SIPRI Strategy 2024-2029

Approved by SIPRI Governing Board

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Contents

Introduction and summary

A strategy is a guide to help an organisation thrive as it moves into the future. It sets out objectives and explains how to meet them. It is driven by the basic goals and values of the organisation as well by an awareness of the practicalities of what the institution can or cannot do. Accordingly, it offers a narrative that explains the institution's identity and role to itself and to the world. More than detailed plans and targets, a strategy deals in challenges, directions and options.

This draft of SIPRI's strategy for 2024 to 2029 opens by revisiting some fundamentals that apply in a changing world. Our institutional DNA ties together fidelity to facts and a commitment to peace. Core values remain excellence in research and its active dissemination, a commitment to promoting dialogue, and the institute's clear and firm independence. Getting the balance right between change and continuity is the underlying theme of the strategic approach as SIPRI seeks to understand and face the key challenges that arise.

The goal, purpose and objectives are unchanged from the strategy covering 2019 to 2024; the central objective is to strengthen the global conversation on peace and security. How we meet our objectives will adapt to the changed context, not least in the funding environment. Major changes in fundraising and project management are under way and will be continued.

SIPRI researches key peace and security issues in depth and explores the links between them. The institute will benefit from broad agreement on a rounded approach that addresses national, human and ecological security. Within that overall approach, different areas of specialist expertise can connect. The diverse themes of the institute's research can be captured under three headlines –

- Battlefields of today and tomorrow;
- Peacefields for the future;
- Geopolitics meets the local.

No change in SIPRI's organisational structure for research is proposed but an effort will be made to establish a new technical section.

A key aspect of SIPRI's participation in the global conversation on peace and security remains the dissemination of authoritative research and the convening of a wide variety of meetings including large forums and private dialogues. SIPRI is committed to maintaining the capacities required for this work.

The strategy concludes with 34 key performance indicators for the coming five-year period.

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1. Change and continuity

Recent years have seen profound changes in world affairs. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2022 was still being felt as the Russian re-invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 unfolded. There were already and remain rising tensions over Taiwan between China and the USA. The global background includes the deepening ecological crisis headlined by the growing impact of climate change, the higher incidence of military coups in Africa, and the increased number and intractability of armed conflicts around the world. In Sweden, a change of government, inflation and the general weakening of both the domestic and the EU economy add to the dimensions of change at multiple levels that the institute needs to navigate and its new strategy needs to address. Specific challenges arising from the changing context for SIPRI's continuing work are addressed below.

There are also significant elements of continuity. The fundamentals still apply. Some aspects of SIPRI's strategy today could have been enunciated at any point in the 58 years since the institute was founded (and probably were). Our statutes state that,

> 'the purpose of the Foundation is to conduct scientific research on questions of conflict and cooperation of importance for international peace and security, with the aim of contributing to an understanding of the conditions for peaceful solutions of interstate conflicts and for stable peace.'

In short, the task is to do solid research that could help bring about a more peaceful world. The Myrdal Commission, whose report led to SIPRI's establishment, recommended that the new institute should carry out work with

> 'an applied research character directed towards practical-political questions … in a constant interchange with research of a more theoretical kind'.

From these texts come the twin strands of SIPRI's institutional DNA — fidelity to the facts and a commitment to peace.

But while continuity matters, conditions are always changing and the institute must adapt in order to thrive. One way to understand SIPRI is by seeing it as part of the knowledge industry, broadly defined. As a relatively small player, albeit with a high profile and a significant global footprint, it is not only the excellence of our research but also our capacity to innovate that helps us to stand out.

Continuity means sustaining research themes on which we have distinctive strengths, a well-earned reputation and a niche. Innovation means both taking on new themes and keeping established themes fresh – new topics, new focus of research, new methods, with new capacity and/or new partnerships.

The emphasis on continuity highlights the importance of our long established and widely used databases. They are a common good in both research and policy on peace and security and are at the core of our reputation for authoritative research. The emphasis on continuity is also reflected in our continuing work on arms transfers, dual use technology, arms trade control and weapons of mass destruction — areas in which SIPRI has conducted research for decades.

At the same time, the emphasis on innovation leads us both to seek out new angles and new questions within well-established research themes, and to identify and build expertise in new

themes and topics. In the past decade, we have developed cutting edge work on artificial intelligence and cyberspace, on climate change and food security, on outer space and on West Africa. And innovation is important for us in other ways – not only choices about research priorities, but in methods of outreach, in how we build our staff capacity, and in how we organise the dialogues and forums we convene.

2. Independence

SIPRI's identity and reason for existence are bound up in the idea that making issues of conflict and peace, arms and disarmament more comprehensible for the public and policy-makers alike, and more actionable for the latter, increases the possibility of a transition towards greater peace and security. We thus emphasise the production of data that is as accurate as we can make it, analysis that is fair minded, and policy proposals that are both creative and balanced.

It is axiomatic that this work is best done by — and most trusted when it comes from — an independent body. This means that our independence and our integrity are a necessary part of our peace-and-facts DNA.

As an institution that was established by a government decision and whose Governing Board continues to be appointed by the Swedish government of the day, it is especially important that we are clear about the value of our independence and even fierce in guarding it. There are many challenges to it: there are some donors who want to treat SIPRI as a consultancy company rather than a research institute; there are more diffuse pressures to conform to a generally accepted line of thinking, especially about high profile, high-stakes issues; there is sometimes the assumption that we can only do the work we do with information others regard as sensitive if we are connected to a government. Sometimes our independence and allegiance to the evidence and reasoned analysis may court unwanted controversy. There are likewise diverse factors at play in supporting our independence, including our research staff's research ethics, a capacity for innovative thinking, a variety of income sources and, occasionally, sheer determination.

