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Centre for International  
Governance Innovation

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# Strategic Plan

Designing for Impact and Influence

2025–2030






# About CIGI

The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) is an independent, non-partisan think tank whose peer-reviewed research, foresight and trusted analysis influence policy makers to innovate.

With the engagement of a global network of experts and contributors, CIGI tackles the governance challenges and opportunities of data and transformative technologies, including AI, and their impact on the economy, security, democracy and, ultimately, societies.



CIGI acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The CIGI Campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes 10 km on each side of the Grand River.

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# Global Context

## Turbulence, Evolution and Silver Linings

CIGI's last Strategic Plan in 2020 foresaw an emergent digital era where governance and data sit at the heart of policy. The world of 2025 now faces a fresh jolt of upheaval.

Foundational economic and security alignments are being disrupted, and international institutions are increasingly marginalized. Smaller powers struggle to find their place. The rapid diffusion of emerging technologies — artificial intelligence, quantum, digital money, satellites, cyber and autonomous weaponry and much more — is outstripping the capacity of governance frameworks to adapt. These reshape every aspect of society, from media and security to human rights and economic frameworks. All nations are struggling to balance the need for innovation and technology with their security, privacy and human values. Growing geopolitical competition over critical technologies underscores the urgent need for forward-looking policies.

Amid all this, there are silver linings. There is an opportunity to rethink and reshape governance structures for the public good, and to strengthen collaboration between governments, industry, organizations, institutions and people.

Our Strategic Plan sets the stage for innovative research in four key areas. It articulates our approach to policy research mobilization and drives our frame for policy impact and influence. CIGI provides evidence-based analysis and recommendations, fosters dialogue and helps drive policy innovation. The need for informed, agile policy making has never been greater. By acting with foresight and dexterity, and with our global network of experts and partners, we can respond to challenges and work to achieve responsible, equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Uniting us is the vision that, if properly governed, the process of ubiquitous digitalization and the core value of data as an asset can deliver on their ultimate promise: to be true public goods.

# Core Values

## Innovation

CIGI fellows and staff demonstrate intellectual curiosity by embracing fresh insights and new policy ideas from a diversity of perspectives. They are willing to take risks and emphasize strengths in the pursuit of creative, groundbreaking governance solutions.

## Accountability

CIGI team members take personal responsibility for the quality and timeliness of commitments, regularly communicate expectations, proactively work to address issues as they arise, and act as prudent, efficient stewards of CIGI's and partners' resources.

## Integrity

CIGI fellows and staff embody the highest professional standards: they behave honestly and ethically; provide open and honest feedback; and seek opportunities to collaborate and consult. They build long-term relationships with internal and external colleagues based on mutual trust and respect.

# Strategic Framework

## Innovative Research

*Agile, ambitious, relevant, forward-thinking, clearly prioritized research*

**AI and Transformative Technology:** Advancing a technology governance future based on shared values through foresight on breakthrough emerging technologies and causal understanding of the underlying factors that drive responsible innovation, competitiveness and security.



**Data, Economy and Society:** Furthering innovative and equitable economic frameworks that address digitalization, global financial systems, and the intersection of data and governance in promoting the public good, including focused work on Africa.



**Digitalization, Security and Democracy:** Supporting secure, equitable and democratic digital ecosystems by addressing cybersecurity risks, space governance gaps, challenges with AI applications and the societal impacts of emerging technologies on human rights and security.



**Global Cooperation and Governance:** Fostering innovative solutions for data-related policies at all governance levels and promoting actions to help evolve critical international institutions and foster global cooperation in an era of strategic behaviour.

## Policy Research Mobilization

*Inform, engage, innovate, relevant, accessible, trusted, insightful*

**Knowledge Translation:** Translate research into impactful digestible content; leverage research through innovative multimedia modes.

**Advocacy and Engagement Strategy:** Intentional engagement strategy with international and national organizations, governments and industry; capacity building in governments; leverage partnerships with other research groups for policy impact.

**Broaden Audience and Trust:** Expand offerings targeted to public audiences; build brand recognition and confidence.

## Policy Impact and Influence

*Designing for impact, results-oriented, influencer, contributor*

**Design for Impact:** Intentional design for policy impact and outcomes; connect knowledge products with desired outcomes.

**Measure for Influence and Impact:** Evaluate influence and impact on relevant international governance and domestic policy and legislation; expand connection and influence with industry to increase quality of CIGI research.

## Partnerships and Networks

*Collaboration, resilience, sustainability*

## People

*Thriving culture, collaboration, talent, diversity*

# Strategic Drivers

## Innovative Research

The **Innovative Research** strategic driver is designed to be agile and ambitious, ensuring that it remains relevant and forward-thinking in addressing the dynamic challenges of our time. Research is clearly prioritized across four key research areas: AI and Transformative Technology; Data, Economy and Society; Digitalization, Security and Democracy; and Global Cooperation and Governance. This approach allows for targeted, impactful research that anticipates future trends and provides actionable insights to shape international and national policy and decision making.

## Policy Research Mobilization

The **Policy Research Mobilization** strategic driver is focused on three core themes: knowledge translation, advocacy and engagement, and broadening audience and trust. Knowledge translation aims to inform and engage audiences by transforming research into relevant, accessible content using innovative multimedia formats to deliver insightful impact. Advocacy and engagement focuses on formalizing relationships with international and national organizations, governments and industries to ensure CIGI's research recommendations remain trusted and impactful. Finally, broadening audience and trust seeks to expand public engagement, build literacy on key research areas and strengthen CIGI's brand recognition to enhance the credibility and reach of our work.

