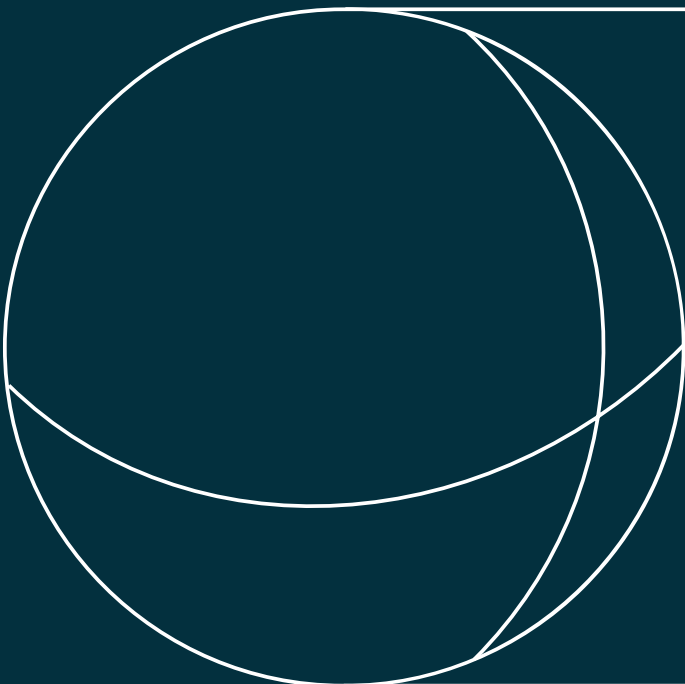research report

Robust, Effective, and Democratic Global Governance for a World in Transition:
Evidence From the ENSURED Expert Survey

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Abstract

This research report presents the first results of and technical information from the ENSURED Expert Survey (n=763) carried out in August–September 2025. The expert survey consists of three parts. First, experts rated a total of 110 international organisations (IOs) in terms of their effectiveness, robustness, and level of democracy. While a few IOs score high on all three qualities, most IOs show clear strengths and weaknesses: it seems difficult to combine all three qualities. Second, experts assessed the likelihood that key IOs will face challenges like member-state withdrawal, a resource crisis, gridlock, or increased policy complexity in the near future. While the withdrawal of a major member state will likely affect some types of IOs, increased policy complexity is a challenge for which all IOs need to be prepared. Furthermore, experts also expect that informal institutions and regional organisations will serve as alternatives to formal IOs in the future. Finally, in a conjoint experiment, experts assessed the importance of various characteristics linked to effectiveness, robustness, and democracy when it comes to carrying on in the face of different challenges. In this context, state compliance emerges as an important feature. Reaction speed is particularly relevant when IOs face resource crises, while policy initiatives taken by IO leadership can especially break gridlock. This expert survey has also resulted in two Open Access datasets, which will provide an important resource for IO scholars.

Citation Recommendation

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Introduction

In recent decades, international organisations (IOs) and other global institutions have been increasingly challenged and scrutinised, and ongoing power and paradigm shifts away from liberalism and universal multilateralism continue to intensify these challenges (Stephen 2017). At the same time, many international problems (from climate to health, migration, trade, and digitalisation) require cooperation among states. This raises the question of how global governance can be transformed to make it more effective, robust, and democratic in a contested world in transition.

With the ENSURED Expert Survey, we surveyed 763 experts based in 48 countries.

This research question constitutes the core of the ENSURED project (Choi et al. 2024), which includes the ENSURED Expert Survey, the results of which we present in this report. The survey solicited the insights of academic experts on IOs around the globe. Between August 26, 2025 and September 22, 2025, we surveyed 763 experts based in 48 countries. The survey has a high response rate at 21.6 percent, which indicates the level of expert interest in the challenges IOs are currently facing.

This report presents the background and technical details of the survey, as well as answers to the following questions:

1. How do experts score various IOs in terms of their effectiveness, robustness, and democratic credentials?
2. Which challenges do experts expect IOs to be faced with in the near future?
3. Which institutional qualities – in terms of effectiveness, robustness, and democracy – do experts perceive as most essential in enabling IOs to continue carrying out their mandate when facing such challenges?

This report provides new comparative evidence to a field in which such data is rare and case studies still dominate (Sommerer and Liese 2024; Weinhardt and Dijkstra 2024). We find that, according to experts, IOs vary significantly in terms of their effectiveness, robustness, and democratic quality. Of the 22 IOs rated by at least nine experts, we find that the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE) score among the highest for all three qualities overall. Apart from this pattern, however, all three institutional qualities vary greatly across IOs. We also find variation within IOs when we look at the specific indicators used to measure these qualities. The analyses thus show that while many IOs may aspire to combine high levels of effectiveness, robustness, and democracy, this rarely occurs in practice.

With respect to the challenges IOs are likely to face in the near future, the experts anticipate that member-state withdrawal is much less likely in general-purpose IOs (such as the African Union [AU], the EU, or the United Nations [UN]) than in task-specific IOs (such as the International Criminal Court [ICC], the World Health Organization [WHO], or the World Trade Organization [WTO]). Increased policy complexity is expected to

be a challenge for all the IOs included in our survey. A resource crisis is most apparent at the UN, but experts deemed funding problems quite likely for all other IOs as well (the EU was the only exception). Gridlock is particularly important at the UN and the WTO, but all the IOs included here are expected to encounter this challenge. The experts furthermore anticipate that while we will likely see informal and regional institutions emerge as important alternative forums to IOs across policy domains (from trade to security, climate, and health), we are less likely to see the rise of head-on competing institutions. Various case studies under the ENSURED project umbrella also hint in these directions (e.g., Weinhardt, Parizek, and Srivastava 2025; Martins and Petri 2025; Marconi and Greco 2025).

Strong state compliance contributes to an IO's ability to continue carrying out its mandate when it encounters challenges such as withdrawal, a resource crisis, or gridlock.

Finally, the survey shows that especially strong state compliance contributes to an IO's ability to continue carrying out its mandate when it encounters challenges such as withdrawal, a resource crisis, or gridlock. Thus, IOs such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the EU, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – which the surveyed experts rate highly in terms of state compliance – are better prepared to face these challenges than other IOs. Other institutional characteristics are particularly helpful when an IO encounters specific challenges. Fast reaction speed and high reliance on compulsory budget contributions tend to be most helpful when facing a resource crisis. Hence, these experts perceive that fast reaction speed makes the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), AIIB, IMF, NATO, and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) best prepared to face this particular challenge. The EU and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) score best in reliance on compulsory budget contributions. In contrast, IOs faced with gridlock particularly benefit from regular independent initiatives on the part of their leadership. Here, it also helps if not all affected states participate, which is most common for the UN Security Council (UNSC), the World Bank, and the IMF.

This report includes the complete survey questionnaire (see Annex A). In addition, by October 2026, two anonymised datasets will be released and made available via Dataverse.nl. The first dataset will contain the ratings for each of the 110 IOs included in the survey. The second dataset will present the experts' expectations regarding the future challenges IOs are likely to face and the institutional qualities they will need to do so.

Study Design

We begin this report with technical information about the study, which can be used to understand the rationale behind the study as well as to place the survey findings within the relevant sample context. The survey itself was reviewed and approved by the Ethical Review Committee of the Inner City Faculties (ERCIC) at Maastricht University (protocol nr ERCIC_692_31_03_2025).

Designing the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 35 (grouped) questions. The survey first asked the respondents to indicate their main area of expertise. Next, respondents were asked which two IOs they have most expertise on. Respondents could choose IOs from a wide range of options, divided into six areas of expertise broadly defined (health, climate, trade, security, digitalisation, and human rights), as well as a category for multipurpose IOs (including regional organisations) and another category for specific IOs in issue areas other than the six main areas. Respondents could also name an IO in an open field if they could not find their IO of expertise on the list. Once the respondent's expertise was identified, the survey consisted of three sets of questions corresponding to the three research questions mentioned above:

1. Respondents were asked to rate institutional qualities and practices with respect to the *effectiveness*, *robustness*, and *democratic quality* of the two IOs about which they have the most expertise. Each IO was rated on twelve different aspects.

2. The next section asked questions about the *likelihood of various challenges occurring* in the areas of security, climate, trade, and health, as well as specifically for the WTO, the AU, the WHO, the ICC, the UN, and the EU – six well-known IOs with which most respondents were familiar.

3. A conjoint experimental design was used to test which institutional qualities and practices the respondents deemed more likely to help IOs *continue to carry out their mandates* when faced with challenges such as member-state withdrawal, a resource crisis, or gridlock.

The survey closed with a few background questions to enable us to compare the respondent base with our sample (see the next section). The complete questionnaire is presented in Annex A.

Sampling Procedure

The relevant research population for our survey was *academic experts in the field of IOs*. Since no registry of all individuals within this category exists – nor is it feasible to compile one – the first step in this survey project was to develop a sampling frame. For this purpose, we selected academic experts from the programmes of the five most recent Annual Conventions

(2021–2025) of the International Studies Association (ISA). The advantage of this approach is that the ISA convention is a selective and prestigious academic conference: most academic experts in the field of IOs (try to) regularly attend this conference, invest time and money in attendance, and are required to submit an abstract on their topic, which is then screened to ensure basic quality. The drawback of using ISA programmes to select experts is that it creates a bias toward "Global North" scholars who have access to resources and can obtain visas to visit these conferences in North America.

From the 2021–2025 ISA programmes, we selected all persons listed on panels and roundtables that matched at least one of four selection criteria: (1) the panel or roundtable was sponsored by the "International Organization" section; (2) the panel or roundtable description included terms such as "international organization(s)," "international institution(s)," or "global governance," or mentions any specific international organisation; (3) the panel or roundtable description referred to challenges related to the international order (such as autocracy, populism, grand strategy, or challenges specifically related to China or the US); (4) the panel or roundtable made reference to concepts related to the international order, such as "global order" or "multipolarity." For poster sessions, we applied the same selection criteria to individual paper titles. As the next step, we looked up the listed individuals online. Individuals were excluded if, regardless of their inclusion in the list for a relevant panel or roundtable, they clearly did not fit the category of experts in the field of international organisations. Individuals were also excluded if they did not (yet) hold a doctorate or did not work at a university, think tank, or research institute at the time of the survey.

In total, we invited 2,568 individuals whom we identified in the conference programmes to take part in the survey. Of those individuals, 555 completed the survey, and another 97 experts answered at least half of the questions. Additionally, 111 experts answered less than half of the questions. Based on the number of complete responses (i.e., 555), the response rate is 21.6 percent. Incomplete responses are included in the analyses of those questions that these respondents did answer.

When compiling the sample, we coded the country in which the expert's institution is located, as well as their gender as it appears based on their picture, name, and/or pronouns. We used this information solely to compare the distribution within the respondent sample to the sampling frame. Table 1 shows that both the gender and the country of institution are distributed very similarly in both the pool of invited experts and the sample of respondents we obtained.

