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9 April 2021

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL  
CHANGE RESEARCH  
Twenty-eighth meeting  
Videoconference, 22-23 June 2021  
Agenda item 11**

**Joint Report of the Science-Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science-Policy Advisory  
Committee (SPAC)**

1. This document has been prepared by the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) with the assistance of the IAI Directorate.

Background

2. The *Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*, Article VII, the Scientific Advisory Committee, paragraph 1, stipulates that the SAC:  
  
*...shall be the principal scientific advisory organ of the Institute.*
3. Additionally, Article VII, paragraph 4(a) directs the SAC, among other actions, to:  
  
*Make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties regarding the Scientific Agenda, long-range plans and annual program of the Institute.*
4. The Conference of the Parties, at its 21st meeting (CoP-21, Montevideo, 2013), adopted Decision XXI/13, which states:

*The CoP approved the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Science-Policy Liaison. The committee will provide advice to the CoP and the IAI Directorate on how to use and design science for policy and decision-making.*

### Membership

5. The current membership of the SAC includes: Reynaldo Victoria (Chair), Elena Abraham, Edwin Castellanos, Tereza Cavazos, Mariana Meerhoff Scaffo, Joshua Tewksbury, Ines Camilloni, Alexander Turra, Patricia Balvanera, Jean Paul Metzger, and two alternate members: Michelle Scobie and Mercy Borbor.
6. In June 2021, one SAC member nominated by the Parties, Mariana Meerhoff Scaffo from Uruguay, will conclude her first term and she is eligible for re-election, per Article VII, paragraph 2 of the *Agreement*, if nominated by a party.
7. One SAC member nominated by the Parties, Edwin Castellanos from Guatemala, will conclude his second term.
8. Notification no. IAIUYDIR/2021/004 was issued on 23 March 2021 inviting Parties to submit nominations for these vacancies.
9. Membership to the SAC requires expertise in a number of critical areas relevant to the Scientific Agenda of the IAI and to reflect an appropriate balance among the biogeographical areas of scientific importance to the Americas and also an integration of natural and social science.
10. The current membership of the SPAC includes: Brigitte Baptiste, Walter Baethgen, Javier Gracia-Garza, Evelia Rivera-Arriaga, Karen de Oliveira Silverwood Cope, Vaughan Turekian, and David Smith.
11. The Conference of the Parties shall elect SAC members from nominations received from Parties.

### Activities

12. In accordance with Decision XXVI/9, meetings of the SAC and SPAC were held jointly the first Tuesday of every month, during the intersessional period. The joint meetings have been successful, resulting in enhanced communication and participation, and increased exchange of knowledge between the SAC and the SPAC.
13. Nine teleconferences were held: 1 September 2020, 6 October 2020, 3 November 2020, 1 December 2020, 2 February 2021, 2 March 2021, 6 April 2021, 4 May 2021, and 1 June 2021, as of this writing. Issues discussed included: revision of the scientific agenda, the finalization and publication of the CRN3 special issue, new opportunities for funding including grants submitted, alignment of SAC/SPAC activities with the IAI strategic plan, the continuation of the COVID-19 working group, creation of a strategic plan indicators working group, and creation of a regional assessment working group.

14. The SAC and SPAC contributed to the revision of the IAI's scientific agenda per Decision XXVII/5: *The Science Advisory Committee and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee are instructed to further revise and update the IAI Scientific Agenda in line with the IAI Strategic Plan to better reflect transdisciplinary research and science with special attention to human issues and systems.*
15. The revised draft IAI Scientific Agenda is available as an annex to document Decision XXVII/5: *Recommendations by the Parties and the SAC and SPAC on revisions to the IAI Scientific Agenda*, no. IAI/COP/29/12.
16. The SAC and SPAC contributed to the editorial and review process for the CRN3 special issue per Decision XXVII/29: *The IAI Science Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) are instructed to collaborate with the Directorate on the publication of a special issue on the IAI in a peer reviewed journal, by acting as guest editors, reviewers, and/or any other function that contributes to the publication of the Special issue.* At the time of writing, the expected date of publication is April or May 2021.
17. The SAC and SPAC provided feedback on implementation of the 4-year proposal submitted by the IAI directorate to the NSF (awaiting funds) entitled, *Building Capacity for Science-Informed Policy in the Americas through Regional Collaboration, Global Change Science Synthesis, Science Diplomacy, and Transdisciplinary Networks.* The proposal addresses Decisions XXV11/15 (Fourth Round of Collaborative Research Grants), XXVII/17 (Transdisciplinary Science), XXVII/20 (Seed Grant Programs), XXV11/30 and XXV11/30 (Establishment of a Flexible Funding Mechanism for the Americas).
18. The SAC and SPAC created a working group on the IAI's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The working group began meeting on an ad-hoc basis in May 2020 to identify strategic areas where the IAI can support Parties in the context of COVID-19. The working group is drafting a document summarizing these observations and recommendations, and are identifying outreach mechanisms to Parties such as publications and webinars. Based on the recommendations of the working group, the IAI collaborated with Virtual Keystone Symposia (VKS) to develop 3 SciTalks – on demand scientific presentations featuring research that address compelling scientific and global health questions. SciTalks were shown by the IAI in public webinars followed by a panel discussion with experts in science and policy. Experts included members of the SAC/SPAC.
19. The SAC and SPAC created a working group on the indicators for the IAI's Strategic Plan. The working group began meeting in February 2021 and worked throughout March 2021 to provide a draft set of indicators to be approved by the SAC and SPAC prior to presentation at the Conference of the Parties.
20. The SAC and SPAC established a working group to develop a template for the regional assessment as described in the IAI Strategic Plan. The working group will provide a draft set template of the assessment to be approved by the SAC and SPAC for consideration at CoP-29.

Recommendation

21. The Conference of the Parties is invited to take note of this document.