizing levels. Wealth concentration continues to accelerate, with the top 1% capturing a disproportionate share of global gains, while large segments of the population experience stagnation or decline. This economic divergence fuels social discontent erodes trust in democratic institutions, and creates fertile ground for ultra-conservative, nationalist, and populist movements. These movements often mobilize around anti-rights agendas, including backlash against gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), directly impacting organizations like IPPF. The rise of “hostile activism,” disinformation, and polarization further complicates the sociopolitical environment. In parallel, forms of “rampant capitalism,” characterized by financialization, tax avoidance, and weak global redistribution mechanisms, continue to exacerbate structural inequalities and limit states’ capacity to deliver inclusive development.

Despite these challenges, important opportunities emerge for organizations like IPPF. The fragmentation of multilateralism is giving rise to new forms of “minilateral” and coalition-based cooperation, where like-minded actors, including civil society, can exert influence and drive agendas forward. The diversification of development actors also creates openings to engage non-traditional donors, regional institutions, and South-South partnerships. Moreover, the growing recognition that inequality, gender injustice, and exclusion are central to political instability provides a strong normative basis for advancing SRHR as integral to development, democracy, and peace. In a context where states are increasingly inward-looking, civil society organizations have a critical role as transnational connectors, norm entrepreneurs, and accountability actors. Strategic positioning—grounded in evidence, coalition-building, and adaptive financing—will be essential to navigate risks while leveraging emerging spaces for influence in a rapidly evolving global order.

1.2 Internal context:

Internally, IPPF in 2026 is navigating a period of institutional recalibration anchored in the implementation of its new Charter of Values and the 2025 General Assembly (GA) statement, which calls for accelerated delivery of the “Come Together” agenda. This framework emphasizes cohesion across the Federation, stronger accountability, and a renewed focus on rights-based, people-centered programming.

While the new Charter of Values will provide a critical normative compass—reinforcing commitments to dignity, equity, inclusion, feminism, and youth leadership—its operationalization is needed across all regions and Member Associations (MAs). Variability in institutional capacity, political operating environments, and financial stability means that some parts of the Federation may advance more quickly in aligning values, governance, services, programming, and culture, while others face constraints or have limited capacity that may widen internal disparities. Ensuring that the Charter of Values and the final years of “Come

Together” translate into measurable, system-wide enhancement and impact—rather than remaining aspirational—requires sustained investment in capacity strengthening, clearer performance frameworks, advancing governance reforms at MA level and consistent leadership signalling.

The broader state of the Federation is a story of both resilience and structural fragility. Many MAs operate on the frontlines of crises: humanitarian challenges, shrinking civic space, funding uncertainty, and intensified opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), which places strain on their ability to deliver on their mandate, governance systems and leadership continuity. In some contexts, governance challenges—ranging from board effectiveness to role clarity and compliance—have exposed vulnerabilities that can affect credibility and performance.

At the regional level, there is an ongoing need to balance autonomy with coherence, particularly as decentralization efforts intersect with demands for stronger oversight and accountability.

This all makes the role of the unified Secretariat especially critical. Its evolution toward a more integrated, efficient, and strategically aligned entity is central to delivering federation-wide impact. Within this, the Director’s Leadership Team plays a pivotal role in setting tone, driving delivery and performance, supporting a positive culture, and ensuring that decision-making is transparent, timely, and aligned with both global strategy and local realities. Establishing a strong working relationship with the DLT and ensuring effective operational management of the Secretariat is essential.

Maintaining donor confidence and meeting regulatory expectations—particularly of bodies such as the UK Charity Commission—requires ongoing diligence in governance, financial stewardship, and risk management.

The broader state of the Federation reflects both resilience and structural fragility, particularly in relation to financial sustainability and resource mobilization. Many MAs are operating under increasing funding uncertainty, as traditional donor support becomes more constrained, earmarked, or politically conditioned. In this environment, the importance of proactive and strategic income generation is heightened, including strengthening relationships with core donors, diversifying funding sources, and effectively leveraging moments such as donor meetings to reinforce confidence, articulate impact, and secure flexible funding. At the same time, financial discipline is becoming ever more critical. Close monitoring of budget compliance, rigorous tracking of expenditure, and strengthened financial oversight mechanisms, both at Secretariat and MA level, are essential not only for efficiency, but for maintaining credibility with donors and regulators. Governance challenges in some parts of the Federation, including board effectiveness and compliance gaps, further underscore the need to reinforce financial stewardship and accountability as core organizational priorities.