Table 1: The ENSURED Expert Survey Sample

	Sampling Frame	Respondent Sample
Gender	45% female, 55% male	41% female, 58% male, 1% other
Country of institution	75 different countries* 36% USA 13% UK 8% Germany 6% Canada 3% Netherlands 2% Norway, Australia, Sweden, Switzerland *10% of the sample is based in developing economies[1]	48 different countries** 24% USA 14% Germany 6% Netherlands, UK, Canada 4% Italy, Switzerland, Sweden 3% Norway, Japan **11% of the sample is based in developing economies

Additionally, the survey asked respondents to identify their main area of expertise and their academic discipline. The sample is quite diverse in terms of area of expertise. While the largest group (32 percent) identified themselves as experts on IOs generally, 28 percent specialise in the field of security; 12 percent are experts on trade, economics, and development; 11 percent are experts on migration and human rights; 8 percent focus on topics such as climate, sustainability, environment, and energy; 2 percent work in digitalisation, internet, and communication; and 1 percent of the respondents specialise in health and nutrition.

In terms of academic discipline, 68 percent of respondents said they work in the field of international relations, 17 percent in political science, and 7 percent in (international) political economy. The remaining 8 percent are almost evenly spread across other disciplines, such as economics, law, development studies, history, sociology, area/regional studies, anthropology, geography, psychology, and public administration.

Fielding the Survey

We invited a total of 2,568 experts, of which 763 individuals took part in the survey. We sent the initial invitations by email on August 26, 2025. Individuals were invited to take part in an online survey, administered via the Qualtrics platform.[2] This first round of invitations rendered 235 responses.

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1   We used the UNCTAD list of developing economies to categorise states. Our sample includes experts from 18 developing economies: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Ecuador, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong SAR, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Türkiye, and the United Arab Emirates (UNCTAD Data Hub 2025).

2   The contact list drawn from conference participation included a number of respondents based in Russia. Since Qualtrics applies US sanctions, these respondents were removed from the sample, as they could not access the survey.

On September 3, 2025, we sent the first reminder, which resulted in 269 additional responses. We sent the final reminder on September 15, 2025, which resulted in 259 additional responses. The survey was closed on September 22, 2025. Thus, we collected the survey data within a total period of four weeks.

Identifying IO Expertise

The first part of the survey asked the experts to identify those IOs on which they have the most expertise. Each respondent could select one or two IOs. The experts who responded to the survey offer a broad range of expertise. Together, they cover 110 IOs – a rather high number that corresponds to the large number of IOs worldwide. We have listed all the IOs that were rated in the survey in Annex B, and data on all of these IOs will be available in our Open Access dataset. *Figure 1* presents the 35 IOs that were rated by at least five experts. This figure shows that most expertise is concentrated in a limited number of organisations, notably the UN, the EU, and NATO.

In the remainder of this report, we use data on the 22 IOs selected by at least nine experts, as we consider this a solid basis on which to make balanced assessments. In addition to a good balance between IOs with a global (n=12) and those with a regional focus (n=10), this selection includes organisations that cover a plethora of issue areas as well as IOs specifically active in the areas of security, development, trade, economics, and justice.

Figure 1: Number of Experts per IO
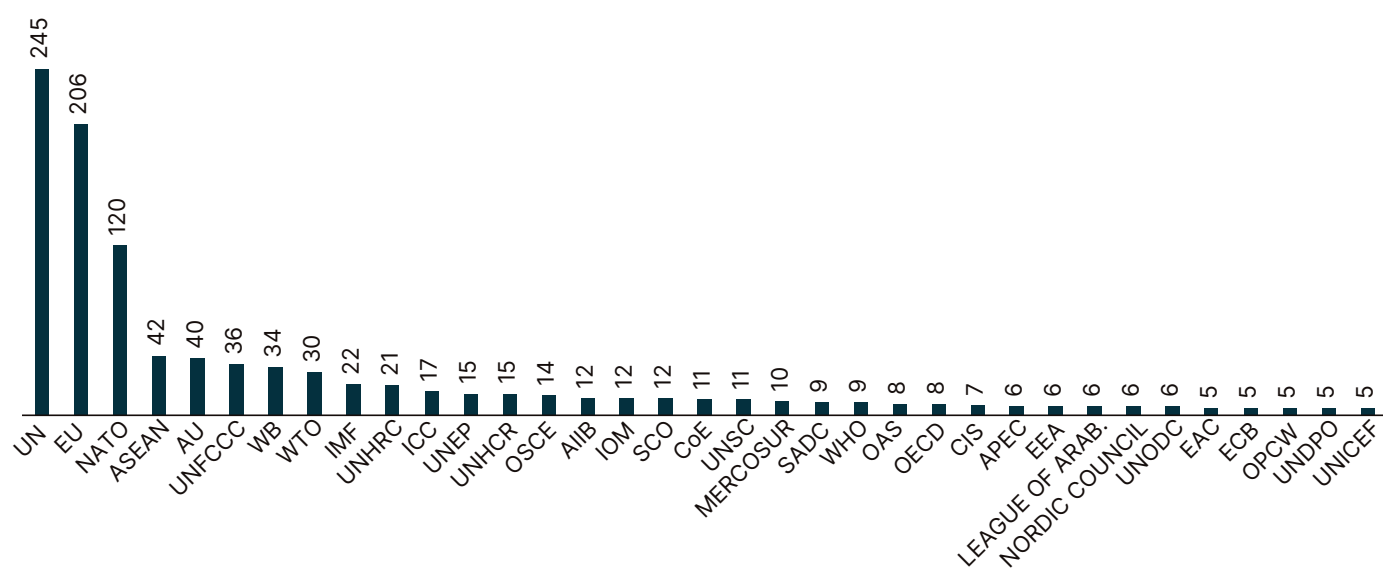
Note: The graph includes IOs that were rated by at least five experts. The graph is reduced for presentation purposes. See Annex B for the full list of IOs included in this study.

Findings

Now that we have set the scene by explaining the technical setup and the rationale behind the study, the remainder of this report will present descriptive results in answer to the following questions: How do experts score various IOs on their effectiveness, robustness, and democratic credentials? Which challenges do experts expect IOs to be faced with in the near future? Which institutional qualities – in terms of effectiveness, robustness, and democracy – do experts perceive as most essential in enabling IOs to continue carrying out their mandate when facing such challenges?

Evaluating Effectiveness, Robustness, and Democracy

We asked the experts to rate the effectiveness, robustness, and democracy – the key concepts covered in the ENSURED project – of the IOs on which they have the most expertise. The survey included four specific indicators for each quality. These indicators focus on aspects of IOs that require expert assessments and deep knowledge, as this information cannot be obtained simply by reading the annual reports or the statutes of the studied organisations. They take the form of statements which respondents could rate as a "very bad description," a "rather bad description," a "rather good description," or a "very good description" of the international organisation, or alternatively as "not applicable." Experts also had the option to indicate a lack of knowledge on each indicator. All of these statements are included in Annex A. To avoid order effects, we randomised the order in which both the qualities (effectiveness, robustness, and democracy) and the statements used as indicators of each of these qualities appeared.

These indicators build on the ENSURED project's conceptual framework (Choi et al. 2024). As such, we operationalised effectiveness with statements that touch on IO policy output, outcome, and impact. Statements on organisational robustness tapped into an IO's governance autonomy and rule stability. Finally, statements on the organisation's democratic quality covered participation and accountability.

As we turn to *Figures 2–4*, it immediately becomes clear that there is much variation in the assessed IOs' effectiveness, robustness, and democracy. The next sections are devoted to discussing this variation.

Effectiveness

When it comes to an IO's effectiveness – that is, its ability to achieve the goals for which it was established and to address policy challenges successfully (Choi et al. 2024) – NATO, the IMF, the EU, the UN Security Council (UNSC), AIIB, CoE, the World Bank, the WHO, and UNHCR score relatively high on average (see Annex C). Yet we observe notable differences between effectiveness linked to output (operationalised as taking significant decisions and reaction speed), linked to outcome (state compliance), and

linked to impact (goal achievement).[3] While experts note that several IOs do take significant decisions (particularly CoE, the EU, IMF, UNSC, the World Bank, NATO, and the ICC), state compliance and goal achievement usually lag behind. None of these 22 IOs performs particularly well when it comes to state compliance and goal achievement. Reaction speed is the highest-rated characteristic for IOM, OSCE, and UNEP, and in some other cases reaction speed is on a par with taking significant decisions. Overall, we note that within-IO variation across the four dimensions is generally high, and IOs rarely receive a low expert rating on all four indicators of effectiveness.

Figure 2: Expert Assessments of IO Effectiveness
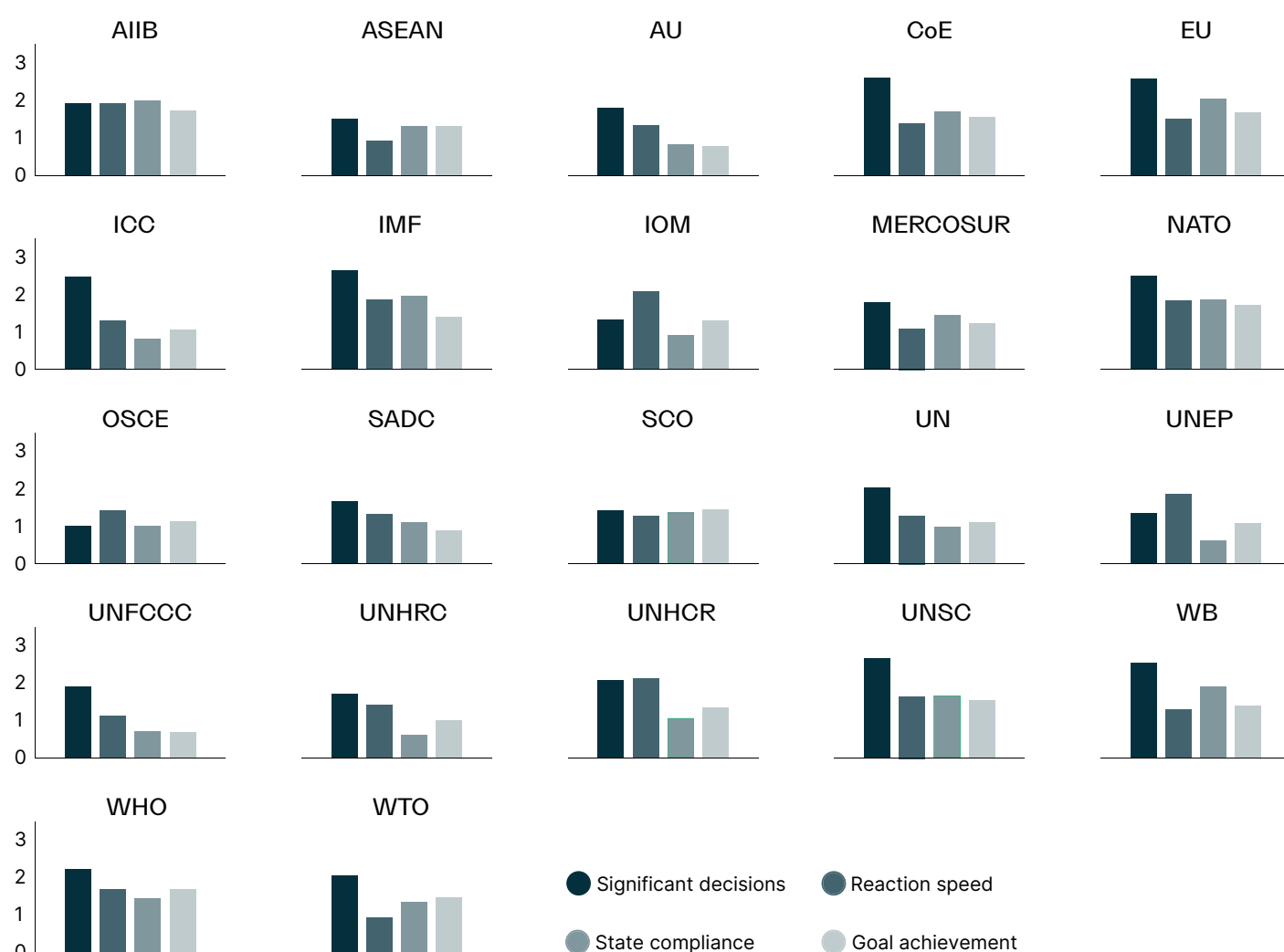
Note: The survey question reads: How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [name of IO]? Response options: Very bad description (0); Rather bad description (1); Rather good description (2); Very good description (3).