3. Challenges of a changing context

Several aspects of the overall changing context for peace and security create particular challenges for SIPRI in the coming five years.

Today there is a major inter-state war in Europe. The war in Ukraine did not start in February 2022 and is not the first inter-state war in Europe in a very long time. It began in 2014 and there were inter-state wars in Europe in both of the two decades before that. Nonetheless, something big did change in February 2022. Russia's re-invasion of Ukraine not only escalated the conflict to new levels of violence but also drew the West into more active support for Ukraine and efforts to hamper Russia. This changes the terms of debate on peace and security in Europe and is an important influence in world politics; contending positions on the war in Ukraine may harden into confrontational alignment over other questions such as Taiwan. Sweden responded to Russia's escalation of the war in Ukraine by accompanying Finland in joining NATO. There is a possibility that this will change the view of SIPRI among some of our audiences, so that the institute is not so easily seen as being impartial in our treatment of data

or so fair-minded and balanced in our analysis. **In response, SIPRI needs not only to protect its independence but in some sense also to project it – to make visible the authenticity of our claim to be independent.**

The mounting ecological crisis also feeds insecurity, instability and conflict. For several years, SIPRI has been at the forefront of research identifying the links between climate change and insecurity, and in recent years has taken this line of inquiry into other aspects of the ecological crisis. Though many policy environments and some research settings remain more or less blind to the impact of ecological disruption on peace and security, there is a growing awareness of these intersecting issues and the importance of tackling them. It is, however, a challenge to maintain a conceptual balance in the approach to peace and security, giving each component its due while insisting on the importance of recognising and addressing the whole. At the same time, there remain many gaps in knowledge about ecological disruption – unexplored dimensions for both natural and social sciences. For an institute that cares about evidence, this sets a clear task for research but also a challenge to the assumptions underlying how we think about policy. Choices must be made on how to address these risks though the details of timing and scale remain unclear. This involves designing policy on the basis of speculative risk. Put differently, evidence-based policy is all very well but not enough. **SIPRI needs to embrace this challenge as an opportunity. It can develop and present a coherent and balanced view of what constitutes security. It can also push forward with addressing the unanswered questions in ecological security, supporting policy-making amid uncertainty.**

The economic context is considerably less benign than previously and will probably worsen. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the escalation of Russia's war on Ukraine has brought price inflation, especially in energy and food, to many countries. This problem is exacerbated by what the World Bank analyses as a long-term decline in economic growth rates that, if left unaddressed, will continue into the 2030s. If national and intergovernmental policies cannot address these issues successfully, consequences could include slow recovery from present economic difficulties, with modest growth thereafter. With many governments increasing military spending in response both to specific perceived threats and to the general ambience of insecurity, this will likely be at the cost of important social programmes, international development assistance and financing for climate action and the green transition. This adds the issue of socio-economic human insecurity to the intersection of national security and ecological security issues outlined above. Against this general background, institutions like SIPRI will find it harder to attract the resources needed to research and analyse growing and increasingly complex problems of conflict and insecurity. **In response, the institute needs to concentrate on financial management and fundraising, especially from new sources. Readiness to make tough choices if necessary must be accompanied by a tolerance of the risks involved in innovation and investing in new research ideas and capacity.**

Growing political polarisation in many countries weakens trust in institutions and generates an increasingly transactional view of facts and analysis. This is experienced in many democracies and is normally associated with a perceived decline in democratic values. Linked to these trends is an apparently growing tolerance of and even preference for so-called 'alternative facts' – approximately meaning, 'fact-like statements that suit my/our pre-given opinions'. For an institute that deals in facts, this is close to an existential challenge. It is often worth challenging experts, especially the tendency to value their own specialisation above all other knowledge. And it is a human tendency to see what we expect to see and believe what

we want to be so. But when facts are selected that are convenient and expertise is rejected in favour of a set of favoured projections and inventions, trouble looms. From climate change through immigration via Brexit to election results and the pandemic, this problem seems to rear its head with increasing frequency. On the other hand, recognition of the problem seems to encourage many others to seek out reliable, consistent and independent sources of information and analysis. SIPRI's global media footprint and general reputation has benefited from this in recent years. **The institute can respond to this harsher operating environment by emphasising the clarity of information and analysis as well as their integrity. Research excellence means not only reliability and originality but also optimal accessibility.**

The proliferation of segmented channels of communications complicates the task of disseminating research. The problem of polarisation and semi-factual convenience is fed by the way that mass communication has evolved in the digital age. There is, of course, the problem of misinformation but the issue goes deeper. Even before the digital age, the proliferation of broadcasting companies meant communications enterprises could target defined segments of the population with niche output. In the digital age, the relationship also works in reverse, so different population segments effectively (if not entirely deliberately) target their own sources of information. The underlying technology of global information encourages many users to avoid and ignore the facts they don't like and celebrate those – including the half-truths and untruths – that they do. SIPRI and like-minded institutions have to navigate a volatile and diverse communications space in which reasoned analysis and careful treatment of the evidence often take second and third place to sound bites and diatribes. **Against this background, SIPRI will need to remain aware of changes in the media and communications landscape and continue to be familiar with multiple modes of communication. While we use diverse means and platforms, we maintain consistency in the substance of our communications.**

The changes needed to rise to these challenges mostly involve evolution rather than a step-change in SIPRI's programmes and practice, the exception being in financial management and fundraising. Even there the changes required, though significant, are not wrenching and are already under way in 2024.