Safeguarding remains a defining priority and a key test of institutional credibility. Following sector-wide reckonings over power, accountability, and duty of care, IPPF has strengthened its safeguarding frameworks, but consistent implementation across a diverse federation continues to be a challenge. Embedding safeguarding not only as a compliance requirement but as an organizational culture, linked to the Charter of Values, is essential. This includes

survivor-centered approaches, robust reporting and accountability mechanisms, and leadership commitment at all levels.

At the same time, safeguarding intersects with broader issues of organizational health, including staff wellbeing, equity, and inclusion, particularly in high-risk and politically hostile environments. Moving forward, IPPF's internal success will depend on its ability to align values with practice, reinforce trust internally and externally, and build a cohesive yet flexible federation capable of responding to an increasingly complex global context.

1.3 Board context:

A well engaged and informed Board is key to both IPPF's inner stability and its public credibility. Building and maintaining a relationship between the DG and the Board, its leadership and its committees that is rooted in trust, mutual respect, transparency and strongly focused on strategic priorities is a priority: important now and in the longer term. Both the Board and the DG have responsibilities to ensure that governance flourishes for the wellbeing of IPPF and that both the Board and the DG are able to fulfil their distinctive leadership responsibilities with appropriate support from each other. The June Board meeting will be a major milestone.

The Board's workplan (as agreed at its March 2026 meeting) sets out its agreed strategic priorities up to IPPF's next General Assembly, and the workplan offers both the Board and the DG a framework for tracking progress throughout that period. It can also be a basis for shaping the Board meetings' agenda and for guiding the work too of its committees. The Board and its committees require DG engagement, and support too from the DLT to ensure they can fulfil their responsibilities.

Further, new trustees and committee members will be introduced in this period while transition in Board leadership (including chair-ship of C/FAR) also takes place. The DG has an important role to play in orienting, advising and supporting those affected by changeover and the incoming leadership as they take up their responsibilities.

1.4 DG transition context:

Guiding Principles:

- ***Continuity:*** Ensuring continuity in, and enhancement of, *Come Together* implementation, including in delivery of the Secretariat's 2026 Business Plan.
- ***Supportive:*** Ensuring the DG is provided support, opportunity and mentorship as she takes on her role and is given every resource required to ensure her success
- ***Transparency & "no surprises":*** Enabling clear and open communication between the Board & DG, with no surprises about matters of importance to the effectiveness of the Board and the DG; within and across the Secretariat offices; across the Federation, and with key external stakeholders i.e. the Charity Commission
- ***Shared accountability:*** Establishing clear expectations and shared understandings of the division of labour/responsibilities between the Board and the DG; ensuring fair and impartial assessment of the DG's performance at the six and 12 months' milestones.
- ***Inclusivity:*** Ensuring diverse interests and perspectives are taken into account including those of trustees, the Secretariat including the DLT, MA EDs and other key partners

- **Confidentiality:** Protecting dignity of all involved and guarding sensitive and strategic information appropriately.

2. The Board’s purpose in setting objectives with and for the DG

Acknowledging the context and demands as summarised above, the purpose in setting these objectives/priorities/targets/indicators is to support:

- A shared understanding between the Board and the DG of her priorities for her initial six-month period and her first 12 months, including the rationale behind those.
- Evidence-based reporting at agreed intervals, by the DG, of her progress towards those objectives/targets
- Minimisation of misunderstandings about performance expectations and enable issues of concern to be identified promptly and fairly, including at the end of the six months probationary period.

3. Active provision of support to the DG & “early warning”

Clear objectives are not enough. The Board leadership and the DG must also establish a solid basis for the to be provided and receive support reliably and appropriately. Thus:

- At fortnightly intervals, the DG will organise for a call with the Board leadership (Chair and Vice Chair), sending an agenda of items prior to those calls.
- The Board chair will further schedule calls with the DG-Support WG as he deems appropriate and will oversee the approach to evaluation of the DG performance, which including for the process that the WG will undertake at the end of her probationary period.
- The Chair, Vice Chair and the DG agree to raise any performance concerns that emerge as they emerge and not wait to address them only at the end of the probationary period
- The DG will secure services of a mentor/coach to give her independent and confidential support throughout this period.