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3   In the survey, these items were formulated as: It takes significant decisions; It reacts quickly to arising challenges in its policy domain; States strongly comply with the decisions of the organization that apply to them; Most of its policies reach their intended goal (see Annex A, Q6).

Robustness

We operationalised robustness with indicators that tap into governance autonomy (the organisation's leadership taking independent initiatives, low reliance on voluntary budget contributions, and independence in recruiting IO staff) and rule stability through the use of formal flexibility mechanisms, such as opt-outs (Choi et al. 2024).[4] On these indicators of robustness overall, we observe the highest scores for the EU and the World Bank (see Annex C). UNSC has the lowest score.

Figure 3: Expert Assessments of IO Robustness

● Leadership initiatives   ● Opt outs
● Voluntary budget contributions   ● Independence recruitment

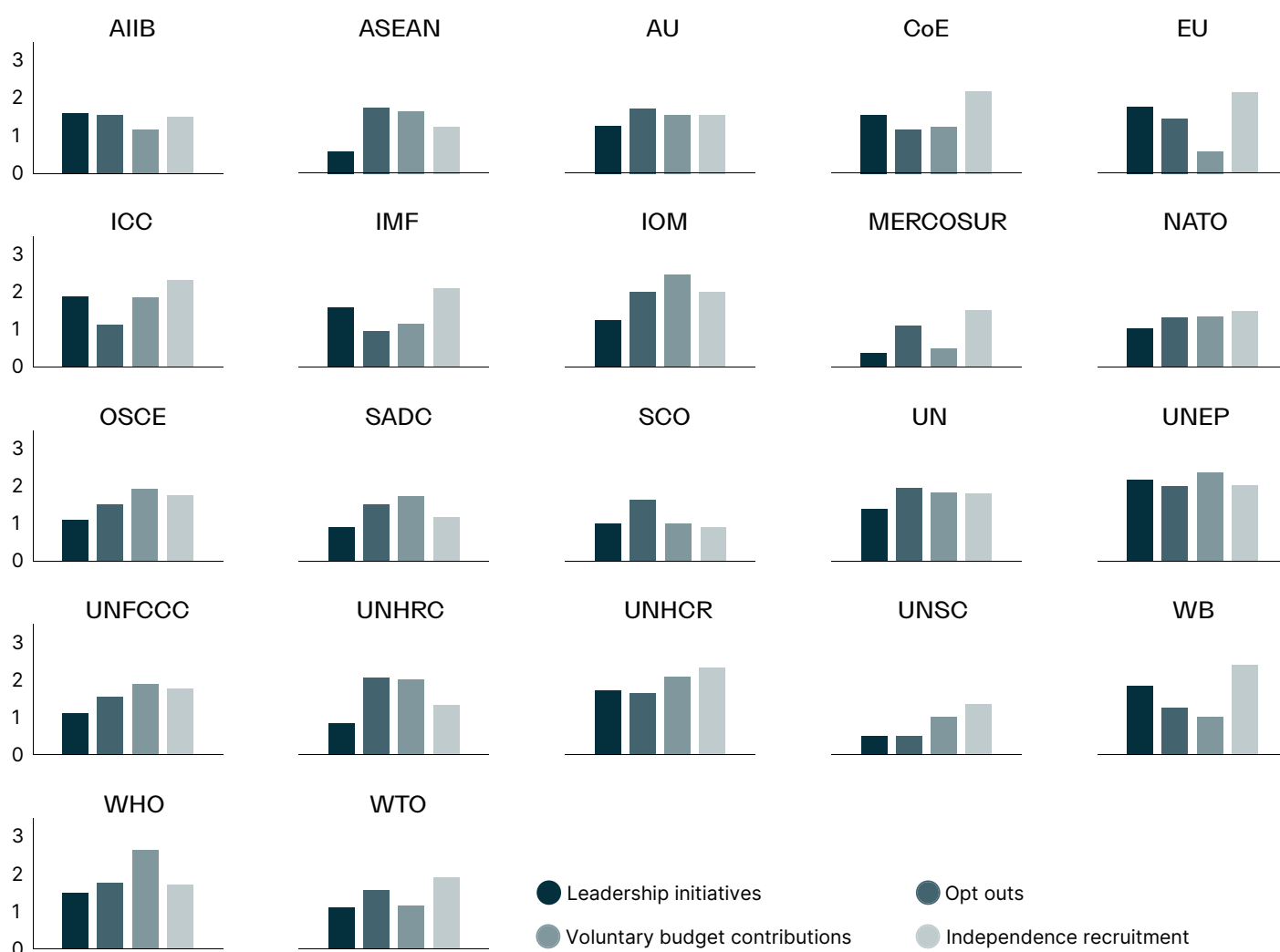**Note:** Lower ratings for reliance on voluntary budget contributions indicate higher robustness, as voluntary budget contributions provide less IO control and stability. The survey question reads: How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [name of IO]? Response options: Very bad description (0); Rather bad description (1); Rather good description (2); Very good description (3).

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4   In the survey, these items were formulated as: Its leadership regularly takes initiatives independent of the member states; It regularly allows member states to opt out from certain decisions; Most of its budget consists of voluntary contributions; It has great independence in recruiting its own staff members (see Annex A, Q7).

Beyond this, assessments are quite mixed, and we see considerable variation across organisations. If we take independence in leadership initiatives and staff recruitment, and low dependence on voluntary budget contributions as indicators of an IO's autonomy from its member states (Choi et al. 2024), then we find that the EU and the World Bank display a pattern of high institutional autonomy. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), UNHCR, and the WHO show the opposite pattern, as independence in leadership initiatives and staff recruitment are low, and voluntary budget contributions are an important source of income, which means the IO relies heavily on financial resources that can be withdrawn at any time. Finally, the option to opt out varies widely across IOs. Opt-outs are available most often in decisions taken by IOM, the UN, UNEP, and UNHCR and least often in those taken by UNSC, IMF, the ICC, MERCOSUR, and CoE.

Democracy

We assessed the democratic quality of IOs against the aspects of democratic participation and democratic accountability, as these are essential dimensions of democratic global governance (Choi et al. 2024). Democratic participation is measured with indicators on state participation, geographical distribution of staff members, and non-state actor participation. Accountability is measured with an indicator on the presence of accountability mechanisms, such as auditing institutions, courts, or parliamentary oversight.[5] For IO democracy indicators overall, we observe high scores for the European regional organisations, the EU, and CoE. Conversely, we see low scores for UNSC, IMF, SCO, and AIIB (see Annex C).

Turning to specific qualities, the data shows that most of the IOs score quite high on staff diversity. This is an important characteristic for nearly all regional organisations, which are also often characterised by a high level of participation among affected states. More than half the IOs are quite weak when it comes to non-state actor involvement. Finally, we observe important variation within IOs with regard to individual indictors of democratic quality. Various regional IOs show a pattern of high democratic participation in terms of affected-state participation and staff diversity, yet lower openness to non-state actors, and weaker accountability mechanisms (see, for instance, ASEAN, SADC, SCO, OSCE and the AU).

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5   In the survey, these items were formulated as: Affected states fully participate in all its deci-
     sion-making; It has a fair geographical distribution in its staff members; In practice, non-state actors
     are strongly involved in its decision-making processes; It has strong accountability mechanisms (e.g.
     auditing institutions, courts, parliamentary oversight) (see Annex A, Q8).

Figure 4: Expert Assessments of IO Democracy
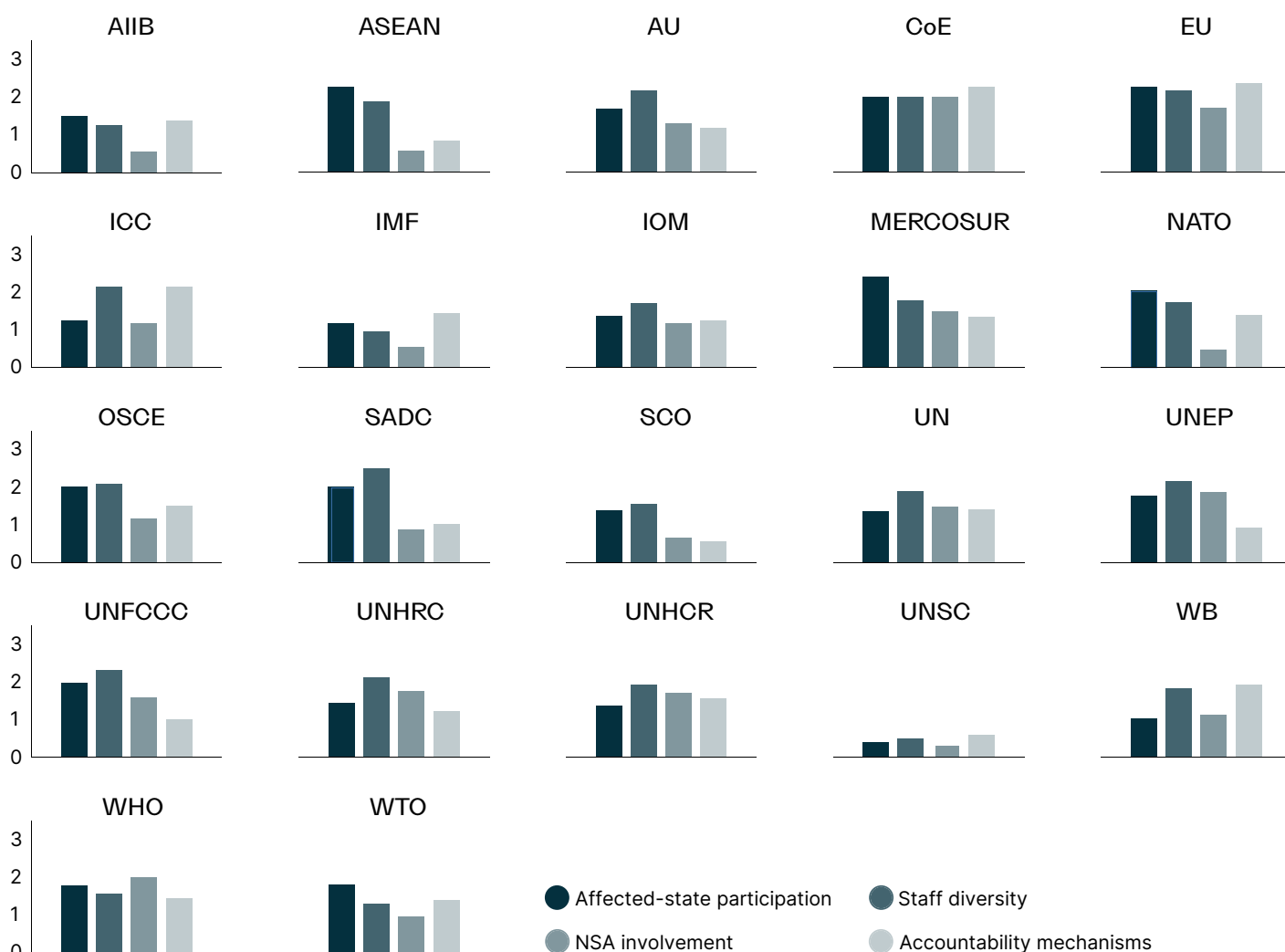
● Affected-state participation   ● Staff diversity
● NSA involvement   ● Accountability mechanisms

Note: The survey question reads: How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [name of IO]? Response options: Very bad description (0); Rather bad description (1); Rather good description (2); Very good description (3).

