

Report from IAI Executive Director Search Committee

Committee members:

Executive Council: Maria Uhle (USA), chair, Miguel Blesa (Argentina), Jean Ometto (Brazil) Eric Gagne (Canada), Gladys Santis (Chile), Roberto Villalobos (Costa Rica), Milagro Mainieri (Panama), Fernando Mendez Gaona (Paraguay), and Ramiro Villarpando Camargo (Bolivia).

Additional members: Javier Gracia-Garza (Science-Policy Advisory Committee - SPAC Chair), Edwin Castellanos (Scientific Advisory Committee -SAC Chair) and Marcella Ohira (IAI Directorate Staff).

Process

IAI Executive Director search process was overseen by an 12-member committee consisting of representatives from various member countries as well as representatives from the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) and the IAI Directorate Staff.

The position description (Annex A) was posted on the IAI website on August 15, 2016. Several of our international partners shared this advertisement with their communities including Future Earth and START. The position was open to all qualified candidates except for citizens of Uruguay as stated in the Agreement to Establish the IAI.

Eligible candidates from the 2015 search process were contacted by the Search Chair and informed that a new process had been initiated and were encouraged to apply.

The committee received 25 applications by October 7, 2016 – the application deadline. All the information was contained on the IAI twiki and was password protected. The members of the committee evaluated each candidate according to the criteria (Annex B) agreed to by the CoP and Executive Council members. Each committee member provided a short list of up to 8 candidates identified as suitable for a teleconference interview. The chairs of the SPAC and SAC provided input from their members and Marcella Ohira provided the input from the IAI staff.

The search committee decided on a short list of 10 candidates that were provided the opportunity to interview with the committee during early November. The interviews were recorded with permission from each applicant and access to the recorded interviews was provided to all committee members as well as the members of the SPAC, SAC and IAI staff.

After review of the teleconference interviews, the committee invited 3 candidates for in-person interviews in Montevideo during the week of January 23, 2017. The interviews were recorded and all members of the search committee were given access to the files. The search committee discussed the candidates during a teleconference on 10 February 2017.

Recommendation

The search committee recommends Dr. Marcos Regis da Silva as the next Executive Director of the IAI. As was stated during the CoP in Lima, a major challenge for the IAI has been engaging members of the CoP and galvanizing a regional perspective for the many challenges that the IAI science can help address. With the advent of the SPAC, the IAI is moving toward making the strong IAI science relevant and accessible to decision-makers in the region and the IAI requires an Executive Director with diplomatic and policy experience with a strong knowledge of how science can be used to inform decision-making and ultimately policy. Dr. Regis da Silva has the necessary background and experience to help the IAI move to the next level (application materials are contained in Annex C).

For over 25 years, he has worked within academia and the United Nations system as well as the secretariats of several international organizations. He has been instrumental in developing plans to move various organizations forward to meet challenging goals relevant to global environmental change. Biodiversity and ecosystem services have been the principal focus of his previous work. Currently, these are topics of great importance to the IAI member countries. Dr. Regis da Silva has also worked on global environmental change issues and their relation to trade within the Americas. He also provided a strong view on the need for open science and data sharing and provided several suggestions on how to position the IAI as a leader in the region for these efforts. During the interview, he presented a clear, ambitious vision for the IAI over the next decade and he recognized the need to engage members of the CoP to make these efforts successful.

He has experience in managing staff and providing a constructive, supportive work environment that is based on both team-work and individual responsibility and accountability.

The committee fully supports Dr. Marcos Regis da Silva for the position of Executive Director of IAI.