One additional aspect of change worth noting is that early in the period of the new strategy, SIPRI will have a new Director when the current one completes his ten-year term.

4. SIPRI's goal, purpose and strategic objectives

SIPRI's goal, purpose and strategic objectives are set out in Box 1 (next page). The goal is given to us by our statutes and founding documents. The four-part purpose we have derived from that goal as our pathway for achieving it encapsulates an enduring balance between research, outreach, dialogue and contributing to peace research in other places. Both goal and purpose are unchanged from our previous strategy for 2019 to 2024.

It can fairly be asked whether prospects for disarmament and peace have improved in the last five years. The reasons why the answer must be negative go far beyond the scope and potential influence of a research institute, of course, and do not imply failure or poor performance by SIPRI. And the parlous state of global affairs today is a reason for redoubled efforts rather than for abandoning the goal or radically rethinking the purpose. But reflecting on world affairs going in more or less the opposite direction to the one we want raises at least

two worthwhile thoughts for our strategic direction. First, the scale and difficulty of peace and security issues means we must be clear that we can only ever undertake part of the work of addressing them. We cannot do it all alone. This underlines the recognition that partnerships are key assets. Second, our research and policy ideas may contribute to future peace and disarmament prospects by being available for use when an opportunity arises for improvement in one or other area. That is, preparing the ground for future changes is as important as achieving short-term policy take-up and impact.

Except for a minor editing tweak, the questions and answers on our three strategic objectives in Box 1 are also unchanged. The deteriorating security landscape does not diminish – if anything, it enhances – the importance of a global conversation on security and stability that takes evidence seriously and values dialogue and the international rule of law. It does, however, make the conversation more difficult. From the discussion above on key challenges arising from the changing global context, it flows logically that the conversation we prefer is one that explores a rounded concept of security, including not only traditional concerns such as defence against external threat but also human and ecological security. The conversation thus tackles a wide range of issues including gender, economic inequality and other dimensions of inclusivity or marginalisation. We continue to seek to participate in it in a variety of ways – by generating evidence, by being one of its convenors and simply by joining in.

Box 1: GOAL, PURPOSE, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **GOAL:**
   - To contribute to improved prospects for disarmament, peace and security by carrying out empirically sound research and insightful analysis.

2. **PURPOSE:**
   - To carry out applied research on security, peace and conflict;
   - To disseminate our data, analysis and conclusions including evidence-based recommendations for policy;
   - To use our authoritative reputation to convene dialogues; and
   - To help build capacity for peace research in other countries and regions.

3. **THREE QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**
   - Given the current security landscape, what objective is worthwhile and feasible?
   - As an independent institute, and given our scale and the context in which we sit, what part do we have in trying to achieve them?
   - What do we need to do so we can do our part?

4. **AND THREE ANSWERS:**
   - A global conversation on human security and international stability.
   - Generate evidence, convene gatherings, join the conversation, gain and spread knowledge, help build capacity of others.
   - Therefore, maintain quality of data and research.

To be able to participate in this global conversation in these ways, the top priority remains the quality of our research and data: widely disseminated, it is the core of our reputation. SIPRI continues to use open-source data and to make our methodologies for handling data available online.

We both maintain research capacity on issues that are of lasting concern and continually renew the freshness of our research, so it remains cutting edge and not only keeps up with but also anticipates changes in the security horizon.

SIPRI wants to ensure that its research reaches international policy audiences. We aim to provide the evidence that ought to underpin policy, and to offer actionable proposals when appropriate. To do this, we need to understand policy-makers' priorities, though we will also, when necessary, bring up other issues about which they ought to be concerned.

And as indicated earlier, it is axiomatic that, to do this, maintaining our independence is a central requirement.

Participation in the conversation involves aiming to get our research to our target audiences in a form they can both digest and respect. SIPRI attempts to communicate its data, analysis, findings and recommendations in accessible forms. This has several dimensions. Our written material is as precise as possible and avoids jargon as much as possible. SIPRI uses a variety of communications channels – social media, videos, policy briefs, media interviews, topical comment, research reports, the *Yearbook*, lectures, speeches and seminar presentations, and so on – so as to be as accessible to as many audiences as possible. Some of the communication is tightly targeted to make sure it is accessible to institutions and individuals who can make particularly good use of the work. Some is aimed at a more general audience.

We also participate in the global conversation by convening events and taking part in events organised by others. These activities are of different types and scales, ranging from public events for a general audience to high-level forums to small private dialogues to expert roundtables and more. As with our outreach, we attempt to keep our activities fresh so they continue to attract participation and attention. This aspect of our work is facilitated by our authoritative reputation and supported by expertise on the subject matter.

With these factors in mind, Box 2 (next page) offers a summary assessment of our strengths and weaknesses, together with the opportunities and challenges with which we are faced in the mid-2020s.

Box 2: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Strengths: we have	**Weaknesses:** but we also have
- Clear goal and firm ethical foundations - Well structured research programme - Main activities strategy-driven - Impressive outreach, good reputation - At forefront of research on some key issues - Significant convening power - Good standing in a broad constituency in Sweden & internationally	- An embattled constituency both in Sweden & internationally - New financial uncertainties - Overstretch in several functions - Limited (and potentially declining) financial capacity to invest in new research fields - Narrow (albeit expanding) funding base
Opportunities: we see	**Challenges:** we need to

- Global insecurity highlights need for
  - SIPRI research & data
  - Dialogue
  - A community of thought
- In some quarters there is appetite for
  - A return to evidence-based policy
  - Integrative analysis
  - Being ambitious despite setbacks
	- Maintain quality in research, outreach & events
	- Stay at the cutting edge of peace research
	- Generate more resources
	- Control growth and avoid ballooning
	- Prevent growth feeding overstretch
	- Manage higher profile and greater visibility
	- Maintain dialogue despite growing difficulties
	- Recruit & appoint new Director

5. Going forward: A new strategy (beginning with a look at the old)

In 2016, SIPRI decided to adopt a 5-year strategy. Though the institute decided it needed a new strategy before the full five years were up, we remained with the 5-year timeframe for its next strategy and for this new one, though the timeframe is not meant to be precise.