Combining Effectiveness, Robustness, and Democracy

In this section, we explore whether it is possible to identify clear patterns in combinations of low or high effectiveness, robustness, and democracy. Scholarly literature regularly makes the argument that high state and non-state participation (which characterises democratic global governance) comes at the expense of reaction speed and effectiveness more generally (Choi et al. 2024; Sommerer and Liese 2024). Indeed, for 14 out of 22 IOs we observe a statistically significant difference between the average score on the democracy indicators and the average score on the effectiveness indicators (p<0.05; see Annex C). Most of these 14 IOs score higher on democracy than on effectiveness (ASEAN, the AU, the EU, OSCE, the UN, UNEP, UNFCCC, UNHRC), with differences ranging from 0.140 to 0.631 points on the 0–3 scale. However, for six IOs we find a contrasting pattern.

The difference is particularly stark for UNSC, IMF, and AIIB, which are characterised by a high score on effectiveness and a much lower score on democracy. Here, differences range from 0.750 to 1.393. This suggests that it is easier to combine medium-to-high levels of effectiveness with high levels of democracy than medium-to-high levels of democracy with high effectiveness. Nevertheless, it is important to note that five of the IOs in our sample demonstrate that high levels of democracy and effectiveness can go hand in hand. For the EU, CoE, the WHO, UNHCR, and the World Bank, we observe quite high scores (a mean of at least 1.5) for both democracy and effectiveness (see Annex C).

Furthermore, turning to specific institutional characteristics in *Figures 2* and *4* shows that high state and/or non-state actor participation does not necessarily come at the expense of reaction speed. When we look at the IOs with the quickest reaction speed, we observe that only about half of them (AIIB, IMF, IOM) clearly score low on state and non-state actor involvement. In contrast, UNEP, NATO, and UNHCR have a rather quick reaction speed as well as high levels of involvement among affected states and/or non-state actors. In turn, of the IOs with a slow reaction speed, we observe a few instances of high levels of state participation (ASEAN, UNFCCC, the WTO) and no instances of high levels of non-state actor participation.

> We do not see strong evidence for the common argument that high state and non-state actor participation comes at the expense of reaction speed and effectiveness more generally.

In sum, while we observe significant differences between democracy and effectiveness ratings overall, we do not see strong evidence for the common argument that high state and non-state actor participation (as characteristics of democratic global governance) comes at the expense of reaction speed and effectiveness more generally (Choi et al. 2024; Sommerer and Liese 2024).

Furthermore, Annex C indicates high variation in how robustness combines with effectiveness and democracy (Weinhardt and Dijkstra 2024). Sometimes it is equally high (e.g., the EU, the World Bank) or low (e.g., SADC, ASEAN) as an IO's effectiveness. In other instances, it is similar to an IO's democratic quality (e.g., NATO, the ICC, the UN, UNHRC, UNEP). These results show that while IOs may seek to score high on all three qualities, doing so in practice is not straightforward. Few IOs score similarly high on all fronts.

Zooming in on specific characteristics, the literature suggests tensions between democratic demands for transparency and accountability on the one hand, and institutional autonomy on the other (Choi et al. 2024). However, the pattern in *Figures 3* and *4* is the opposite. We observe that in IOs which score high on accountability, the leadership tends to more frequently take independent initiatives, and the organisation also has more independence when it comes to staff recruitment (e.g., the EU, CoE, the ICC, the World Bank). In IOs with weaker accountability mechanisms, the leadership tends to take fewer independent initiatives and the organisation has less independence in staff recruitment (e.g., ASEAN, SADC, UNEP, UNSC).

Whereas the literature expects to find synergetic effects between effectiveness and robustness, as successful outcomes would supposedly maintain governance autonomy (Choi et al. 2024), we find very mixed associations for these two qualities . IOs with high goal achievement may display either high (e.g., CoE, the EU, the WHO) or low (e.g., NATO, UNSC) governance autonomy in terms of independent leadership initiatives and staff recruitment. Yet we do observe consistently lower dependence on voluntary budget contributions among IOs with high goal-achievement scores (the WHO is the exception here). This supports the suggestion in the literature. Additionally, the literature suggests that stable financial resources support a speedy response to challenges as well as effective implementation (Choi et al. 2024). Here again, taking low dependence on voluntary budget contributions, reaction speed, and goal achievement as indicators, we observe that the pattern is mixed.

Overall, these analyses lead us to conclude that when assessing specific IOs and institutional characteristics, the above-mentioned logical assumptions concerning trade-offs and synergies can hardly be applied.

Future Challenges for Global Governance

The second part of the survey was dedicated to the experts' expectations concerning future challenges to global governance, as IOs are currently facing pressure in unprecedented ways (Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021). The purpose here is forecasting, using a large sample of experts (the so-called "wisdom of the crowd") to get a better sense of the challenges and direction of global governance. The survey questions focussed on challenges to specific IOs as well as challenges for various issue areas more generally.

Challenges to International Organisations

We used the survey to gather expert views on the future likelihood of four contemporary challenges to IOs: withdrawal of major member states, a resource crisis, gridlock, and increased policy complexity (Hale, Held, and Young 2013; von Borzyskowski 2025; Graham 2017; Kreienkamp and Pegram 2021). All four challenges can have far-reaching consequences for an IO's ability to survive, to remain relevant, and to carry out its mandate. We asked the experts to evaluate the likelihood that six well-known IOs (the AU, the EU, the UN, the ICC, the WHO, and the WTO) will encounter each of these challenges by 2030. The chosen IOs vary in terms of scope: the AU and the EU are regional, general-purpose IOs (and the EU has a higher level of delegated authority; see Hooghe et al. 2017), while the ICC, the WHO, and the WTO are global, task-specific IOs (with different mandates and instruments, from regulatory to expertise to judicial), and the UN is a global, general-purpose IO. Given this variety, we expected variation across IOs and challenges.

Figure 5 shows that overall, the experts anticipate that the four challenges we identified will be apparent for all IOs in the future, yet we observe

important variation in the expected likelihood and prevalence of the different challenges for each IO. Notably, withdrawal of major member states is on average expected to be "rather unlikely" for the AU, the EU, and the UN, while it is expected to be "rather likely" for the ICC, the WHO, and the WTO. With regard to the EU, this observation is consistent with the long, complicated process of Brexit; when it comes to the UN, states technically cannot withdraw. Nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising that the predicted likelihood of withdrawal from the ICC and the WHO is not higher, given that member states have actually announced their withdrawals from these organisations in recent years (including the US withdrawal from the WHO in 2025). Similarly, the score for the AU is interesting, as several of its members have been suspended recently.

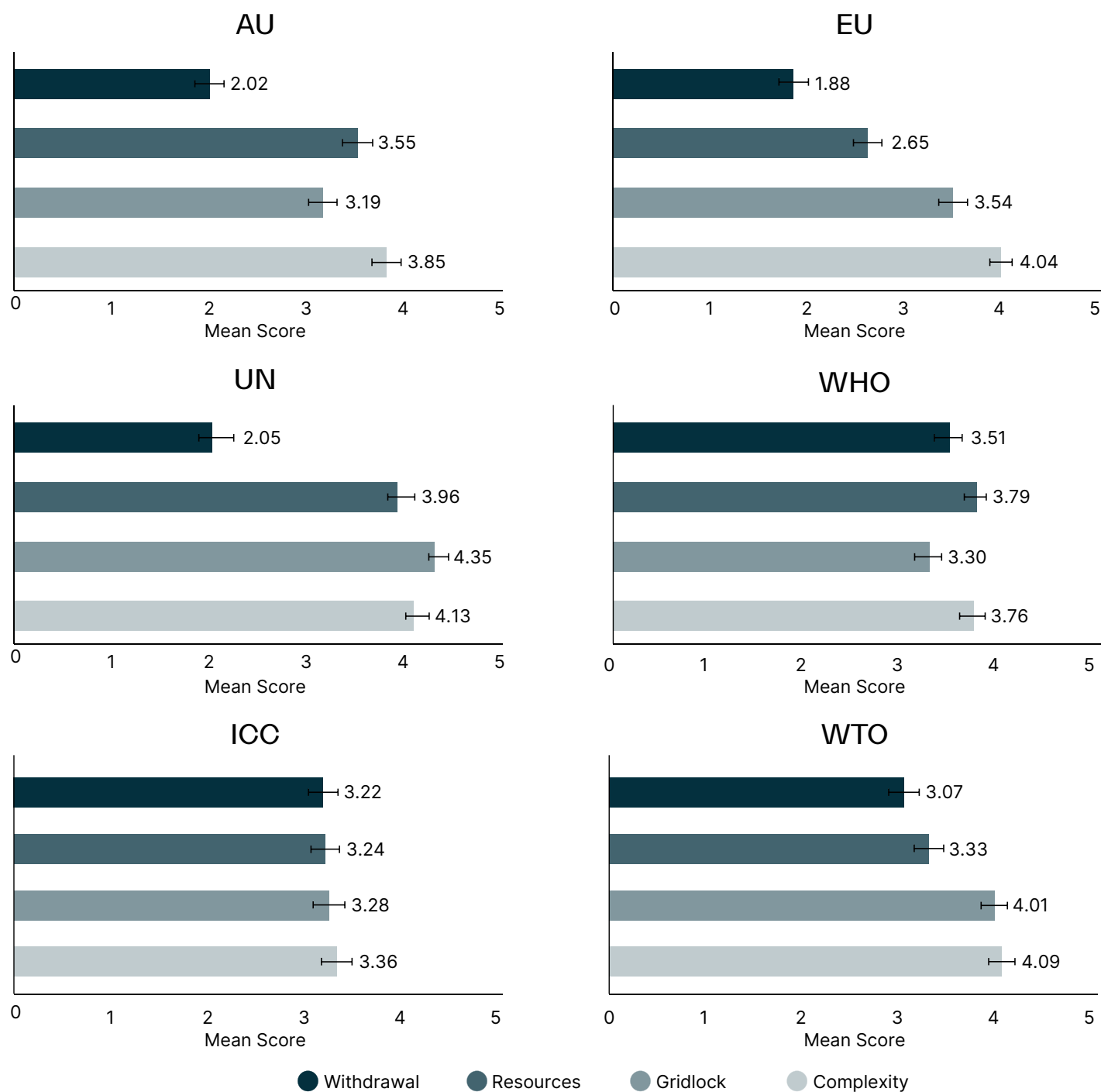**A resource crisis is considered most likely for the WHO and the UN in general.**

A resource crisis is considered most likely for the WHO and the UN in general. Experts regard this scenario as "very likely," in line with current developments and budget cuts across the UN system, including at the WHO. The WTO as a regulatory IO and the ICC as a court are less resource dependent. The EU is the only organisation on the list deemed less than "rather likely" to face a resource crisis in the near future. This expectation is likely based on the EU's direct income and the mandatory contributions made by member states (see also *Figure 3*).

