RECOMMENDATIONS

- Avoid further expanding the Quad remit at the expense of progressing existing commitments
- Streamline 12 existing working groups into three ‘pillars’: regional public goods, technology and security cooperation
- Prioritise areas for cooperation to provide more structure, focus attention and resources, and better ‘brand’ the Quad
- Establish new, major Quad projects related to critical technology, quality infrastructure and supply chain resilience

The upcoming Leaders’ Meeting in Tokyo will raise expectations of new announcements to demonstrate progress. Instead of further broadening cooperation or announcing enhanced defence cooperation, the focus should be on delivering against existing commitments.

Since the Leaders’ Summits in March and September 2021, the functional remit of the Quad has dramatically expanded. This includes recent commitments around COVID-19 vaccines, climate change, and critical and emerging technology. The Quad has now declared 12 priority areas for cooperation.

As the Quad agenda expands beyond the traditional security sphere, there is a pressing need to provide coherence and structure to its work. In the absence of a formal Secretariat, a dedicated and consolidated Quad web presence could help manage its work programs, track progress on implementation, and communicate its achievements to the world. It could provide a record of past meetings, joint statements, working groups, and existing commitments.

Developing thematic priorities would help focus the Quad’s expanding agenda. Its 12 priority areas should be organised into three themes – regional public goods, technology and security cooperation – which would provide structure, prioritisation and resourcing to key initiatives.

As a next step, the Quad should focus on major projects related to critical technology, quality infrastructure and supply chain resilience. Out of all working groups, these three have the strongest political convergence for action, leverage Quad member strengths, have a sense of regional urgency and potential tangible benefit to countries, and are less provocative than other areas of Quad cooperation.
Hayley Channer is the Senior Policy Fellow at the Perth USAsia Centre. Based in Canberra, Hayley produces analysis on foreign and defence policy in the Indo-Pacific, engages with key Australian Government agencies and other policy stakeholders, and builds and sustains the Centre’s domestic and international network. Hayley has led a diverse career across government, think tanks and the not-for-profit sector. She previously worked for the Department of Defence producing strategic policy guidance on defence cooperation and international engagement with the United States and Japan.

About the author

Disclaimer

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in relation to the subject matter covered. It is provided on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering any form of professional or other advice or services. No person should rely on the contents of this publication without first obtaining advice from a qualified professional individual or agency.

© Perth USAsia Centre 2021

This publication is subject to copyright. Except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of it may in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, microcopying, photocopying, recording or otherwise) be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted without prior written permission. Enquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

Notwithstanding the above, educational Institutions (including schools, independent colleges, universities, and TAFEs) are granted permission to make copies of copyrighted works strictly for educational purposes without explicit permission from the Perth USAsia Centre and free of charge.