It is salutary to recall that SIPRI's almost-expired current strategy was adopted in 2019. It did not foresee the two biggest international events of the following five years, even though one of them started within months of the strategy being formally adopted.

The one part of the 2019-2024 strategy that was of specific relevance to the Covid-19 pandemic was that it aimed to strengthen SIPRI's online convening power. Retrospectively, this may be what made it possible to decide quickly to move the 2020 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development online.

Or it might just have been coincidence and the truth is simply that we were fast on our feet.

The 2019-2024 strategy also made no mention of the risk of Russia escalating the war in Ukraine, though it did reflect on rising geopolitical rivalries and deteriorating security.

SIPRI, of course, was not alone in not forecasting what happened next. Things often happen that are not foreseen with any clarity, and the issue for strategy in such cases is whether the institution is able to react to the unexpected: we cannot plan for everything but must be ready for anything.

Meeting the challenge of the pandemic, SIPRI showed considerable flexibility, not only in moving events online with commendable speed and effectiveness, but also in making new working and contractual arrangements with staff as the situation demanded. There were some problems in cohesion, morale and workload but teams worked hard to keep everybody together and feeling looked after. Potential problems in programme development were addressed so well that the institute grew, so much that the pace of recruitment generated a problem of overstretch. And a flagship report was put together despite varying degrees of lockdown in the various countries where a 30-strong research team lived and worked.

This experience suggests that an over-detailed approach to strategic planning risks being knocked askew by events.[1] Not everything is in our control, however smart our strategy; we do well to show some strategic humility. In that spirit, we need to be sure that changes we make with a new strategy are fixing only what needs to be fixed and that the problem has been clearly understood. One sure way of destabilising and demoralising an institution is to enact disruptive change that is not clearly necessary and turns out to address the wrong problem.

It Is worth recognising that, during the pandemic, the institute showed considerable resilience. That can be enhanced with stronger systems and greater capacity in some key functions. But in the end, overall, the spirit was good. The same resilience that helps handle the unexpected is needed in today's tougher political and financial environment.

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[1] If UK Prime Minister MacMillan actually said it, he was right. If he never said it, the person who put the words in his mouth was right. According to repute, when asked what is most likely to blow governments off course, he replied, "Events, dear boy. Events."

6. Facing up to the funding environment

The analysis earlier in this document indicates one area of work where significant change is needed for the coming period. There is no reason to believe that the current tightening in availability of resources to fund our research will soon ease. Economic performance in European countries and others from which we receive funding out of government spending is not expected to be as strong as in the three previous decades. The demand for increased military spending will be the focus of many governments' overall expenditure plans along with replenishing financing for health, education, welfare and infrastructure. This does not mean public funding for the kind of policy relevant research SIPRI does will disappear. In some quarters and on some issues, the signs are that there will be increased demand. However, the funding arena will be more competitive.

To meet these current and expected circumstances, SIPRI has begun a series of actions to make us more capable in this area.

- To help researchers turn ideas into viable research proposals and projects, we have established the position of Director of Programme Development. Responsibilities will focus on work on a few, multi-year, multi-person projects and, if opportunity presents, the development of a new programme.
- To strengthen our project fundraising, we have established a Grants Acquisition and Development Team. We will continue to build this team, working on project applications and budgets.
- To be sure we make optimal use of project funding, we have established a Project Management Office, which we will also continue to build.
- To strengthen our core and strategic funding, we are attempting to deepen our engagement with governments and with the private sector with a view to securing long-term funding; to this end, we have begun regular internal coordination meetings on fundraising to share information, ideas and promising contacts.
- To capitalise on our standing and based on the experience of our 2022 report, *Environment of Peace*, we have established the position of Head of Major Initiatives. The work will focus both on the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development and on a small number of initiatives, ideally involving researchers from more than one cluster, on issues where we have or can have an authoritative voice, with solid research and active outreach combining to achieve policy impact.

Each of these steps involves setting a mandate for, in the different cases, teams, senior members of staff and a coordinating group, and each mandate involves a plan and targets. These are outlined in Table 1 (next page).

These steps are in addition to continuing to focus on sound project development, financial management, networking and good donor relations. We continue to aim for more multi-year grants but the funding environment does not always make such opportunities available. Accordingly, we also need to have the flexibility and imagination to make the most of short-term grants. These can be useful as means of leveraging for investment in future work and grants, as a way of supporting the repackaging of established findings for new audiences, and, if available episodically but regularly, they can add up to be as fruitful as a multi-year grant.