Gridlock – a situation in which member states block an IO's decision-making – is expected to plague the UN and the WTO the most (experts rated both scenarios "very likely"), yet this also stands out as one of the top challenges with which the EU may be confronted. For both the UN and the EU, this may be a logical consequence of the fact that member states are unlikely to withdraw. Member states are bound to stay together, but they may find it difficult to reach consensus. For the WTO, this expectation is in line with its stalled trade negotiations and the recently imposed trade tariffs between major economies, such as the US, China, and the EU.

Increased policy complexity is on average rated as "very likely" for all IOs.

Finally, increased policy complexity – meaning the policy problems an IO aims to address will become more complex – is on average rated as "very likely" for all IOs. This is interesting, as such complexity is less about political challenges and more about the increasingly complex problem structure IOs are facing (Hale, Held, and Young 2013). In discussions around the crisis of global governance and IOs, this issue comes up less frequently than political challenges – for instance, those presented by the Trump administration or emerging powers such as China – and yet experts predict that IOs are highly likely to face increased policy complexity in the near future.

Figure 5: Likelihood of Challenges Around Withdrawal, Resources, Gridlock, or Policy Complexity

AU

- Withdrawal: 2.02
- Resources: 3.55
- Gridlock: 3.19
- Complexity: 3.85

Mean Score

EU

- Withdrawal: 1.88
- Resources: 2.65
- Gridlock: 3.54
- Complexity: 4.04

Mean Score

UN

- Withdrawal: 2.05
- Resources: 3.96
- Gridlock: 4.35
- Complexity: 4.13

Mean Score

WHO

- Withdrawal: 3.51
- Resources: 3.79
- Gridlock: 3.30
- Complexity: 3.76

Mean Score

ICC

- Withdrawal: 3.22
- Resources: 3.24
- Gridlock: 3.28
- Complexity: 3.36

Mean Score

WTO

- Withdrawal: 3.07
- Resources: 3.33
- Gridlock: 4.01
- Complexity: 4.09

Mean Score

● Withdrawal   ● Resources   ● Gridlock   ● Complexity

Note: The survey question reads: How likely do you think [name of IO] is to encounter each of the following challenges by 2030? Response options: 0 (almost) impossible; 1 very unlikely; 2 rather unlikely; 3 rather likely; 4 very likely; 5 (almost) certain. N(AU)=130, N(EU)=186, N(ICC)=168, N(UN)=186, N(WHO)=161, N(WTO)=167.

Alternative Institutional Arrangements

In various fields, alternative institutional arrangements to the major global IOs either already exist or are in development. These include *informal* rather than formal international institutions, *regional* rather than global institutions, and *competing* institutions rather than non-competing alternatives (see Choi et al. 2024; Westerwinter, Abbott, and Biersteker 2021; Morse and Keohane 2014).

The first such alternative format is informal international institutions with limited membership, such as clubs, summits, or ad hoc coalitions. The Group of 7 (G7) and Group of 20 (G20) are two examples of informal international institutions which were originally tasked with economic coordination, but which have gradually developed a broader scope. Other examples include the Visegrad Four and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). These informal arrangements are typically exclusive in their membership and contribute to the fragmentation of global governance (Vabulas and Snidal 2021). Examples of the second alternative format – namely regional organisations – include the EU, ASEAN, the AU, and MERCOSUR, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Hooghe, Lenz, and Marks 2019; Panke, Stapel, and Starkmann 2020). Third, competing institutions include AIIB, which is often mentioned as an IO that can compete with aspects of the World Bank, and BRICS, which is seen as an institution that rivals the G7 and challenges various traditional postwar IOs (Faude and Parizek 2021; Stephen and Skidmore 2019).
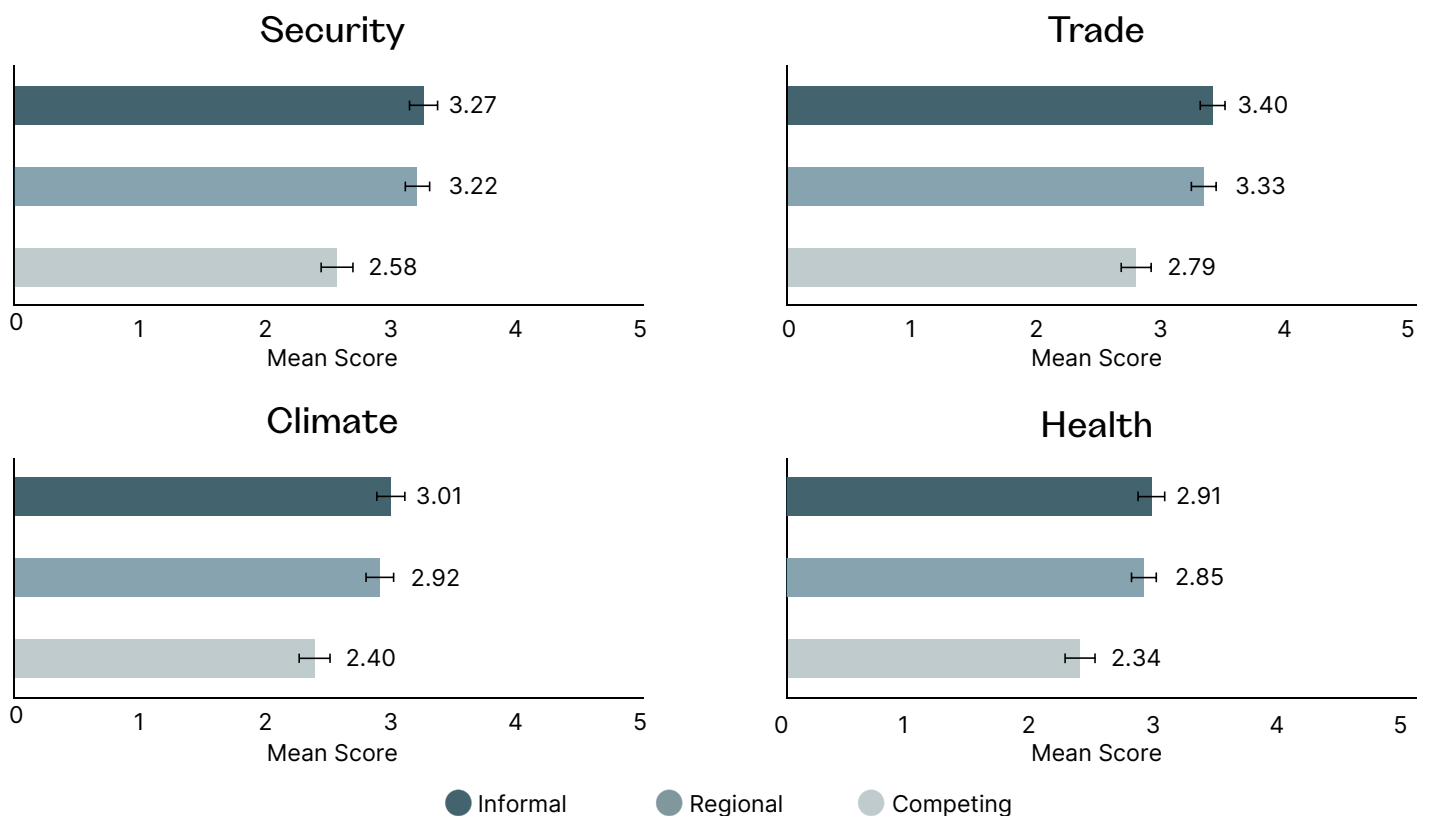
While these three types of arrangements are not new, it remains to be seen whether they will become more active, more widespread, and/or more influential in years to come. Ongoing power shifts between major states create a situation in which this multipolar power (im)balance is not reflected in the institutional setup of existing global IOs. This could make alternative formats attractive, especially to states that feel left out of the major IOs. Relatedly, states may look for alternative ways to achieve their goals when they are faced with gridlock and an inability to act within existing IOs. For these reasons, we asked the experts to evaluate the likelihood that these three types of institutional arrangements will become more important in the near future. The results are presented in *Figure 6*.

Across the board, we observe higher expectations for the increased importance of informal arrangements and regional alternatives than for competing institutions. Informal and regional institutions are regarded as "rather likely" to increase in importance across all four issue areas. The lower likelihood that competing institutions will become more important is somewhat surprising, given that we are entering a period of increasing geopolitical rivalry, with initiatives and institutions such as the expanded BRICS and SCO (Stephen 2017). Moreover, even if the differences in expected likelihood are modest, the graphs in *Figure 6* show that experts anticipate that security and trade will become more strongly defined by alternative arrangements to the major IOs than climate and health. While conflicting interests between states do become clearly

> Across the board, we observe higher expectations for the increased importance of informal arrangements and regional alternatives than for competing institutions.

visible in IOs devoted to climate and health, our findings suggest that the universal collective goods which these bodies aim to govern may serve as a stabilising factor. This stands in contrast to trade and security, which are areas characterised by more traditional cooperation challenges that revolve around inter-state competition. Nevertheless, experts anticipate that alternative institutional arrangements will become more important in all four domains.

Figure 6: Likelihood that Alternative Institutional Arrangements Will Become More Important

Security

Informal	3.27
Regional	3.22
Competing	2.58

Trade

Informal	3.40
Regional	3.33
Competing	2.79

Climate

Informal	3.01
Regional	2.92
Competing	2.40

Health

Informal	2.91
Regional	2.85
Competing	2.34

● Informal   ● Regional   ● Competing

Note: The survey question reads: How likely do you think each of the following [informal/regional/competing institutions; see Annex A Q12–13 for specific formulations] is to happen by 2030 in the area of [trade/security/health/climate]? Responses: 0 (almost) impossible; 1 very unlikely; 2 rather unlikely; 3 rather likely; 4 very likely; 5 (almost) certain. N(Security)=285, N(Trade)=290, N(Climate)=286, N(Health)=279.

