



EAST-WEST
CENTER

East-West Center
Foundational Strategy
2023 - 2027





Aloha East-West Center Stakeholders,

With its foundation in Hawai'i, East-West Center stands at the heart of this century's most consequential region. The Indo-Pacific, home to more than half the planet's people and two-thirds of its recent economic growth, is center stage for some of our world's best opportunities for progress, as well as some of its most daunting challenges to peace and sustainability. While many Indo-Pacific nations are growing in affluence, influence, and interna-

tional prominence, the region also faces mounting impacts from climate change, COVID-19, corruption, and geopolitical competition. Waves of regional change pitch communities between breakthrough and disaster.

East-West Center's work in the next five years is built on the conviction that capable, committed, and connected leaders make the difference in turbulent times like these. We believe leadership transcends social sectors and roles. It is an individual's capacity and commitment to making a positive change in their own organizations, communities, and nations through influence, interactions with others, and innovation. East-West Center's strongest lever of positive impact is convening, developing, and equipping more promising and diverse leaders to address critical challenges together.

This strategy is anchored in the Center's long legacy of leaders. EWC's 70,000+ alumni from 179 nations demonstrate the difference such leaders can make. Over the past six decades, they have helped make critical discoveries and decisions that enabled the tremendous growth we see in the Indo-Pacific today. Our alumni continue to catalyze positive change, and their tremendous legacy is the Center's foundation for growth.

Thank you for your support of East-West Center as we recommit to preparing emerging leaders to face tomorrow's common challenges, particularly in environmental sustainability and good governance. With your continued partnership, we anticipate an era of renewed impact, bringing about a more peaceful, prosperous, just, and sustainable region.

Suzanne Vares-Lum
PRESIDENT

East-West Center Strategic Planning Process



To better focus institutional efforts and resources on addressing the Indo-Pacific's challenges, East-West Center stakeholders collaborated to create this institutionally unifying, impact-oriented strategic framework. Over the next five years, EWC's programs will be prioritized, aligned, and implemented in line with the strategies described here to achieve the Center's mission and vision.

A wide range of stakeholders contributed to this foundational plan, including the Board of Governors, staff, partners, and alumni. Planning activities included assessing regional needs; selecting priority areas where the Center can make a difference; focusing on the Center's distinctive strengths and competencies; and establishing key institutional goals and strategies. The results of these activities are captured in this document.

East-West Center Regional Assessment

East-West Center stakeholders identified three main areas in which Indo-Pacific leaders must collaborate to address profoundly complicated and important issues of common concern.



Environmental mismanagement such as overfishing, pollution, and deforestation yield consequences for communities, including food and water insecurity, heightened vulnerability to natural disasters, forced migration, and conflict. These in turn decrease resilience, as impacted individuals grapple with diminished economic, educational, and health outcomes.

A Changing Environment

As environmental degradation and climate change grow ever more severe, Indo-Pacific communities face the worst impacts but also hold the keys to a thriving Earth. East-West Center can work alongside partners and emerging leaders to build capacity and common passion to conserve natural resources while increasing human resilience.

Informed, participatory decision-making, shaped by leaders dedicated to equitable and sustainable use of natural resources, will make all the difference. To make good decisions and back them up with action, leaders at all levels need reliable information, multidisciplinary understanding, and international collaboration. East-West Center will be the hub for sharing these vital tools and capabilities.

A Need for Good Governance

Global democracy is in decline, with two-thirds of the world’s population now living in autocracies. Free and open societies in the Indo-Pacific face challenges of resource scarcity, internal conflict, and outside pressures that threaten destabilization. Increased disinformation efforts and attacks on media lead to distortions of public perception. Women, youth, minorities, and other marginalized groups are often disenfranchised just when their participation would be most vital to good decision-making.

To improve governance, leaders at all levels need skills, knowledge, and support to strengthen democratic institutions and accountability. The Center will support government and civil society leaders with shared data and best practices, educational opportunities, and international networking. We will help empower civil society organizations to play a crucial watchdog role and combat disinformation. We will work to bring disenfranchised groups to the table.



A Spotlight on the Pacific

Pacific Island nations stand in a geopolitical spotlight, which brings challenges but also unprecedented opportunities. Pacific leaders are navigating these circumstances together, and East-West Center stands with them as a supporting partner.