## Policy Impact and Influence

The strategic driver of **Policy Impact and Influence** focuses on designing for impact by intentionally shaping programs to achieve meaningful policy outcomes. The strategy is focused on creating and implementing methodologies that connect knowledge products and program activities with specific desired results. To measure success, the strategy incorporates tracking program-specific and cumulative changes to assess the influence and impact of research activities on both international and national governance. This approach positions CIGI as a key influencer and valuable contributor to shaping effective policy into the future.

# Innovative Research

## AI and Transformative Technology

- Inform policies on AI governance that promote innovation while ensuring ethical standards, security and equitable access.
- Advance responsible emerging and dual-use technology through analysis and recommendations that consider the environmental sustainability, techno-economic competitiveness and social impact.
- Enable foresight on cross-cutting technologies such as AI and quantum and their interface with other research areas.

## Data, Economy and Society

- Advance comprehensive economic frameworks that respond to the digitalization of the global economy.
- Analyze emerging global financial systems.
- Empower African researchers to inform the continent's digital transformation.
- Explore the contribution of data to corporate value.
- Empower decision makers with the insights necessary to navigate an increasingly digital and multipolar world, where data, technology, economic inequality and global governance intersect, while advancing public good.

## Digitalization, Security and Democracy

- Advance new ideas and solutions to address national and international cybersecurity challenges, space security governance and AI applications in military contexts.
- Analyze the implications of technology on human rights and democracy, disinformation and freedom of thought.
- Propose strategies to counter technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
- Provide policy recommendations to guide decision making in the face of evolving threats to national and human security in the digital age.

## Global Cooperation and Governance

- Advance new ideas and solutions for multilateral and institutional reform.
- Analyze the implications of the evolving multipolar order with the rise of India, China and other emerging powers.
- Outline global scenarios to support policy analysis and decision making to advance the public good.

# Policy Research Mobilization

## Knowledge Translation

- Translate research into impactful digestible content that draws on CIGI expertise and research.
- Leverage research through innovative multimedia modes to expand options and impact of research.

## Advocacy and Engagement Strategy

- Enhance and formalize CIGI's advocacy and engagement strategy with international and national organizations, governments and industry to ensure research-driven recommendations are relevant, helpful and trusted.
- Build literacy and skills in governments and partner research institutions around CIGI research focus areas, including support for Canada's global leadership.

## Broaden Audience and Trust

- Expand offerings targeted to public audiences to create a literate public on CIGI research focus areas.
- Build brand recognition and confidence with targeted audiences to advance the core research areas and recommendations.



# Policy Impact and Influence

## Design for Impact

- Implement an intentional design of CIGI programs for policy impact and outcomes.
- Design and implement a methodology to connect knowledge products and program activities with desired outcomes.

## Measure for Influence and Impact

- Measure program-specific and cumulative change from research activities to determine influence and impact on international and national governance.

# Partnerships and Networks

The strategy for deepening and growing CIGI's collaborative partnerships and networks focuses on building strong, strategic alliances with key partners, including academic institutions, think tanks, industry leaders and policy makers, to amplify research impact. It aims to foster cross-sector collaboration, leveraging diverse expertise and resources to address complex global challenges. By cultivating long-term partnerships, the strategy ensures that research outcomes are disseminated and adopted, and result in tangible, real-world solutions.



# People

CIGI people are foundational to the success of the organization. This strategy focuses on fostering a thriving culture that emphasizes collaboration, innovation and shared purpose across CIGI. CIGI is committed to the attraction and retention of top talent by creating an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity, promotes collaboration and supports professional growth. By prioritizing a dynamic and engaged workforce, this strategy ensures that the CIGI team continues to contribute to international and national policy influence and impact.

## Acknowledgements

CIGI gratefully acknowledges the support of founding partners Jim Balsillie and the Government of Canada, as well as contributions from the Government of Ontario and the City of Waterloo.

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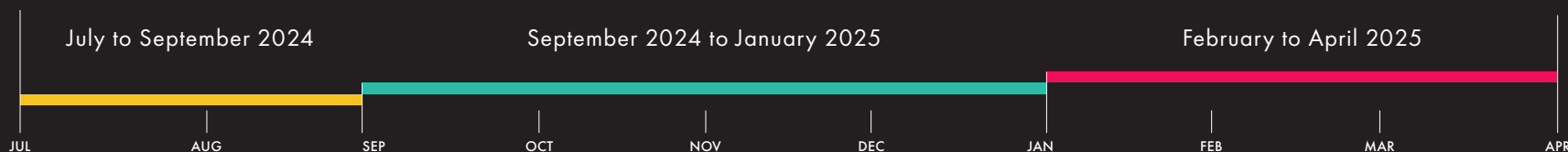
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# Strategy Development Timeline



## Phase 1: Strategy Exploration

Conducted extensive strategy consultations to gather input on the strengths and desired future state for CIGI. The data was collected through interviews and focus groups and themed into three reports:

- Think Tank Strategy Exploration Report: included themed interviews from global think tanks
- Government Strategy Exploration Report: included themed interviews from government officials
- CIGI Team Strategy Exploration Report: included themed interview and focus group data from staff and leaders from CIGI

## Phase 2: Strategy Development

Identified the strategic themes and priorities. A strategy framework was developed and tested with the CIGI team. The feedback was integrated, and the strategic objectives and goals were developed.

## Phase 3: Strategic Plan Launch

The one-year Strategic Operating Plan 2025–2026 was developed and the Strategic Plan 2025–2030 was formally launched to the community.

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# Thank You

To learn more about CIGI's work and activities, visit [cigionline.org](https://cigionline.org).





  
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