Tackling Challenges Through Effectiveness, Robustness, and Democracy

In the first section of this report, we explored how experts rate different IOs in terms of effectiveness, robustness, and democracy. In the previous section, we saw that withdrawal of major member states, resource crisis, gridlock, and increased policy complexity are seen as real challenges

for IOs in various issue areas, both regionally and globally. In this final section, we link our key institutional qualities to challenges as we explore whether and how effectiveness, robustness, and democracy can help IOs to endure and to continue to carry out their mandate when they encounter these challenges.

For this part of the report, we employed a conjoint experiment. The experiment includes two institutional characteristics for each quality to operationalise effectiveness, robustness, and democracy. Reaction speed and state compliance operationalise effectiveness, independent leadership initiatives and budget source are aspects of robustness, and state and non-state actor participation tap into democracy. The goal of this conjoint experiment is to enable us to observe which institutional characteristics the experts prioritise. Using simple survey questions, we could easily conclude that everything matters. Yet when faced with a choice, respondents had to make trade-offs. Overall, we expect that all the institutional characteristics listed in the survey may contribute to an IO's ability to continue carrying out its mandate. However, we used the survey to explore how these different qualities compare, also in the context of distinct challenges. Given the experimental design, we pre-registered this part of the survey.[6]

The conjoint experiment first presented respondents with an introductory text on the challenge at hand. Next, they were presented with a table listing two fictive IOs with varying institutional characteristics (Image 1 below is an example of this). The experts were then asked to choose which of these two institutions they think would be best able to continue carrying out its mandate when encountering the particular challenge outlined in the introduction. Each respondent received the experiment three times – once for each challenge – in a randomised order. The order and the levels of the IO characteristics presented in the table varied randomly as well.

Image 1: Example of a Conjoint Experiment Task

International organizations may be challenged by **a shortage of resources to fund the organization**. Which international organization do you think is most likely able to continue carrying out its mandate in this scenario?

	Organization 1	Organization 2
Reaction speed to arising policy challenges	Fast	Slow
Source of budget contributions	Mostly compulsory	Mostly compulsory
State participation in decision-making	Not all affected states	All affected states
Involvement of nonstate actors in decision-making	Strong	Strong
State compliance with its decisions	Weak	Weak
Its leadership takes policy initiatives independent of member states	Regularly	Rarely

---

6   The experiment was pre-registered as: Soetkin Verhaegen, Hylke Dijkstra, and Thomas Sommerer, "Effectiveness, Robustness and Democracy of IOs," OSF, August 22, 2025, osf.io/kdbgv.

In analysing the results, we first tested how these institutional characteristics affect the ways in which IOs are impacted by challenges in general (i.e., without making a distinction between the three specific challenges presented). The figure below (*Figure 7*) presents the estimated marginal means. This means that we estimate the probability of choice for an IO with a certain level of a particular institutional characteristic. We test whether this probability differs significantly from 0.5, as that is the likelihood when choices are made randomly (that is, the respondent has a 50-percent likelihood of choosing one IO over the other).

State compliance shows the strongest effect in our analysis.

The analysis shows that all but one type of institutional characteristics significantly affects (at $p<0.05$) the ability of an IO to continue carrying out its mandate when challenged. The exception is the participation of all affected states. State compliance shows the strongest effect in our analysis. Both strong and weak state compliance significantly affect the probability of choice. IOs with strong state compliance have a 59 percent probability of choice (or "favourability"), while the probability is only 41 percent for those with weak state compliance. This means that weak state compliance limits an IO while strong state compliance contributes to its ability to deal with challenges. Furthermore, IOs with a fast reaction speed have a 55 percent probability of choice compared to a 45 percent probability of choice for IOs with a slow reaction speed. We observe a similar pattern when we consider independent initiatives of IO leadership and the type of budget source. Regularly taking independent initiatives increases the estimated likelihood that an IO will be able to continue carrying out its mandate, while this likelihood is decreased when independent leadership initiatives are rare. Relying mostly on compulsory budget contributions has a positive effect on experts' expectations that an IO will be able to continue carrying out its mandate when it encounters a challenge, while relying mostly on voluntary budget contributions lowers this expectation. Finally, we observe a slightly weaker – yet still significant – effect of non-state actor participation. Strong non-state actor participation increases favourability, while weak non-state actor participation decreases favourability.

Thus, we observe that an IO's ability to continue carrying out its mandate when it encounters challenges is positively affected when the IO exhibits strong state compliance, a fast reaction speed, regular independent leadership initiatives, depends mostly on compulsory budget contributions, and experiences a high level of non-state actor participation. All other (levels of) characteristics either negatively impact this ability or have no effect (in the case of the participation of all affected states).

Figure 7: Effect of Institutional Characteristics on Probability of Choice
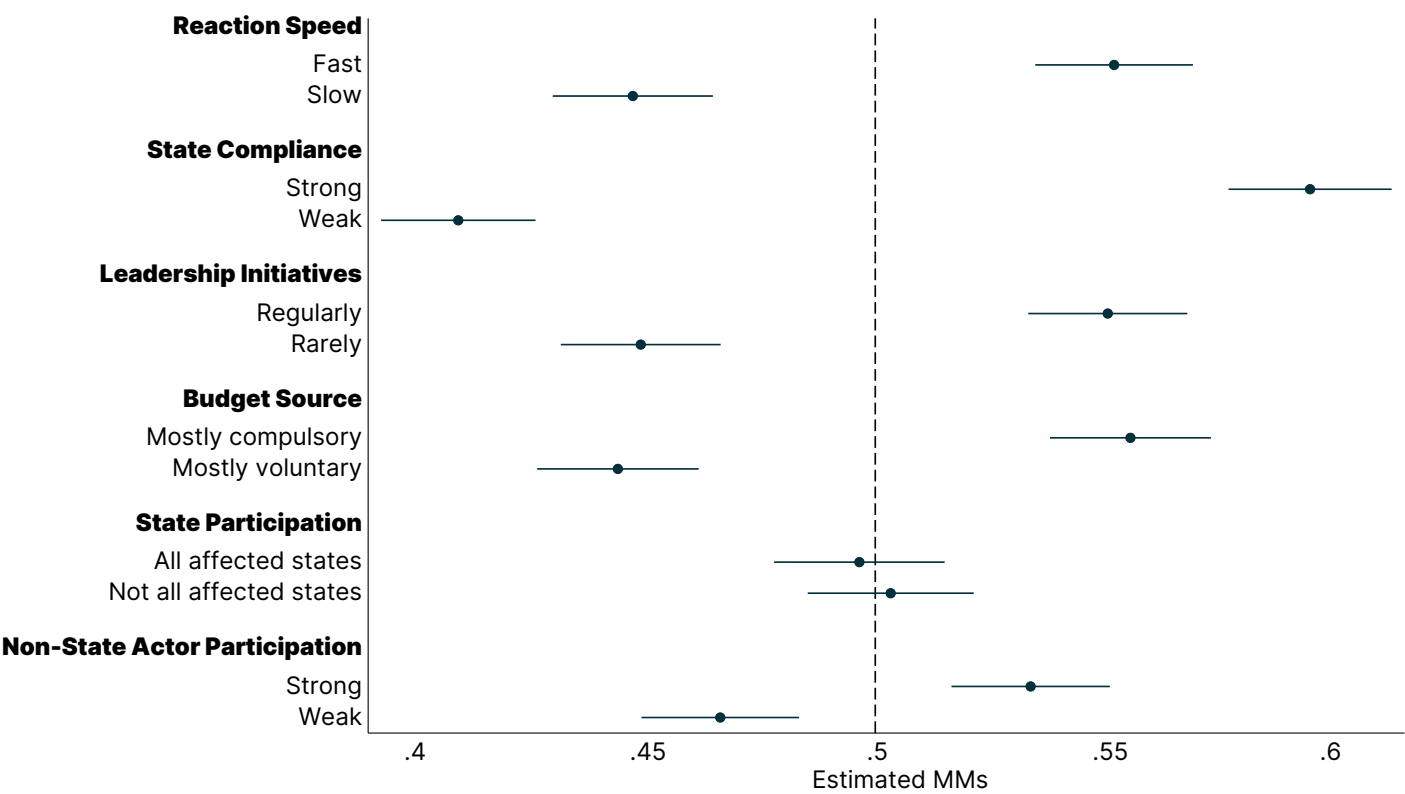
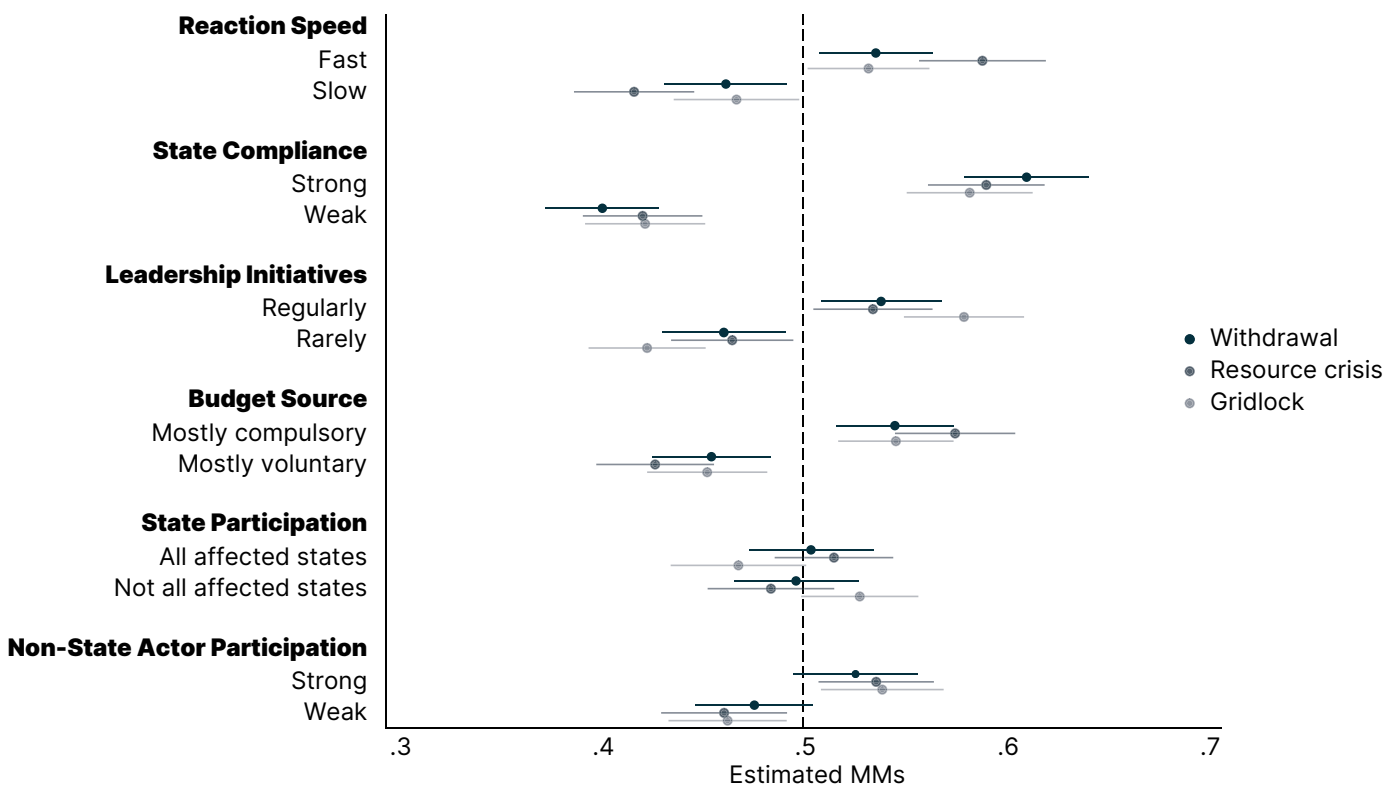
Note: N(Observations)=3250; N(Respondents)=558.