TABLE 1: 5 STEPS TO ADDRESS THE FUNDING ENVIRONMENT

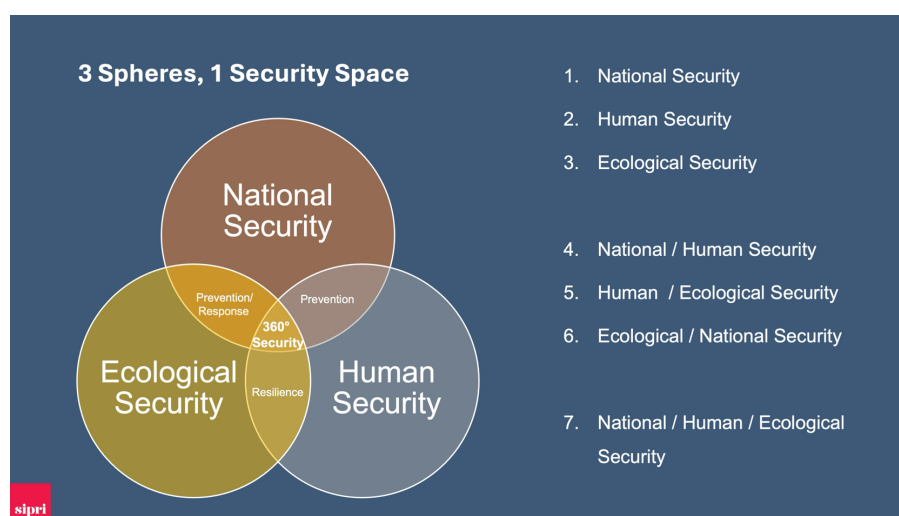| INITITATIVE – setting up the:	KEYNOTE	TARGETS
Position of Director of Programme Development	Assist researchers in developing multi-year, multi-researcher projects & programmes	• Multiple project/programme proposals per year • >1 successful applications p.a. • New programme in 5-year period
Grants Acquisition & Development Team	Assist researchers in gaining access to project funding	• Number of applications rises each year • More successful applications each year • Enough applications to cover annual funding gap (probability estimate) sent out by 30 June each year
Project Management Office	Manage project funding and reporting	• Improved systems for real-time monitoring of projects • Zero overspend or underspend on projects • Project budgets & finances fully aligned with overall institute finance reporting • All project reports delivered to donors on time
Fundraising coordination group	Help identify core and strategic funding opportunities and help bring to fruition	• New core / strategic funding sources identified • New core / strategic funding received • Zero duplication of funding approaches
Position of Head of Major Initiatives	Launch and pilot major initiatives, involving >1 cluster, integrating research, outreach and policy impact	• 1 major initiative launched & (at least partly) funded in year 1 • 3 major initiatives launched & funded in 5-year period • 2-3 major initiatives completed in 5-year period

7. Research: linkages and narrative headlines

Much of SIPRI's research focusses on the links between issues that have normally been kept separate by academia and the policy world alike, such as climate change and insecurity, or the meeting between technologies such as AI and nuclear, or AI and biological weapons. Today, an important part of analysing security issues and working out promising policy options begins with identifying and understanding the intersections between them. This requires inter-disciplinary academic work, inter-departmental policy development, and inter-agency practice. For SIPRI, it emphasises different programmes and clusters working together.

The general approach underlying this insistence on an integrative way of working is sometimes referred to as T-shaped expertise: the vertical line represents in-depth knowledge and expertise, while the crossbar indicates recognition of the necessity to connect one in-depth area of knowledge with others and the willingness to do so.

Familiarity with this way of thinking and working fits SIPRI well for addressing the challenges that issues as varied as ecological disruption and populist nationalism generate in different ways for peace, security and international order.

Box 3: A ROUNDED APPROACH TO SECURITY

3 Spheres, 1 Security Space

1. National Security
2. Human Security
3. Ecological Security

4. National / Human Security
5. Human / Ecological Security
6. Ecological / National Security

7. National / Human / Ecological Security

Box 3 presents one way to think about this, which some have found useful both in and outside SIPRI. It posits one security *space* within which are three security *spheres*. This puts equal emphasis on the separate components of insecurity and conflict and their links and overlaps. The Venn diagram conveniently identifies seven broad headings for tasks that have to be fulfilled to sustain security for citizens. The diagram visualises the spheres as both separate and a part of each other and shows that each has a part where there is little integration with the other two. In other words, using the metaphor of T-shaped expertise, the crossbar and the vertical line are equally important. To address a frequently asked question, a rounded approach to security does not mean everybody has to be expert on everything. Similarly, our research does not need to and will not go into every aspect of the overall security space.

The question then arising concerns what angles to take, or how to explain our priorities and choices in developing the research programme. The internal discussion of the 2024-2029 strategy has suggested three such angles, which can also be regarded as headlines for the institute's narrative about itself. These are:

- **Battlefields of today and tomorrow:** this could mean research on actors, drivers, issues, sites and instruments of current and future contestation and conflict;
- **Peacefields for the future:** this could focus research on actors, drivers, issues, sites and instruments of work to strengthen the prospects for peace;
- **Geopolitics meets the local:** this could take us into research on how the prospects for peace and conflict at local level are shaped by (and, in turn, often shape) developments in both global and regional geopolitics.

Table 2 (pp 13-16) lists the institute's research programmes in the three current research clusters – Armament and Disarmament; Conflict, Peace and Security; and Peace and Development – in terms of which of these three headlines applies to them. All the institute's current research is connected to one or more of the headlines. As well as current work, Table 2 includes some planned work (labelled "in preparation") and some ideas that have not yet been worked out (labelled "potential").