Sustainable development in the face of environmental degradation is the Blue Pacific Continent’s greatest challenge. Livelihoods in Pacific Island nations are threatened by biodiversity loss. Storms and natural disasters batter the islands with increasing frequency and intensity. Geographical isolation creates barriers that worsen the impacts of environmental disasters on food security and health.

In addition, Pacific Island nations face intensified international pressures, targeted disinformation, and challenges to their sovereignty. COVID-19 continues to threaten lives and slow progress across sectors, while the legacy of a nuclear past still affects communities today.

East-West Center seeks to support Pacific leaders with educational opportunities, professional development, and international networks. EWC’s Pacific Islands Development Program, the only US-based member of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), and Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders (PICL), is a bridge to allies, a hub of expertise, and a platform for Pacific voices.

“Through cooperative research, education, and public diplomacy, the [East-West] Center has provided a critical understanding of the region’s dynamic issues for global leaders involved in moving their countries together into the future... It is an invaluable education center and meeting ground for representatives of the Asia Pacific community wishing to work toward a peaceful Pacific Rim.” – SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE



East-West Center Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

The East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue.



EWC groundbreaking ceremony, May 1961. Left to right: University of Hawai'i President Laurence Snyder, UH Board of Regents Chairman Herbert Cornuelle, first Center chief executive Murray Turnbull, future Hawai'i Gov. John A. Burns, then-Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson. Photo courtesy of *The Honolulu Advertiser*.

Mandates and Origins

East-West Center's mission originated in its 1960 mandate from Congress to be a place “where scholars and students in various fields from the nations of the East and West may study, give and receive training, exchange ideas and views.” The Center's founders considered Hawai'i, with its multicultural population and environmental riches, to be the perfect home for interchange between East and West.

From its inception, East-West Center was a place for emerging international leaders to come together with established experts to focus on solving common problems using the tools of study and dialogue. The Center was to embody a mindset in which the United States is an equal partner in shared learning and exchange with regional counterparts, resulting in mutual benefit.

The East-West Center vision for the next five years extends and hones this mission, drawing from our historical strengths and successes.





Vision

East-West Center, in collaboration with partners, is a premier institution in the Indo-Pacific to convene, develop, and equip a network of leaders to solve challenges of common concern.



Guiding Values

RESPECT: Be inclusive, listen openly and actively. Value expertise and forms of knowledge from many cultures and perspectives.

INNOVATION: Seek improvement and growth, and embrace change by being agile, adaptable, and comfortable in challenging the status quo.

COLLABORATION: Work as a team across the Center and across the region, benefiting from multicultural, multidisciplinary, and multisectoral approaches.





East-West Center Strategic Pillars

Based on the regional assessment and the Center’s mission and vision, East–West Center is committed to making a difference for peoples and communities throughout Asia, the Pacific, and the US in five critical areas:

1.

Develop and Equip Leaders

2.

Convene Impactful Dialogues

3.

Partner with the Pacific Islands

4.

Foster Environmental Solutions

5.

Support Good Governance

Strategies

Below are strategies to fulfill our mission and vision. They will provide the guiding framework for programs and institutional growth over the next five years.

Pillar 1:

Develop & Equip Leaders

An influential and active network of current and emerging Indo-Pacific leaders who are innovative, culturally and technically competent, and collaboratively address issues of common concern.

STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP AND EQUIP LEADERS

1. **Recruit and fund accomplished, diverse emerging leaders** from the United States, Asia, and the Pacific who possess a common desire to accelerate environmental sustainability and sound governance efforts.
2. **Weave all Center functions to support educational and professional development programs** including alumni engagement, research, convening, publications, and the arts.
3. **Run transformational, experiential programs** that support emerging leaders with tools needed to solve complex challenges.



“The East–West Center is a unique organization in which leaders can interact directly with researchers. Nowhere else in the world will our leaders of government have a research facility to help them that way.”

— RATU SIR KAMISESE MARA, FIJIAN STATESMAN AND EWC BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEMBER

Pillar 2: Convene Impactful Dialogues

A trusted and respectful convener that fosters multisectoral, multilateral dialogues to deepen mutual understanding, advance regional cooperation, and create collaborative solutions.

STRATEGIES TO CONVENE IMPACTFUL DIALOGUES

1. **Expand EWC partnerships** with diverse government, business, and academic institutions to attract multi-tiered dialogues and conferences, while using these opportunities to benefit Center participants.
2. **Create EWC-sponsored recurring conferences and summits around strategic priorities**, ensuring a balance of voices and perspectives.
3. **Build on our Hawai'i campus** geography, host indigenous culture, and legacy connection to the Pacific by expanding signature characteristics of EWC convening to Washington DC, national and regional locations, and online.