Next, we break up the results by challenge (*Figure 8*) to inquire whether certain institutional characteristics are deemed more useful than others in dealing with particular challenges. Overall, we find that all institutional characteristics have a significant effect on an IO's ability to continue carrying out its mandate when it encounters challenging scenarios, but the particular challenge does indeed matter.

The general result trends observed in Figure 7 apply to individual challenges as well. Yet for nearly all institutional characteristics, we observe differences between the challenges regarding how strong the effect size tends to be. A few distinctions in significance are noticeable as well. The effects of reaction speed and, to a lesser extent, budget source tend to be more apparent when an IO encounters a resource crisis: experts tend to find fast reaction speed and a budget based on mostly compulsory contributions more helpful when an IO encounters a resource crisis than when facing withdrawal or gridlock. The opposite, slow reaction speed and a budget based on mostly voluntary contributions, tends to more greatly decrease the favourability of an IO dealing with a resources crisis than when facing withdrawal or gridlock.

When dealing with gridlock, specific institutional characteristics are particularly helpful. The effect of both regular and rare independent leadership initiatives on IO selection tends to be stronger when an IO encounters gridlock than when a major member state withdraws or the IO

encounters a resource crisis. Furthermore, for an IO in which all affected states participate in the decision-making process, we find a negative effect (at p<0.10) on its ability to deal with gridlock but no significant effect when confronting the other challenges. In contrast, not including all affected states has a positive effect when encountering gridlock (at p<0.10). For member-state withdrawal or a resource crisis, including or excluding affected states has no significant effect. Thus, breaking up the effects by challenge nuances the insignificant result in Figure 7. Figure 8 shows that the effect depends on which particular challenge the IO encounters. Finally, for the challenge of withdrawal of a major member-state, we observe that the general patterns of Figure 7 apply, with the exception of non-state actor participation, which is not significant in this case.

Figure 8: Effect of Institutional Characteristics on Probability of Choice, by Challenge

Note: Withdrawal: N(Observations)=1082; N(Respondents)=541; Resource crisis: N(Observations)=1094; N(Respondents)=547; Gridlock: N(Observations)=1074; N (Respondents)=537.

Conclusion

In this report, we have presented the first key insights from the ENSURED Expert Survey, in which 763 experts participated. Our analyses show that expert assessments of effectiveness, robustness, and democratic quality vary significantly across IOs. This high variation evokes questions about both the potential consequences of these key qualities of global governance and the drivers behind this high variation. Of the 22 IOs rated by at least nine experts, we find that the EU and CoE score among the highest for all three qualities overall. Apart from this pattern, however, we observe important variety in the high and low scores across all three qualities of global governance overall, and also when it comes to the specific measures we used to study the effectiveness, robustness, and democratic quality of particular IOs. Our analyses also provide new insights into the relationship between these institutional qualities where previous evidence is scarce (Choi et al. 2024). We show that while many IOs may aspire to combine effectiveness, robustness, and democracy, doing so in practice is not straightforward.

> While many IOs may aspire to combine effectiveness, robustness, and democracy, doing so in practice is not straightforward.

With respect to the challenges IOs are likely to face in the near future, the experts who responded to our survey expect that member states are much less likely to withdraw from general-purpose IOs (such as the AU, the EU, and the UN) than from task-specific IOs (such as the ICC, the WHO, and the WTO). They anticipate that all the IOs included in the survey will face increased policy complexity. A resource crisis is most apparent as a challenge facing the UN, yet for all other IOs (except the EU), the experts deem funding problems quite likely. Gridlock is particularly important in the UN and the WTO, but all the IOs included here are expected to encounter this challenge. In terms of alternative institutional arrangements, the experts anticipate that informal and regional institutions will gain importance as alternative forums to IOs across policy domains (from trade to security, climate, and health). However, a rise in head-on competing institutions is less likely. These predictions for the future of global governance should be understood within the timeframe in which the survey took place (August–September 2025), following the initial months of the second Trump administration, during which the US seriously reduced its funding for the UN system and announced its withdrawal from the WHO, UNFCCC, and UNESCO.

The final part of the survey tested which institutional characteristics contribute most to an IO's ability to face challenges such as withdrawal, a resource crisis, and gridlock. We can link the results of these conjoint experiments to the expert assessments of individual IOs. We find that strong state compliance emerges as an important characteristic, which implies that IOs such as AIIB, the EU, IMF, the World Bank, and NATO – which the experts rate highly in terms of state compliance – are better prepared to face these challenges than other IOs. Other institutional characteristics are particularly (un)helpful when an IO encounters specific challenges. Fast reaction speed and reliance on mostly compulsory budget contributions tend to be most helpful when an organisation faces

a resource crisis. Since experts rate the reaction speeds of UNHCR, IOM, AIIB, IMF, NATO, and UNEP highly, and since the EU and MERCOSUR score best on reliance on compulsory budget contributions, these IOs are best able to continue carrying out their mandate when they encounter this challenge. Regular independent leadership initiatives particularly benefit IOs faced with gridlock. Thus, UNEP's, the ICC's, and the World Bank's practices of regular independent leadership initiatives best prepare them to face this challenge. Only for the challenge of gridlock, the (non) participation of all affected states shows a significant effect. The regional IOs in our study – but also quite a few global IOs – score high on including affected states. According to the conjoint experiment, this makes them more vulnerable to gridlock but it does not affect their ability to deal with member-state withdrawal and a resource crisis. Finally, the CoE, the WHO, UNEP, UNHRC, UNHCR, UNFCCC, and the EU score high on non-state actor involvement. This helps them when facing a resource crisis as well as gridlock.

For six IOs (the AU, the EU, the ICC, the UN, the WHO, and the WTO), we obtained expert assessments of their institutional characteristics as well as expectations about the likelihood that a major member state will withdraw, that they will have to deal with a resource crisis, and that their decision-making will be stalled by gridlock. We also collected general information on which institutional characteristics would be more effective (or detrimental) in dealing with these challenges. This final section is a good place to link the findings from the different sections of our report.

Combining this information, we learn that member-state withdrawal is expected to be "rather likely" for the ICC, the WHO, and the WTO. The conjoint experiments show that strong member-state compliance significantly supports IOs in addressing this challenge. As all three of these organisations score quite low on compliance, our research urges them to improve this aspect. Fast reaction speed, regular independent leadership initiatives, and a budget that relies on mostly compulsory contributions are also helpful when a major member-state withdraws. This works somewhat in favour of the ICC, as it scores high on independent leadership initiatives, and the WTO, as it relies only to a limited extent on voluntary budget contributions. Yet none of these three IOs score high on reaction speed.

Experts most clearly expect a resource crisis to hit the WHO and the UN, and this is also the most likely challenge for the AU. The conjoint experiments demonstrated that fast reaction speed, strong state compliance, regular independent leadership initiatives, a budget that relies mostly on compulsory contributions, and a high level of non-state actor participation are useful characteristics to help an IO deal with a resource crisis. Yet these three IOs score rather low on nearly all of these characteristics. The only exceptions are the AU, which scores rather low on voluntary budget contributions, and the WHO, which has high levels of non-state actor participation.

Gridlock is expected to plague the UN and the WTO the most. For the EU as well, this is the most likely challenge. These organisations would be best placed to face these challenges if they could expect strong state compliance and regular independent leadership initiatives, yet fast

reaction speed, dependence on mostly compulsory budget contributions, high levels of non-state actor involvement, and not including all affected states would be helpful too. However, the UN and the WTO score rather low on most characteristics, which does not bode well for their futures. The exceptions are the budget source for the WTO and affected state participation for the UN. In contrast, the EU has (rather) good credentials on all relevant institutional characteristics, except for affected-state participation, which is high. Indeed, an important function of the European Commission is agenda-setting, and it also has the right of initiative in making new policies. Unlike most other IOs, when EU policies are adopted, it has mechanisms in place to check state compliance and, if necessary, to penalise those who do not comply. Its budget relies mostly on mandatory payments from its member states, and initiatives such as consultations and the Economic and Social Committee aim to open up EU decision-making to non-state actors. Central to its decision-making practices, however, is the participation of all member states through the Council system. While (qualified) majority voting is formally an option, in many issue areas, issue linkage and norms of seeking broad agreement make this system vulnerable to gridlock.

In sum, the ENSURED Expert Survey – with its relatively high response rate that brings together insights from 763 academic experts from around the world – provides a unique new source of data for scholars to use. Expert assessments of the effectiveness, robustness, and democratic quality of 110 IOs nicely complement existing IO datasets, which tend to focus on formal characteristics rather than how they actually function. Our data clarifies some of the key challenges facing IOs as well as the increased importance of alternative institutions. The conjoint experiment provides insight on which aspects these IOs need to strengthen internally if they plan to continue to perform – and indeed survive – in this world in transition.

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Annex A

Questionnaire

Q1 Which of the following options best represents your area of expertise? Please only select 'other' if none of the categories fit well.

- ○ Health/nutrition
- ○ Climate/sustainability/environment/energy
- ○ Trade/economics/development
- ○ Security
- ○ Digitalization/internet/communication
- ○ Migration/human rights
- ○ Broad/general international organizations (including regional IOs)
- ○ Other (please name your area of expertise)...

Q2 Regarding which international organization do you have most expertise? Even if your expertise is limited, your responses are as valuable for the purposes of our study.

[List of IOs connected to answer in Q1 + option "Other (please name 1 organization)"]

Q3 How would you rate your expertise regarding this organization?

- ○ Very low
- ○ Rather low
- ○ Rather high
- ○ Very high

Q4 Regarding which international organization of this broader list do you have most expertise? (Please select a different organization than above.) Even if your expertise is limited, your responses are as valuable for the purposes of our study.

[List of IOs connected to answer in Q1 and list of IOs with broad scope + option "None of the above"]

Q5 How would you rate your expertise regarding this organization?

- ○ Very low
- ○ Rather low
- ○ Rather high
- ○ Very high

Q6 How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [IO selected in Q2]:

○ It takes significant decisions.

○ It reacts quickly to arising challenges in its policy domain.

○ States strongly comply with the decisions of the organization that apply to them.

○ Most of its policies reach their intended goal.

[Response options: "Very bad description"; "Rather bad description"; "Rather good description"; "Very good description"; "Not applicable"; "I don't know"]

Q7 How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [IO selected in Q2]:

○ Its leadership regularly takes initiatives independent of the member states.

○ It regularly allows member states to opt out from certain decisions.

○ Most of its budget consists of voluntary contributions.

○ It has great independence in recruiting its own staff members.

