

IAI Science Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC)

Report to the Conference of the Parties

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The SPAC was created at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) in 2013. SPAC's mandate is to provide advice on the development of an IAI strategy to improve and broaden the links between its scientific work and policy making.

SPAC is composed of NGO managers, research directors, research scientists, development bank officials, government administrators and, current and former politicians from across the region. It is hoped that this vast array of expertise is ensuring balanced and informed advice to the IAI on how to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and decision makers.

From May 11th to 13th, 2016, the SPAC held its first face to face meeting since its inception in 2014. The main focus during this meeting was to elaborate on an agreed Action Plan for the future work of this committee in support of the IAI and the CoP members.

Members of SPAC and the IAI directorate engaged in a productive conversation and concluded that SPAC's action for the future will focus on the following three key elements:

1. Improve the visibility of the IAI with policy makers and ensure it is considered a reference organisation in global change research for the Americas.
2. Identify demands on global change policy issues in the region and provide advice to the IAI for establishing research activities to respond to those demands.
3. Enhance the diversification and volume of funds sources.

This vision will be delivered through four key actions that SPAC members will engage in collaboration with SAC and other organisms:

A. Outreach Plan: Provide advice on the key elements of an Outreach Plan

Objective:

- Increase the IAI profile with decision makers of the public and private sector and regional organisations in member countries.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased diffusion of IAI research results and contributions to policy;
- Identification of member countries' needs; and
- Greater involvement of countries who do not actively participate in the IAI.

The SPAC will provide advice on:

- Requirements for selected researchers to 'translate' results into policy relevant information. This could be done by drafting policy summaries, cost-benefits analyses, etc.; and
- Requirements for selected researchers to communicate findings to the community and decision makers.

Outreach Plan:

To ensure the objectives of an effective outreach plan, the SPAC recommends the following:

- B. Engagement with SAC:** SPAC and SAC should work jointly to define the best way to communicate the impact of the science conducted by the IAI and to refine the science agenda moving forward to ensure relevance of the science in addressing critical issues for the region.

Objectives:

- Establish regular meetings between the SAC and the SPAC members (at least twice a year) and between their respective Chairs (at least every three months);
- Help develop a policy perspective for the text in the next call for IAI funding projects and for developing selection criteria for the 4th call of projects to be conducted in 2017/2018, in accordance with grant conditions and new funding criteria; and
- Assess the need for SPAC to consult, and participate in environmental scans that would

Recommendations to CoP

- **Strengthen capacity on the IAI directorate to ensure it will respond to the needs of decision makers when called for support/information.**
- ***Enhance CoP members capacity to be more engaged in outreach at the national level.***
- **Continue to build capacity within the scientific community as this is a great way of communicating the outputs of the IAI. In particular, support training of scientists to communicate effectively to decision makers.**
- **Take a strategic approach to release outputs of the IAI, for instance use a consistent schedule to release products (i.e. policy briefs, scientific synthesis reports, etc.) .**
- **IAI increase their linkage with international policy making processes such as environmental conventions (UNFCCC, CBD, etc.).**
- **Support the IAI to improve linkages with funding organisations.**
- **Further opportunities for the IAI to engage with the private sector as potential receptors of the knowledge created by the IAI.**

identify current and future issues on global change for the region.

Expected Outcomes:

- The IAI research projects results reflect the region's knowledge and outreach needs;
- Researchers include policy considerations when communicating their results;
- Advice provided by SPAC on research themes will be used to prioritize investments; and
- Enhanced integration of science and policy within IAI and its program implementation.

SPAC will provide advice on:

- Research themes to prioritize and on selection criteria to help the Directorate and SAC in program implementation;
- Requirements for selected researchers to 'translate' results into policy suggestions. This could be done by drafting policy summaries, cost-benefits analyses, etc.; and
- Approaches and products that researchers could use to communicate their results to decision makers.

Engagement with SAC:

To ensure the objectives of an effective engagement with SAC, the SPAC recommends the following:

Recommendations to CoP

- Increase the focus for synthesis products from the work that has been led by IAI and the state of the knowledge of topics of policy relevance and promote national consultations.
- Engage in an inclusive consultative process to identify “priorities” for the science agenda.
- SPAC suggests that in the future CoP agendas should include science/policy items.
- SAC members should become ambassadors to connect with science bodies in each Party country so that those internal bodies in turn connect and advice CoP members.

- C. **Engagement with Decision-Makers:** SPAC will advise the IAI and SAC members on what are the most effective ways of engaging with decision-makers in general.

Objectives:

- Increase the uptake of knowledge generated by the IAI by decision and opinion makers;
- CoP members become more familiar with the science body of work generated by the IAI and serve as ambassadors of the institution; and
- Ensure, principally through capacity building activities, that results of current research projects will inform policy.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased diffusion of IAI research results to relevant audiences; and
- Increased awareness of IAI’s work in the communities where it conducts research and in the region.

SPAC will provide advice on:

- How to familiarize researchers with policy considerations (e.g. presentations on how decisions are made in government and/or large corporations).

Engagement with Decision-Makers:

To ensure the objectives of an effective engagement with Decision-Makers, the SPAC recommends the following:

Recommendations to CoP

- **SPAC recommends the creation of a long term network of science-policy integrators, including national organizations that transcends the current membership of SPAC members,**
- **Strengthen the receptor capacity in each of the CoP members to use the knowledge generated by the IAI scientific community.**
- **CoP members to become more involved in the definition of the IAI policy related goals.**

- D.** Analyze available **financial mechanisms** that can be used to support IAI research on global change

Objective:

- Identify mechanisms that could finance research and/or the implementation of the IAI contribution to policy relevant issues in the Americas, including through projects of sustainable development funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and El Fondo para la Convergencia Estructural del MERCOSUR (FOCEM).

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased implementation of IAI informed policies or decisions; and
- Enhance diversification and amount of funding for the IAI to conduct research.

SPAC and the IAI directorate will:

- Interview institutions who do climate financing and other type of environmental financing to better understand the opportunities available in the region; and
- Provide advice on how to communicate these opportunities to decision makers.

Financial Mechanisms:

To ensure the objective of identifying additional financial mechanisms for the IAI, the SPAC recommends the following:

SPAC membership:

Recommendations to CoP

- Further a “Belmont model-like” to support science projects among the Parties.
- The IAI Directorate continue the outreach to world/international funding organisations
- IAI serves as a broker between potential research organisations in Latin America & Caribbean and funders for developing goals.
- Co-financing (IAI and Banks or countries outside the Americas)
- Create a Developing Officer position (consultant?) on the IAI

This year two members of SPAC will be retiring from their function as members of the committee. Two candidates will be presented to the CoP in June 2016 for its consideration to fill these vacancies.

IAI Restructuring and the SPAC role:

The SPAC has been working closely with the IAI Science-Policy Liaison Directorate (SPLD) office. The current capacity in the SPLD is not adequate to successfully deliver on the actions described in this report. SPAC recommends that this directorate is enabled adequately to support the important work of science policy integration.

Next face to face SPAC meeting:

The Humboldt Institute in Bogota, Colombia, offered to host the next SAC/SPAC/IAI Directorate meeting during the week of April 24-28 2017.