4. The Performance Framework

The first six months are understood primarily as a leadership transition period in which the Director General will focus on listening, relationship-building and strategic orientation across the Federation. The table at Section 5 (below) sets out the agreed framework of priorities and means/measures for assessing progress or performance against them.

The Framework is comprised of:

- Priorities that reflect the contextual analysis above. They are clustered around key stakeholders.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and key milestones to be met
- Methods of confirmation of performance i.e. activity-reporting at agreed intervals; “fresh eyes” presentation to the June Board meeting and a fuller report to the final meeting of 2026; feedback from internal & external stakeholders.

5. Priorities, KPIs & targets

Overall desired outcome at six months mark:

Maria Antonieta has taken established constructive working relationships with the DLT, the Secretariat, select EDS, key Member Associations and with the Board and its committees. She is articulating and communicating a thoughtful strategic perspective on IPPF's current state and options for its future. Key stakeholders report satisfaction with IPPF's progress under her leadership.

a) *Onboarding, induction & substantive priorities*

Focus	Agreed Priorities	Excepted results (KPIs/targets)	
		By September 2026	By March 2027
Secretariat	- Secretariat business plan's key deliverables on schedule - Strong working relationship with DLT & all Secretariat offices established - Good grasp of & close attention to Sec. & Fed. budget - income, expenditure & risk management - Understands & is managing Sec. workforce & related issues i.e. safeguarding, staff association, morale, HR leadership - Good grasp of key IPPF systems, policies & operating standards	- Evidence building of strong & productive working relationship with "One Sec." as a multi-officed entity, fully inclusive of Reg. Offices (see below) - Evidence building of effective working relationship evolving with DLT & openness to DLT feedback on that - Demonstrating good grasp of & insights into Board's direction & of implications for its committees workplans - Evidence building of leading approach to next IPPF Strategic Plan, & of Sec. role in that	90+% of annual Sec business plan deliverables on track/completed "One Secretariat" improvements introduced (reduced silos, etc) 100% safeguarding compliance - DG/Sec. contribution to Board workplan progress on track - Federation engagement in prep. for next strategy well underway
MAs	- Dialogue/visits with strategic sample of MAs, incl. across regions & in humanitarian settings - Effective working relationship with a range of MA EDs in formation - Familiarisation with & initial analysis of trends & challenges in MA performance & sustainability incl. programme impact, governance & income issues - Clear focus on priorities for delivery in remaining years of <i>Come Together</i>	- Evidence of good grasp of & insights into MAs' & Board MC issues, incl. positive feedback from others - Key issues for MAs in crisis settings or confronting security risks identified & steps for addressing those are articulated - Evidence of evolving strong working relations with EDs, including via follow-through with outputs of 2025 ED Advisory Group - Evidence of deepening understanding of implications for IPPF as a Fed. of a tough time for civil society at large - Has evolving perspective on strengthening of MA governance - Plans for roll out across Fed of Charter of Values & GA Statement being implemented	- Strong strategic direction for future "IPPF footprint" and novel mean of affiliation are emerging including in context of prep of new strategic plan - MA EDs are reporting confidence in the thought leadership provided by the Sec and report positive opportunities to contribute to that 60+% of MAs have signed the Charter of Values

Focus	Agreed Priorities		Excepted results (KPIs/targets)	
			By September 2026	By March 2027
Key partners	Is taking systematic steps to build up productive & trusted working relationships with key stakeholders:		- Successful 2026 Donors Meeting – +ive donor feedback - Successful March & June Board meetings - Evidence of strong “no-surprises” and candid working relationship with Board leadership, its committees, as well as with the NGC & the new honorary counsel - Evidence of progress in joint projects (i.e. as per Fight Back Fund) with key external partners - Successful public interventions	95+% donor retention - Successful BoT Nov/Dec meeting - Successful Board committee meetings 5+high-impact global interventions - Consistent engagement % effective communication with the Board, its leadership & all committees
	Internal - Board of Trustees - Chair & Vice Chair - Committees & WG - NGC	External - Donors - Key government & UN partners - Sector partners - Civil society partners - Media		
Self	- Is settling well into a new city - Is building a strategic sense of the DG role & how to best position its influence and authority - Offers the Board a “Fresh Eyes” strategic perspective on IPPF - Demonstrates candid awareness of self “SWOT” - Identifies challenges/limits & asks for & accepts assistance as needed - Embodies & promotes the IPPF Charter of Values in decision-making, relationships, & contribution to organisational culture.		- Reports progress in adjusting to new setting - Conveys sound initial grasp of the DG role & its core challenges - Presents credible verbal “Fresh Eyes” report to June BoT & a fuller written report to Nov BoT. - Is open about own leadership strengths & weaknesses in the first months, & about risks & opportunities of that to be managed in months ahead	- Demonstrated adaptive leadership with course correction when needed - Board-endorsed strategic direction for DG leadership in 2027 - High-trust relationships with the BoT, Board leadership & committees.

