

**INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR
GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH**



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Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Newsletter

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IAI NEWSLETTER Report to EC 20, CoP 12

1. Background

The IAI Newsletter is one of the institutional outreach activities of major importance. The regular production of this publication allows IAI members, involved scientists, interested institutions and public in general to have a continuous updated view and information about the IAI's programmatic and institutional activities, plans and announcements of opportunity. It also includes the results of the IAI scientists' work in the different areas of the Science Agenda. The Newsletter was first issued in December 1992 and since then it has been published uninterruptedly.

Since 1994, when the bodies of IAI were effective, the planning and preparation of the Newsletter was supervised by the EC and from 1997 through an EC Communication Task Force. With the dissolution of several Working Groups and Task Forces by the EC in its 16th Session in Panama, December 2002, the supervision was transferred in 2003 to an Editorial Board whose membership and terms of reference are described in Annex I. During 2003 this group worked very smoothly and, as a result, all issues were released in time.

There were however some financial concerns due to escalating costs, and as a result during a visit of the IAI Director to Argentina in September 2003 discussions were held with the Newsletter Editor and the Secretary of State of Science and Technology to explore possible ways to reduce the production costs. After further reflections, the consideration of different alternatives and interactions with the Editorial Board members the Director, as a measure with minimum damage, decided to reduce the frequency from 4 to 3 numbers per year as from 2004, maintaining the same structure and keeping the number of pages up to 28.

This decision was informed to EC 19 in Buenos Aires, June 2004, for comments and possible endorsement. The Council agreed to this reduction for the year 2004 and recommended a group to analyze the issue and report to EC 20. The CoP 11 supported this recommendation. A summary of the EC 19 and CoP minutes and actions related to the Newsletter are in Annex II.

The group is composed by the Editorial Board, the IAI Financial Officer and Dr (Mrs.) Barbara Garea as CoP Member. The next section of this document summarizes the previous considerations of the editorial board, the Directorate's arguments presented and discussed during EC 19 and provides details on some issues.

2. Discussion

Table 1 contains the edition dates and number of pages of the newsletter in the previous years. During 2001 and half 2002 the newsletter was issued irregularly. A period of regular issues started in July 2002, with one issue published and distributed every 3 months. By the end of 2003 and after withstanding with the load of contributing to regular quarterly newsletter issues for one year, the IAI Directorate promotes a measure to reduce the funds assigned to the Newsletter. The findings of the analysis of this situation made with the participation of some members of the Editorial Board was presented at the 19th meeting of the Executive Council:

“As the situation from the financial point of view became unsustainable, after further reflections, the Directorate came to the conclusion that the only possibility of maintaining the Newsletter within the established budgets, without the difficulties cited above, was simply to reduce its frequency. That is to say four-monthly instead of quarterly. With this approach the costs fitted very well within the approved budget, there were no major difficulties with the numbering (simply the No 34 would cover the period January-April, instead of January-March and thus continuing), and the style and size of the publication was kept unchanged. This was

considered a minimum damage approach and as such it was agreed to initiate this change from January 2004, “ad referendum” of the next EC 19 decisions.”

Table 1 – History of the last issues of IAI Newsletter

Number	Dated	Released	Pages
25	Mar – Jun 2001	July 2001	28
26	Jul – Sep 2001	Nov 2001	24
27	Jan – Jun 2002	Jun 2002	28
28	Jul – Sep 2002	Oct 2002	32
29	Oct – Dec 2002	Jan 2003	28
30	Jan – Mar 2003	Apr 2003	24
31	Apr – Jun 2003	Jul 2003	28
32	Jul – Sep 2003	Oct 2003	36
33	Oct – Dec 2003	Feb 2004	28
34	Jan – Apr 2004	Jun 2004	28
35	May – Aug 2004	Nov 2004	28
36	Sep – Dec 2004	Apr/Jun 2005?	28

During the EC 19 session the Directorate also pointed out that, as in the production of the Newsletter a considerable involvement of all IAI senior officers is required, a reduction of its frequency would also alleviate this pressure liberating time of these officers for other equally important tasks and duties.

As noted in the background section the Executive Council agreed to this reduction for the year 2004 and recommended a group to analyze the issue and report to EC 20 and the Conference of the Parties supported this recommendation.

On March 1, 2005, taking advantage that Carlos Ereño and Bárbara Garea, two members of the proposed group to analyze this issue were at the Directorate attending the IAI Financial and Administrative Committee (FAC) meeting, this group held a meeting with the IAI staff.