Pillar 3: Partner with the Pacific Islands

Along with Asia partnerships, nurturing an active hub for Pacific Islands expertise active hub for Pacific Islands expertise in the areas of culture and arts, economics, civil society, government, environment, and sustainability; a platform to amplify Pacific Islands voices; and a bridge between the region and partners.

STRATEGIES TO PARTNER WITH THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

1. **Expand capacity and role of the Pacific Islands Development Program** and sustain and leverage its unique position.
2. **Increase Pacific Islands participation** in all programs, with a balanced representation from Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia (including Native Hawaiians).
3. **Amplify Pacific voices and expertise** by revitalizing a credible, inclusive *Pacific Islands Report*.



Pillar 4: Foster Environmental Solutions

A regional hub of environmental expertise and collaborative action, generating just, community-based solutions that improve ecosystem health, mitigate climate change, and foster human resilience.

STRATEGIES TO FOSTER ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS

1. **Build Center-wide multidisciplinary capacity** in the areas of climate change, transboundary water governance, land resource management, and disaster resilience.
2. **Increase region-wide capacity** for leaders to make decisions that promote human resilience and equitable, sustainable use of resources, through partnerships with governments, educational institutions, NGOs, media, and communities.
3. **Raise public awareness and increase cooperation on environmental action** through accessible research publications and policy findings, convening activities, arts, and other public outreach.



“The decisive decade before us will determine if the region can confront and address climate change, reveal how the world rebuilds from a once in-a-century pandemic, and decide whether we can sustain the principles of openness, transparency, and inclusivity that have fueled the region’s success.”

— INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 2022



Pillar 5: Support Good Governance

A cooperative, international network of public servants and civil society leaders empowered to foster transparent, effective, and inclusive institutions, peaceful dispute resolution, secure economies, and respect for human rights.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT GOOD GOVERNANCE

1. **Empower public servants** by creating programs and products around best practices of fiscal transparency, public services delivery, and economic opportunities.
2. **Enhance the capacity of independent media** by equipping journalists with knowledge and networks to better inform the public and keep governments accountable through factual, objective reporting.
3. **Empower women** as change-makers through leadership programs, networking, and advocacy.



Cross-Pillar Strategies

East-West Center has built upon a distinctive set of core competencies that have become hallmarks of Center programs and activities.

East-West Center Distinctive Core Competencies and Strengths

- 1. Exceptional programs:** The Center's specialty is bringing international leaders and scholars together to address region-wide challenges through transformative, experiential, and collaborative programs.
- 2. Our home in the heart of the Pacific:** The Center's campus is a welcoming gathering place to convene Indo-Pacific leaders. The beauty, diversity, and rich history of Hawai'i uniquely nurtures people-to-people ties and collaborative action.
- 3. In-house expertise:** The Center's researchers and staff enrich programs with multidisciplinary perspectives and collaborate closely with participants.
- 4. Diverse partner network:** The Center has a long legacy of collaboration with in-country partners to share expertise and diverse perspectives, building leadership capacity across the region.
- 5. Inclusive dialogue:** Center staff are dedicated to sharing and connecting diverse voices of the region, fostering inclusive dialogue, and encouraging culturally informed solutions.
- 6. Alumni connections:** Many transformative leaders throughout the region have learned at the Center and maintain strong ties today. The Center's influential and multigenerational network of local alumni chapters serve as hubs for East-West Center programming and outreach.
- 7. Building bridges between the region and US:** With its official US backing and unparalleled regional connections, EWC connects American leaders with international counterparts. The Center informs policy and strengthens people-to-people ties to address challenges together.



Leveraging Our Unique Strengths

Heighten the Impact of Exceptional Programs

1. Develop, test, and implement a leadership development framework with agreed-upon values, knowledge, and skills.
2. Conduct robust evaluation of program impacts to increase accountability and pursue improvement.
3. Offer participants professionally useful program outputs, including publication and speaking opportunities, locally applicable action plans, and course credentials.