b) *Priorities in the Secretariat Business Plan including roll out of the Charter of Values and GA Statement*

Pillar	Objectives	GA Statement Priority Area	Excepted results (KPIs/targets)	
			By September 2026	By March 2027
Pillar 1: Centre Care on People	- Expand Choice - Widen Access - Advance Digital & Self Care	- Corridors of migration & in the global north - Digital health including AI - sharing tools, learning, and software	- Results Framework updated to reflect GA Declaration. - Safe Passage consortia in full implementation 10 MAs supported in DHI through the IPPF centre - Research conducted in 20 enhanced-reporting MAs as part of the FBF	- Learnings from Safe Passage and other MAs interventions shared & documented - DHI Roadmap implemented
Pillar 2: Move the Sexuality Agenda	- Ground Advocacy - Shift Norms - Act with Youth	- Develop authentic, simple, and relatable narratives simplifying our language - Countering opposition also by gathering, analysing and disseminating intelligence. - Show positive alternative to the toxic manosphere - Integrating priorities of GA Youth Forum	- Dashboard for opposition tracking established. - Results Framework revised to include the priorities outlined at the GA and Youth Forum resolutions	- Increase the number of MAs contributing to opposition/intelligence systems - Develop a specific strategy to address the toxic manosphere
Pillar 3: Solidarity for Change	- Support Social Movements - Build Strategic Partnerships - Innovate & Share Knowledge	- Thinking broadly about allies and partners, balancing ethical rigidity with practical effectiveness - Finding pathways for reaching the most marginalized communities - Developing rigorous evidence-based studies on meeting needs of the communities we aim to serve	- Priority advocacy agenda defined - Evidence of partnership established with organizations led by marginalized groups	- At least one rigorous evidence-based study on meeting needs of the communities we aim to serve developed - Evidence of IPPF influencing multilateral/normative spaces

Pillar 4: Nurture our Federation	• Chart our Identity • Grow our Federation • Walk the Talk	• Plans for roll out of the Charter of Values & for the Brand identity • Adopt a commercial mindset supporting innovation, resilience, and financial sustainability incl. through “insourcing” rather than outsourcing expertise & commodities. • Youth focus and priorities incl. addressing issues re youth volunteerism & creating pathways to retain and recruit young leaders, ensuring continuity and long-term sustainability across our work. • Agenda for next generation governance reform at MA level	• Charter of Values roll out plan launched • Progress in governance in Phase 2 MAs	• Learnings from the governance reform initiative scaled up
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6. Evidence-based performance assessment

The Board is committed to fair, impartial and appreciative assessment of the DG’s performance throughout her time at IPPF, with an initial strong focus on her probationary period. To this end, the assessment approach – for her first six months, within a framework of her 12-months priorities, is as follows:

- i. Probationary period performance will be assessed by the WG in early September, which is six months into the contract allowing also for the summer break
- ii. The WG will assess the DG’s performance in the probationary period on the basis of:
 - Content of DG progress reports to the WG - with written reports to be provided at three, six (and later at the nine) months’ milestones, in addition to the DG/Chair progress reports provided to Board meetings;
 - Evidence of well organised meetings of the Board (June 2026 in particular and including persuasive “Fresh Eyes” presentation), of Board committees and of Donors (i.e. June meeting)
 - Experience of Chair & Vice Chair in forging candid working relationship with the DG through such as their fortnightly catch-up meetings and adherence to a “no surprises” approach
 - Results of key stakeholder interviews to be conducted in July/August by an independent consultant of a sample of stakeholders across DLT, EDs, Donors, trustees and Board committee chairs and members etc;

- iii. In September, the Working Group will discuss the evidence set above with the DG, including the context and explanation for those results, and then determine the nature of its recommendation to the Board.
- iv. The Board will then decide on the outcome of the probationary period – by email and/or in virtual session convened for that purpose, as appropriate.

Ends/