TABLE 2: RESEARCH ANGLES AND NARRATIVE HEADLINES			
ARMAMENT & DISARMAMENT			
	Battlefields of Today & Tomorrow	**Peacefields for the Future**	**Geopolitics Meets the Local**
Arms Transfers	Database & reports		
		Arms Trade Treaty and UN Register of Conventional Arms reporting	
Dual Use & Arms Trade Control	Export controls & cyber surveillance		
	Missile proliferation & space industry		
	Multilateral export controls		
Military Expenditure & Arms Production	Databases & reports		
	Budget transparency projects		
In preparation	Comprehensive report on consequences of military expenditure		
Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)	Nuclear deterrence in NATO posture		
	Nuclear & chemical weapons security		
	Nuclear risk reduction in outer space		
	Reducing reliance on nuclear weapons: the role of 'umbrella states'		
	Naval dynamics in the Indo-Pacific		
		Nuclear forensics	
	EU Non-Proliferation & Disarmament Consortium		
Work with Alva Myrdal Centre, Uppsala University	Nuclear disarmament in international law & policy		
	Armament & Disarmament Summer School		
Governance of AI	Limits on autonomy in weapons		
	AI for peace		
WMD & AI programmes	The AI / Nuclear nexus		
Cyber workstream	Cyber security postures	Resilience in cyber space	
Potential workstream	The peace and security implications of quantum computing		

CONFLICT, PEACE & SECURITY (CPS)			
	Battlefields of Today & Tomorrow	**Peacefields for the Future**	**Geopolitics Meets the Local**
European security	Managing relations w Russia		
		A future European security architecture	
		Managing European divergences	
		Rethinking the EU/European peace model in a changing world order	
European Security with Climate Change & Risk (CCR) (in preparation)	The Arctic		
China & Asia Security	Geo-economics of geopolitics		
	Managing relations w Russia		
		Korean Peninsula dialogue	
		Cooperation & possible spillover effects	
			China's engagements in Central & Southeast Asia, MENA, Africa
	Naval dynamics in the Indo-Pacific		Naval dynamics in the Indo-Pacific
Middle East & North Africa		Supporting dialogues: Iran & Gulf	
		Social cohesion, political voice & multi-level stakeholders	
	Regional security architecture		

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	Battlefields of Today & Tomorrow	Peacefields for the Future	Geopolitics Meets the Local
Sahel & West Africa			Geopolitics Meets The Local is the guiding theme for the whole programme
			Africa as the battlefield for the great powers
	Security architecture & its flaws		
	Conflict, jihadism & cross-border displacement		Conflict, jihadism & cross-border displacement
Peace Operations & Conflict Management	Database & reports		
	The new geopolitics of peace and a just future in Africa		
		Security Sector Reform	
		Gender & conflict resolution in peace operations	
Horn of Africa with Climate Change & Risk programme (in preparation)	Cross-border natural resource management, disputes and their resolution		
		Prospects for dialogue and peace settlements	
			Regional rivalries & external involvement
Potential	Colombia country programme		
Potential		Financing for peacebuilidng	
Potential	Conflict in urban settings (including crime)		

PEACE & DEVELOPMENT			
	Battlefields of Today & Tomorrow	**Peacefields for the Future**	**Geopolitics Meets the Local**
Climate Change & Risk	Pathways from climate change to insecurity		Pathways from climate change to insecurity in diverse geographies
	Response to climate change in security architecture & preparations		
		Environmental peacebuilding in fragile & conflict-affected states and the role of regional organisations	
		Strengthening the knowledge base of institutional (e.g., UN, EU, NATO, AU, AfDB) responses to pressures of climate change	
Food, Peace & Security	Pathways from food to insecurity and insecurity to food		Pathways of food insecurity in Latin America & Horn of Africa
			Provision of basic needs & role of non-state armed groups
			Impact of geopolitical tensions & events on food systems & local food security
		Links between humanitarian action, development & peacebuilding	
		Food security and food systems transformation in a broader resilience framework	
In preparation	Pathways from biotic ecological disruption to insecurity	Opportunities for negotiation, agreement, cooperation on ecological security	Pathways from biotic ecological disruption to insecurity in diverse geographies
In preparation	Human mobility as a mode of adaptation to conflicts and ecological disruption and as a vector of conflict		
In preparation (with CPS)	Assessing the future humanitarian workload and current capacity for preventing violent conflict		
Potential (with CPS)	Civil-military relations in fragile and conflict-affected contexts impacted by climate change		
Potential	Health, peace, pandemic risk, insecurity – linkages to climate change, ecological disruption and food		

8. Research: structure and cooperation

8.1 Research clusters

It is implicit in the previous section and in Table 2 that discussion in the institute in preparation for the 2024-2029 strategy has revealed no reason to move away from the current structure of three research clusters.

- SIPRI will retain the Armament and Disarmament cluster as is.
- In the Conflict, Peace and Security cluster, there is room for manoeuvre to consider adding a Peacebuilding programme to sit alongside the Peace Operations & Conflict Management programme. However, the more immediate prospects for new programmes focus on the Horn of Africa and on Colombia.
- The Peace and Development cluster is starting to take on work on broader ecological disruption in addition to its well-established research on climate change and on food insecurity. There is also room for manoeuvre both to explore health linkages and to develop work on civil-military relations and displacement.

Each cluster will develop new programmes and each programme will develop new projects. Recognising changes in the funding environment will shape how research prospects are explored, no strategic conceptual change is proposed in how we organise our research.

8.2 Technical section

While the overall research structure is unchanged, it is nonetheless an aim to develop a technical support section to offer assistance across the institute with statistical work including perception surveys. The latter have been a central feature of research in the Sahel region and are widely appreciated. We have the ambition to duplicate the methodology in other regions such as the Horn of Africa. Familiarity with statistical techniques and quantitative data will also be useful in other programmes. Establishing a section to support research across the institute depends on raising external funding, whether to support the section directly or to fund it via projects.