Invest in Our Campus

1. Use 100 percent of campus residential capacity for long-term graduate students and short-term program participants. Create a hub of development opportunities for participants to interact with Center experts and programs.
2. Invest in capital improvements to maintain East-West Center's campus as an exceptional meeting ground for coming generations.
3. Model and innovate sustainability in our work and on our campus.
4. Utilize this exceptional venue to attract external meetings by like-minded organizations, and use these opportunities to benefit Center participants.



Align Our Expertise with Leadership Development

1. Develop research agendas that are synced with EWC strategic priorities. Align Center-wide programming to capitalize on research activities.
2. Expand visiting expert program with specialists from across the region.
3. Formalize research mentorship program.



Partner to Develop Regional Capacity

1. Identify key partners to enhance environmental and good-governance capacity throughout the region, including educational and research institutions, government agencies, businesses, local and international NGOs, activists, and informal leaders.
2. Expand EWC's research network by tapping alumni expertise as a key resource.
3. Leverage Pacific relationships to add perspective and insight to programs.

“Lifelong friendships and the professional network that I gained during my East-West Center experience taught me about true bonding and human nature.”

— AGGARAT BANSONG, EWC ALUMNA FROM THAILAND

Amplify Perspectives from the Region

1. Feature a variety of perspectives in our outreach. Elevate voices of those with personal experience of addressing shared challenges, especially women, youth, indigenous peoples, and marginalized groups.
2. Leverage arts and culture as a medium for understanding and connection.



Enhance Long-Term Impact Through Alumni

1. Enhance commitment to lifetime investment in alumni. Provide networking, mentorship, and collaboration opportunities that advance alumni leadership capabilities.
2. Foster alumni affinity groups around pillar topics.
3. Provide alumni with opportunities to “pay it forward” through funding, mentorship, and multigenerational connections.

Create Foreign and Domestic Policy Bridges

1. Contribute to the deepening of US-Indo-Pacific relations through partnerships, outreach, and analysis projects such as the Asia Matters for America initiative.
2. Cultivate understanding between US, Asia, and Pacific policymakers through meetings and dialogues.
3. Create balanced cohorts of US and international participants.





Next Steps

The goals and strategies in this document are only the beginning of the work ahead of East–West Center. Over the coming months, Center staff will shape program plans to more closely align with these goals. Impactful, cross–cutting programs using these strategies will be aligned, synchronized, and resourced over the next five years, and action plans will be formulated to support institutional growth.

Components of the full strategic plan

Program Plans to fulfill the strategic framework: synchronizing multiple functions across the Center to meet goals.

Strategic Finance Plan: optimizing budget processes and funding stream mix (appropriation, fundraising, grants, and service delivery) to support programs.

Capital Improvements Plan: long–term redesign, upgrades, and improvements to EWC facilities in Honolulu and Washington, DC.

Strategic Communications Plan: harmonizing outreach and branding, and online presence across the Center, integration of voices from the region.

Organization structure and human resources: aligning structures, resources, and performance management with strategic goals.

Organizational culture: instilling institutional values, upholding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Monitoring and evaluation: employing data analytics, integrated systems of learning, and process review to improve effectiveness.

Internal process and policy improvement: codifying management systems, policy, and procedures updates to support strategic priorities.



Mahalo to:

EAST-WEST CENTER LEADERSHIP TEAM

Suzanne Vares-Lum, President
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Tracy Omori, Chief Operating Officer

EAST-WEST CENTER MANAGEMENT TEAM

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Caroline Casagrande, Vice Chair

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Lynn K. Miyahira
Honorable John Waihe'e III

APPOINTED BY THE US SECRETARY OF STATE

Ambassador Kelley E. Currie
Ambassador Kenneth I. Juster
David R. Stilwell
Representative Gene Ward

ELECTED MEMBERS

Senator Hilda C. Heine
Chris Kanter
Takeshi Niinami

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Governor of Hawai'i Josh Green (December 2022)
Assistant US Secretary of State Lee Satterfield
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (Designees:
Deputy Assistant Secretary Ethan Rosenzweig,
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Marianne Craven)
Dr. David Lassner, President, University of Hawai'i

INVITEES

Amanda Ellis, East-West Center Association
Karen Knudsen, East-West Center Association
Raoul Magaña, East-West Center Foundation
David W. Panuelo, President, Federated States of Micronesia and Chair, Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders

EAST-WEST CENTER ASSOCIATION

EAST-WEST CENTER FOUNDATION

FRIENDS OF THE EAST-WEST CENTER

EAST-WEST CENTER STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS



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