After discussing different issues related with the cost, contents, distribution and the role of the Editorial Board, the group recognized and agreed the following:

- The IAI Interim Director expressed his concern on the workload put on the Directorate staff as to support the needs of input for the Newsletter, because the staff is reduced and has several other responsibilities and duties.
- The 2005–2006 budget required for 4 issues of the newsletter is US\$ 45,067. If it is reduced to 3 issues the budget will be US\$ 33,977
- The Editorial board has not provided much guidance about the content of the Newsletter (particularly SAC members). In some extent this was understandable as SAC members are extremely busy and are also requested to carry out other IAI functions related to their association with IAI, for example to represent the institution in meetings, etc.
- Independently of the number of issues per year the most important is to strengthen the content of the Newsletter and go more in depth in its substance, for example to include lectures of the IAI Training Institutes, or have articles and updates of current IAI projects, or include information about global change and activities of IAI in the IAI countries.
- It is also suggested to develop an annual plan handy to plan their content in advance and in a balanced way, and to have a stronger participation of PIs and co-PIs and country representatives in the Newsletter
- It was agreed to have the next issue highlighting the IAI Training Institutes, but also to include some institutional information, as commonly done. Also special issues on results of the IAI science programs (e.g. CRN or SGP) in the future.

- It was also agreed not to take any permanent decisions made at this time as we will have a new Director and Program Manager starting soon at the IAI and new SAC members elected at the next CoP.
- There were comments on some problems downloading the Newsletter files from the IAI website. It was suggested that files containing individual articles could also be made available on the website. This has been already implemented. Nevertheless, the IT Manager informed that in the last month 35 downloads of the complete version and no downloads of individual articles were made (included on the website on March 17).
- It was agreed to have 3 issues of the Newsletter produced in 2005.
- A new composition of the editorial board with one member of the SAC, one representative of the CoP. The role, tasks and membership of the board need to be clearly defined.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

- To maintain the production of 3 issues of the Newsletter in 2005
- To modify the composition of the Editorial Board, adding a CoP representative in replacement of one of the SAC representatives
- To approve the recommendations made by the group established to analyze the issue of the Newsletter as to improve its content and plan on a yearly basis the edition of issues devoted to subjects relevant to the IAI activities.
- After this year, the new Editorial Board will evaluate the advisability of maintaining the production of 3 issues per year and will report to the EC.

Annex I

Newsletter Editorial Board

Present membership

- IAI Director (Chair)
- Editor
- Two SAC Members (A. Castellanos, M.A. F. Silva Dias)
- G. Breaulmann (IAI SO)
- M. Ohira Schwarz (IAI CO)

Main Roles and duties

- To recommend the content of the Newsletter suggesting and/or selecting suitable articles and notes;
- To collaborate with the Editor in achieving a maximum consistency and balance of the contents of expected contributions;
- To be conversant with the design and structure of the Newsletter;
- To suggest institutions and individuals to be included in the Newsletter distribution list.

Newsletter Editor Duties

- Taking the lead in the collection and coordination of all inputs to the Newsletter (articles, notes, etc.) taking into account recommendations and suggestions from the Editorial Board;
- Produce an electronic version of the Newsletter following previously arranged website and printer standards;
- Arrange for, supervise and follow up the production of the Newsletter insuring a timely delivery;
- Prepare a budget to be discussed with the Directorate for approval and endorse the subsequent related financial reports;
- Arrange for the appropriate and timely distribution of the Newsletter.

Directorate:

- Dir: Chair the board and overall coordination
TCO: General oversight of different processes related to the production and distribution
SO: Check and contribute to scientific entries, notes and news.
FO: Monitoring, follow up and approval of budget and financial reports.

Annex II

Actions regarding IAI Newsletter by EC19 & CoP 11

Minutes EC 19, Buenos Aires, 29-30 June 2004

Newsletter

- 2003 releases issued on time
- Escalating distribution costs
- Alternatives were considered to reduce production and distribution costs and to improve the efficiency of distribution.
- Due to financial shortages, we are forced to reduce the frequency of the Newsletter from quarterly deliveries to three numbers per year for 2004, in order to maintain the costs within the available funds without affecting the quality, presentation or content of the publication. The CoP is requested to endorse this measure.

*The EC approved the reduction in the frequency of the IAI Newsletter (from 4 to 3 issues per year) for the current year. The EC asked a group composed of the IAI Newsletter Editorial Board, the Financial Officer, and a CoP member to analyze this issue and report back to the next EC. **Action 1 – Day 2***

Minutes CoP 11, Buenos Aires, June 28-July 2, 2004.

Newsletter

The Director reported that the 2003 releases had been issued on time. Due to financial shortages, the Directorate was forced to reduce the frequency of the Newsletter from quarterly deliveries to three numbers per year for 2004, in order to maintain the costs within the available funds without affecting the quality, presentation or content of the publication.

*The CoP elected Barbara Garea as the CoP member that would be part of the group composed of the IAI Newsletter Editorial Board, the Financial Officer and a CoP member to analyze the issue of the IAI Newsletter distribution and report back to the next EC. **Action 13 – Day 2***