To encourage researchers to take the T-shaped approach to knowledge and expertise, all research programmes will work with other programmes including programmes in other research centres. To be well-placed to undertake integrative research, SIPRI will seek broad internal agreement on a rounded approach to security.

8.3 Working in partnerships

SIPRI's strategic objective of supporting and strengthening the global conversation on peace and security is a commitment to a joint endeavour. There is no question of SIPRI doing it alone. As an independent research institute contributing knowledge and convening power to the conversation, we play our part alongside others. Accordingly, partnerships are essential parts of our work and strategy.

SIPRI has a wide array of partnerships with a range of other organisations, from local NGOs in countries where we work, through research institutes, thinktanks and universities, to international forums, financial institutions, humanitarian actors and UN agencies. Most of these partnerships are governed by limited term but renewable Memoranda of

Understanding. When funds are required to support joint activities, project grant applications are made. Much of our work is only possible because we take great care of these strategic partnerships.

8.4 Diversity and inclusion

In keeping with SIPRI's commitment to cooperation and partnerships, it is also an aim to retain and strengthen the application of the principle of diversity and inclusion throughout our work.

In research on issues as diverse as arms control, the impact of climate change, international humanitarian law, food insecurity, peacebuilding in divided communities, and security sector reform, it has proven important to acknowledge and respect the sometimes different and sometimes converging interests and capacities of diverse social groups. Gender, nationality and ethnicity, social class and age are significant aspects in understanding insecurity and improving the prospects for peace. SIPRI includes these considerations in undertaking research, in generating outreach and in convening gatherings of all kinds, and aims to take this further. At the same time and to the same end, SIPRI also aims for diversity among the staff and on the Governing Board.

The inclusion of diverse intellectual backgrounds and perspectives in dialogue and research is likewise an important part of SIPRI's approach, leading externally to wide and varied networks of partners and interlocutors, and internally to an emphasis on inter-disciplinary cooperation.

9. Outreach and the global conversation

Because informing policy has been a core part of SIPRI's mission from the outset, it could be argued that participating in and attempting to strengthen a global conversation on peace and security has always been one of the institute's objectives, even if implicitly. This was articulated in the 2019-2024 strategy and is repeated and reaffirmed here as a key objective for the coming five years. We have the ambition to be with others at the forefront of the conversation.

Loosely defined, what we seek is an exchange of views, ideas, information and preferences taking place in a variety of forms, media and settings. It is a conversation rather than a cacophony in part because it takes evidence seriously, values dialogue, respects international law and the importance of treaty commitments, and explores a rounded view of security. We take part in this conversation by contributing our research findings to it and by both convening and joining forums and exchanges in which it can happen.

9.1 Dissemination

SIPRI has a large global footprint relative to its size. As the global security horizon has darkened, the institute's data on military expenditure, arms transfers, arms production and nuclear weapons have received more media coverage. So also have some specific reports and outputs such as research on Chinese arms companies and on environmental dimensions of peace and security.

The global communications landscape is evolving. We now publish very few books other than the *Yearbook*. Reports, factsheets, briefings, backgrounders and blogs are the main forms of written output. To maintain standards, a strong editorial hand is essential. Some outreach is

indirect; releases, interviews and briefings for news media play a large part in our outreach. Visual content in the form of maps, charts and smartly presented tables are an important part of the toolbox. The shorter and more immediate forms of social media outreach, such as on X and Instagram, also demand consistent attention and investment of time and energy, along with the preparation of video content in the form of short films and livestreaming.

This is specialist work. While researchers are, with training if necessary, the best people to put forward for interviews as experts, a different expertise is also a necessary part of outreach.

SIPRI's communication of research data and findings is a success story of 2019-2024. Partly this reflects excellent performance by the outreach team, and partly it reflects the growing appetite for our material by an audience that is increasingly worried and rightly so. It will require sustained resourcing at approximately the current levels to sustain this success.

9.2 Major initiatives

In May 2022, SIPRI published *Environment of Peace* after two years' work by some 30 researchers in SIPRI and elsewhere. This was designed as a research and outreach initiative. The report was launched and re-launched many times in the 12 months following its initial publication. It had considerable effect in advancing awareness that ecological disruption fosters risks for peace and security.

Based on this experience, as indicated above (Table 1), we have established the position of Head of Major Initiatives to lead comparable projects on strategic issues. Possible topics include the humanitarian case for investing in conflict prevention and a comprehensive study of the effects of military spending. SIPRI would both contribute its own research and draw on other research centres, playing a convening and editorial role.

9.3 Convening power and dialogue

SIPRI's convenes various kinds of dialogue and exchange. As well as a standard range of roundtables, seminars, workshops and courses, SIPRI convenes:

- The Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development;
- The Stockholm Security Conference (SSC);
- Private dialogue meetings to discuss difficult problems in a safe space.

The Forum and the SSC are major undertakings. The Forum was first convened in 2014 jointly by SIPRI and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and has been held every year since. It explores the intersection of conflict, insecurity, poverty, development and peacebuilding and has become a key gathering for the international constituency concerned with these issues. From 2023 it has been convened by SIPRI alone. The SSC was first convened by SIPRI in 2016 and has been held most years since. It has not defined as clear a niche for itself as the Forum.

The deterioration of peace and security in recent years underlines the importance of both the Forum and the SSC. However, the funding environment makes both events potentially more burdensome and difficult for SIPRI to sustain alone.

We aim to continue to convene both the Forum and the SSC throughout the period covered by this strategy, possibly entering new partnerships to do so. As a step towards this objective

in the case of the SSC, clarifying its niche is an important enabling objective. We will maintain an events team with adequate capacity for these tasks.