[Response options: "Very bad description"; "Rather bad description"; "Rather good description"; "Very good description"; "Not applicable"; "I don't know"]

Q8 How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [IO selected in Q2]:

○ Affected states fully participate in all its decision-making.

○ It has a fair geographical distribution in its staff members.

○ In practice, nonstate actors are strongly involved in its decision-making processes.

○ It has strong accountability mechanisms (e.g. auditing institutions, courts, parliamentary oversight).

[Response options: "Very bad description"; "Rather bad description"; "Rather good description"; "Very good description"; "Not applicable"; "I don't know"]

Q9 How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [IO selected in Q4]:

○ It takes significant decisions.

○ It reacts quickly to arising challenges in its policy domain.

○ States strongly comply with the decisions of the organization that apply to them.

○ Most of its policies reach their intended goal.

[Response options: "Very bad description"; "Rather bad description"; "Rather good description"; "Very good description"; "Not applicable"; "I don't know"]

Q10 How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [IO selected in Q4]:

○ Its leadership regularly takes initiatives independent of the member states.

○ It regularly allows member states to opt out from certain decisions.

○ Most of its budget consists of voluntary contributions.

○ It has great independence in recruiting its own staff members.

[Response options: "Very bad description"; "Rather bad description"; "Rather good description"; "Very good description"; "Not applicable"; "I don't know"]

Q11 How well or how badly do you think that each of the following statements describes the [IO selected in Q4]:

○ Affected states fully participate in all its decision-making.

○ It has a fair geographical distribution in its staff members.

○ In practice, nonstate actors are strongly involved in its decision-making processes.

○ It has strong accountability mechanisms (e.g. auditing institutions, courts, parliamentary oversight).

[Response options: "Very bad description"; "Rather bad description"; "Rather good description"; "Very good description"; "Not applicable"; "I don't know"]

Q12–13 *[Randomisation: Each respondent receives the question twice, each time for a different issue area]*

How likely do you think each of the following is to happen by 2030 in the area of [security/climate/trade/health]?

○ Informal international institutions with more limited membership such as clubs, summits or ad hoc coalitions gain importance.

○ Regional solutions and institutions gain importance.

○ Competing institutions to the major IOs will be set up and/or used more.

[Response options: "(Almost) impossible"; "Very unlikely"; "Rather unlikely", "Rather likely"; "Very likely"; "(Almost) certain"]

Q14–15 *[Randomisation: Each respondent receives the question twice, each time for a different IO]*

How likely do you think the [World Trade Organization (WTO)/ African Union (AU)/ World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations (UN)/European Union (EU)/International Criminal Court (ICC)] is to encounter each of the following challenges by 2030?

○ A major member state withdraws.

○ The organization has a crisis of resources.

○   Member states block decision-making.

○   Policy problems become more complex.

[Response options: "(Almost) impossible"; "Very unlikely"; "Rather unlikely", "Rather likely"; "Very likely"; "(Almost) certain"]

Q16 Which (other) challenge do you think is most pressing for IOs in the area of [area from Q1]?

[Open field]

Introduction conjoints:

The final part of the survey asks some questions on scenarios.

In the coming years, international organizations may encounter various challenges. The next three pages describe scenarios that international organizations may be confronted with, along with a presentation of two hypothetical international organizations. Please read the descriptions carefully before you answer the questions.

[Randomisation: Each respondent receives all scenarios in a randomised order]

Scenario withdrawal: "International organizations may be challenged by the withdrawal of a major member state. Which international organization do you think is most likely able to continue carrying out its mandate in this scenario?"

Scenario resource crisis: "International organizations may be challenged by a shortage of resources to fund the organization. Which international organization do you think is most likely able to continue carrying out its mandate in this scenario?

Scenario gridlock: "International organizations may be challenged by member states blocking decision-making within the organization. Which international organization do you think is most likely able to continue carrying out its mandate in this scenario?"

Features and levels:

Features	Level 1	Level 2
Reaction speed to arising policy challenges	Fast	Slow
State compliance with its decisions	Strong	Weak
Its leadership takes policy initiatives independent of member states	Regularly	Rarely
Source of budget contributions	Mostly voluntary	Mostly compulsory
State participation in decision-making	All affected states	Not all affected states
Involvement nonstate actors in decision-making	Strong	Weak

Q17, 19, 21 Which international organization do you think is best able to continue carrying out its mandate when member states block decision-making within the organization?

[Respondents could select one of the two presented hypothetical IOs]

Q18 How likely do you think it is that each international organization will survive when a major member state withdraws?

[Response options per presented organisation: "(Almost) impossible"; "Very unlikely"; "Rather unlikely", "Rather likely"; "Very likely"; "(Almost) certain"]

Q20 How likely do you think it is that each international organization will survive when facing a shortage of resources?

[Response options per presented organisation: "(Almost) impossible"; "Very unlikely"; "Rather unlikely", "Rather likely"; "Very likely"; "(Almost) certain"]

Q22 How likely do you think it is that each international organization will survive when member states block decision-making within the organization?

[Response options per presented organisation: "(Almost) impossible"; "Very unlikely"; "Rather unlikely", "Rather likely"; "Very likely"; "(Almost) certain"]

Q23 In which country is your main institution (e.g. university) located?

[Drop-down list of countries]

Q24 What is your main discipline?

[Response options: "international relations", "political science", "economics", "(international) political economy", "law", "development studies", "history, sociology", "area/regional studies", "anthropology", "communication studies", "demography", "education", "geography", "linguistics", "psychology", "public administration", "urban studies", "cultural studies", "other (please specify)"]

Q25 What is your gender?

○   Woman

○   Man

○   Other

Annex B

Complete List of IOs

Continued on the next

| IO	Number of Experts Who Claimed Expertise
United Nations (UN)	245
European Union (EU)	206
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	120
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	42
African Union (AU)	40
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	36
World Bank (WB)	34
World Trade Organization (WTO)	30
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	22
United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)	21
International Criminal Court (ICC)	17
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	15
United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)	15
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)	14
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)	12
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	12
Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	12
Council of Europe (CoE)	11
United Nations Security Council (UNSC)	11
Mercado Común Del Sur (MERCOSUR)	10
Southern African Development Community (SADC)	9
World Health Organization (WHO)	9
Organization of American States (OAS)	8
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	8
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	7
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)	6
European Economic Area (EEA)	6
League of Arab States	6
Nordic Council	6
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	6
East African Community (EAC)	5
European Central Bank (ECB)	5
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)	5
United Nations Department of Peace Operations (UNDPO)	5

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	5
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)	4
Internet Governance Forum (IGF)	4
North American FTA (NAFTA)/United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)	4
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	3
Latin American Integration Association (ALADI)	3
Bank for International Settlements (BIS)	3
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	3
Central European Initiative (CEI)	3
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	3
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	3
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)	3
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	3
Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)	3
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)	3
Central American Integration System (SICA)	3
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)	3
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA)	3
Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization	2
Andean Community	2
Antarctic Treaty	2
Arctic Council	2
European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)	2
European Investment Bank (EIB)	2
G20	2
Global Environment Facility	2
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	2
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)	2
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	2
International Maritime Organization (IMO)	2
International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)	2
Kimberley Process	2
Pacific Islands Forum	2
Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA-CPA)	2
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	2
UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	2
ASEAN Plus 3	1
Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)	1
BRICS	1
Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS)	1

Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee of the La Plata Basin Countries (CIC Plata)	1
Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR)	1
Commonwealth of Nations	1
Convention on Biological Diversity	1
Danube Commission	1
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	1
European Free Trade Association (EFTA)	1
Financial Action Task Force (FATF)	1
G7	1
Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance	1
International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	1
International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)	1
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	1
International Energy Agency (IEA)	1
International Labor Organization (ILO)	1
International Seabed Authority (ISA)	1
International Olympic Committee (OIC)	1
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	1
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)	1
North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)	1
North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)	1
Non-Proliferation Treaty	1
Nuclear Threat Initiative	1
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)	1
Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)	1
Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)	1
United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (UNCCW)	1
United Nations Global Compact	1
Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)	1
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)	1
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)	1
United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Organization (UNDRR)	1
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	1
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)	1
United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)	1
World Food Programme (WFP)	1

Note: Strictly speaking, not all entries are IOs. Some respondents entered a wider array of global governance institutions in the "other" option on the survey.

Annex C

IO Average Assessment Scores
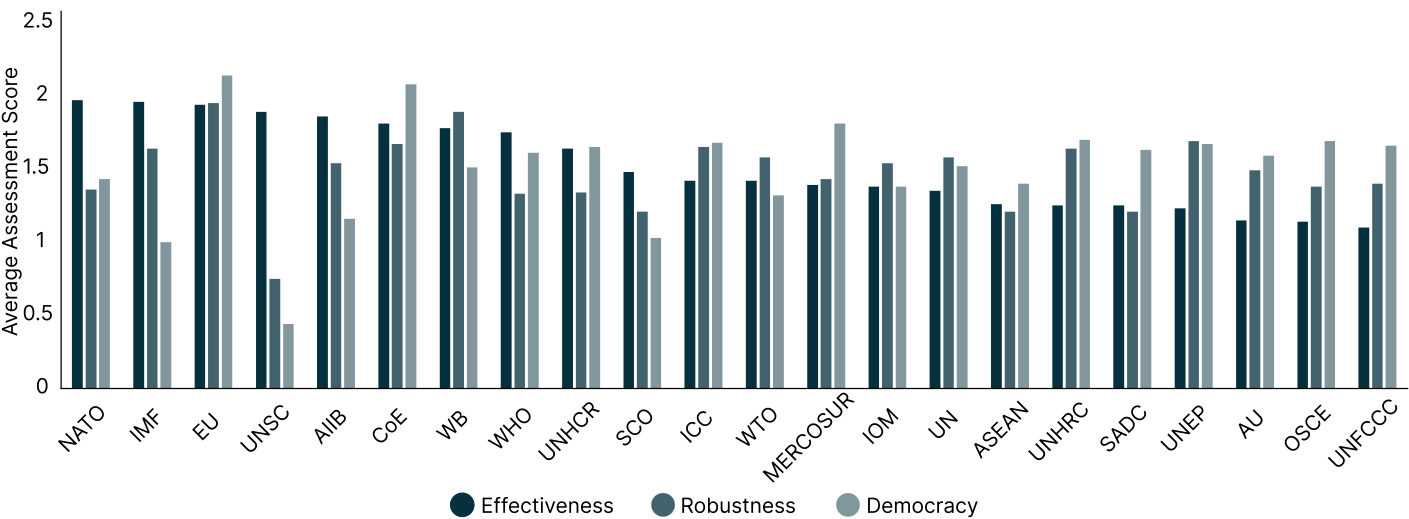
Notes: The bars represent sum scales of the institutional characteristics presented in *Figures 2–4*. Ratings for reliance on voluntary budget contributions were reversed to compose an index running from low to high robustness. Range 0–3.

About ENSURED

In an era marked by global challenges, international cooperation is more essential than ever. Yet multilateral initiatives too often end in gridlock, as dominant states seek to bend the global order to their own interests. Enter ENSURED, a Horizon Europe-funded research consortium studying how the EU and its member states can better defend multilateralism and make global governance more robust, effective, and democratic.

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