SIPRI will continue to convene private dialogues. At present, this work focuses on:
- Dialogue on security and especially nuclear issues in the Gulf region;
- Dialogue on security and especially nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula;
- Participating in dialogue on Asian security and global geopolitics;
- Networking with likely interlocutors for dialogue on security in Russia and Europe.

Contact with certain governments, groups and individuals, who are seen by some others as illegitimate actors, can generate controversies. We will navigate these sensitivities carefully. Our independence and reputation are important assets in doing so.

9.4 Building peace research capacity

SIPRI has the ambition to help establish and develop peace research capacity in other countries than Sweden and beyond Europe. We have not found it straightforward to fulfil this ambition and anticipate the current funding environment will continue to make it difficult to, for example, support the establishment of research centres and programmes in 'global South' countries. There are other important ways in which we do contribute, however.

First, the databases provide important infrastructure for research all round the world; like the rest of our research, they are freely available – a global public good. By recruiting internationally for fixed-term positions and by hosting interns and guest researchers from a wide range of countries, SIPRI helps in individual intellectual and professional development. Directly or indirectly, these core activities can help in building peace research capacity in other countries. In addition, SIPRI has begun to participate directly in educational initiatives, in part with the Alva Myrdal Centre for Nuclear Disarmament at Uppsala University, the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium and UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as in independent activities.

We increasingly hold or join activities in countries and regions where we conduct research. In the field, our partnerships with local institutions contribute to their development and capacity building. In particular, SIPRI has been working with local partners in the Sahel region to help them develop their research skills. Working closely with others, including the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, SIPRI is also helping establish a regional network of experts, policy makers and practitioners to improve the impact, progress and sustainability of peacebuilding research, policy and practice in West Africa. The objective to build partnerships with local institutions will also be a specific objective in the Horn of Africa and Colombia.

10. Targets and Key Performance Indicators

Not every intention or direction expressed in a strategy takes shape as a specific target with indicators. A strategy can also discuss the spirit in which the work should be done, for example. Flexibility is also a strategic goal that may be hard to measure. But there are also aims that should be not only actionable but measurable. Table 3 (next pages) formalises and summarises intentions, aims and commitments expressed in the strategy.

TABLE 3: TARGETS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024-2029

HEADING	OBJECTIVE	TARGETS	INDICATORS	Responsible team(s)	Page reference
FUNDRAISING	New core / strategic funding	• New core / strategic funding sources identified • New funding received • Zero duplication of approaches	1. Numbers of contacts 2. Number of grants received 3. Number of foul-ups	Fundraising coordination group	
	New project funding	• More applications • More grants received • Timely project fundraising	4. Number of applications submitted 5. Number of successful applications 6. Annual funding gap (probability estimate) covered by 30 June	Grants Acquisition & Development (GAD)	
	Multi-year, multi-researcher projects & programmes	• Multiple project/programme proposals per year • >1 successful applications p.a. • New programme by 2029	7. Number of applications 8. Number of successful applications 9. Yes/No (Y/N)	Director of Programme Development (DPD) / GAD	
OUTREACH	SIPRI at the forefront of the global conversation	• Adequate capacity & expertise among media, editorial and events teams	10. Y/N	Outreach	
	Maintain annual Stockholm Forum	• Adequate funding • Participation remains strong • Participation is diverse • Partnerships are solid	11. Whether core funds used 12. Numbers wanting to participate 13. Geographical spread 14. Numbers proposing panels	Outreach / Events team / Head of Major Initiatives	
	Maintain recurring SSC	• Fix durable niche / theme • Adequate funding	15. Y/N 16. Whether SSC uses core funds		
	New major initiatives integrating research & outreach	• 1 major initiative launched & funded in year 1 • 3 funded by 2029 • 2-3 completed by 2029	17. Y/N 18. Number launched 19. Number completed	Head of major Initiatives / project teams /Outreach	

OPERATIONS	Enhance staff resilience	• Staff commitment, contentment & cohesion • IT, HR and Finance systems & procedures that are reliable and user-friendly	20. Staff survey responses 21. Level of satisfaction with systems	Operations / HR / Senior Management Team	
	Efficient project financial management and reporting	• Zero overspend or underspend on projects • Project budgets & finances fully aligned with overall institute finance reporting • All project reports delivered to donors on time in good shape	22. Number with over/underspend 23. Smooth closing of mid-year books & forecasting (Y/N) 24. Number of late deliveries / rejections	Project Management Office /GAD / Finance team / project teams	
RESEARCH	Overall approach highlighting linkages in peace and security	• Research projects & programmes combine diverse expertise & knowledge • Familiarity with a rounded view of security & peace	25. General acknowledgement of value of inter-disciplinarity research (Y/N) 26. Y/N	All clusters	
	SIPRI continues to innovate	• 1 new programme per cluster • 1 new project per programme	27. Number by 2029 28. Number by 2029	All clusters	
	Cross-institute capacity for statistical research & surveys	• Establish technical support section (subject to funding)	29. Y/N by 2029	DPD, GAD	
	Contribute to building peace research capacity outside Europe	• Partnerships with research centres outside Europe • Involvement of non-European participants in SIPRI-supported training & education	30. Number 31. Number	All clusters	
DIALOGUE	Availability & acceptability as facilitator of private dialogues	• Capacity & funding to support dialogue events • Knowledge & networks to support dialogue events	32. Funds available 33. Staff available 34. Y/N	Variable / Deputy Director / Director	