INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH

EC-XVIII
December 4-5, 2003
San José, Costa Rica

6_ECXVIII/DID/English/Nov 24, 2003

Participants:

SAC Members: Walter Fernandez (Chair), Michael Brklacich, Rene Capote, Alejandro Castellanos, Silvia Garzoli, Lynne Hale, Luiz F. Legey, Julia Paegle and Maria Assuncao Silva Dias. Gary Yohe had confirmed his participation, however due to the change in the venue, he was unable to attend.
Observers: Paul Filmer (NSF)
IAI Directorate: Gerhard Breulmann (Scientific Officer), Eduardo Banus (CRN Program Manager) only morning of Day 2, Isabel Vega (Assistant to the Scientific Officer), Paula Richter (Assistant). The IAI Director, Gustavo Necco, sent his regards to the participants and apologized for not being able to attend.

1. Opening of the Meeting

The SAC Chair, Walter Fernandez welcomed the participants and informed them about the recent passing away of Eduardo Franco from Peru, PI of CRN N° 031. A minute of silence was dedicated to his memory.

2. Approval of the Minutes of SAC XVIII

The Minutes of the previous SAC meeting were approved without modifications.

3. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda of the 19th SAC Meeting was approved without modifications.

4. Evaluation of proposals submitted under the second round of the IAI Small Grant Program (SGP-II)

Following was the evaluation of the proposals received under the IAI SGP II. 88 proposals have been received under SGP II. Two proposals were rejected due to incomplete documentation (no main proposal). The remaining 86 proposals, were grouped into: Research (41), Workshops (42), and Technical Reports (3). A total of US$ 600K is available for SGP II, which allows to fund approximately 20 proposals. The mail review took place from 1 September to 17 October 2003 . The Panel convened in Sao Jose dos Campos, Brazil on 20-22 October, 2003.

The SAC discussed both the process adopted and the Panel Assessments. It was agreed that the three-step peer-review (mail review, panel review, SAC) was appropriate and fair for proposal evaluations. Considering the mail and panel reviews, the SAC recommends 22 proposals for funding to the IAI EC, 3-5 December 2003, Costa Rica.

5. Update on the projects under the first round of the Small Grant Program (SGP-I) and the remaining PESCA and ISP-III funds

The first round of the SGP is in its final stage. Most of the workshop projects have sent their reports or are about to do so. Several projects have asked for no-cost extensions, which have been granted for up to 4 months. It will therefore be necessary for the IAI to apply for a no-cost extension to the NSF.

Although the program is closed, a no-cost extension has been granted by the NSF in order to use the remaining PESCA funds. The funds have been used to support IAI Summer Institutes, see bullet 10.

Another no-cost extension has been granted by NSF to use the remaining ISP funds. The funds have to be used until September 2004 and are earmarked for Summer Institutes.

The synthesis of ISP-III has been prepared by Thelma Krug. Thelma is currently working on the synthesis of ISP-I and ISP-II. A first draft is supposed to be ready for the EC meeting, 3-5 December 2003, Costa Rica.

6. CRNs including discussion of CRNs with difficulties

The CRN Program Manager, presented summary info/statistics about the CRNs.

All CRNs have been successful in raising additional funds for their projects and related activities. The SAC requested the Program Manager to prepare a presentation including: a) additional funds raised by the CRN projects, split into national sources, international agencies and IAI funds; b) number of publications by category; c) peer-review of each project; and d) summary of impact and applications of each project. The CRN Program Manager should request the PIs to include information on external funds obtained in their annual reports.

The closing of the CRN Program was discussed. A final PI meeting and the synthesis of the CRN research were considered. The synthesis could be done by themes of the Science Agenda. This synthesis also needs to reflect the contribution of the scientific information produced to the IAI member countries. Concerning a final meeting it was suggested that the SO contact and invite the programs of ESSP or other relevant programs/organizations. If the timing matches, the final meeting of the current CRNs could be held jointly with the first meeting of the second round of CRNs. The SO informed that there is no assigned budget for this meeting. IAI has the option to apply for supplemental funds to the NSF, however those funds would be reduced from the IAI program budget.

The SAC then discussed issues related to CRN project that had experienced difficulties

The IAI will need to request a no-cost extension for the CRN program to the NSF.

7. Assignment of SAC advisors to CRN projects

There will be no changes in the assignment of SAC advisors. Some SAC members sought clearer guidelines about what is expected from them in this advisory role. The SO informed that:
- The role of the SAC member is not a control function, but an advisory function.
- The contact between the SAC member and the PIs of the projects assigned to her/him should be direct. This contact should be sought from both sides.
- In case a SAC member is invited to a CRN Project meeting (s)he is advising, the IAI will cover the travel cost. The SAC member has to submit a written meeting report to the IAI Directorate.
- SAC members should inform the IAI Directorate about any relevant news of assigned projects and provide comments on project reports.

8. Next round of CRNs (continued discussion from 18th SAC), future SGP rounds and streamlining of the IAI proposal process

Following the discussions at the 18th SAC in Mendoza, the IAI program budget should be split into 80% for a new round of CRNs and 20% for new groups, i.e., Small Grants Program and T&E activities. For the T&E activities partners need to be identified to co-finance/organize courses/institutes.

Small Grants Programs (SGP):

The SAC recommends having a regular (annual) SGP call. The SO will prepare a draft timeline for 2004 before a decision can be made on whether it will be possible to launch an SGP as well as a CRN call in 2004. The SAC recommends the following:

- Proposals accepted in 2 categories: Research (up to US$ 30K). The category Technical Report should be combined 'into' Workshop (up to US$20K), with a publication/report as a final product.

- The call should always be launched at the same time of the year.
- The timing should not overlap with the Southern/Northern vacation, must coincide with the publication of the IAI Newsletter and match the timing of the SAC and EC meeting.
- The budget assigned for SGPs may vary from year to year depending on the emphasis of each SGP and the amount of funds allocated for Training & Education programs.
- Smaller SGPs with a thematic focus could be launched at times.
- Some funds could be reserved for "young/early career scientists" (e.g., PhD plus 5 years)
- Duration of projects should be extended to 18 months.
- Proponents must be advised to suggest names of reviewers that do not have a conflict of interest.

IAI CRN-II:

The SAC discussed the launch of a second round of CRNs. The announcement could be launched in the first half of 2004. A detailed timeline to be prepared by the SO. The SAC recommends the following:

- The call will be fully open.
- Up to US$200K/project/a
- Projects approved for 5 years, however, funding for years 4 and 5 will be pending satisfactory progress at the end of year 3 (evaluation after 3 years; evaluation process to be defined)
- Minimum participation of 4 IAI member countries
- Announcement will ask for Letters of intend (LoI) (2-3 pages plus appendices).
- Only parties who submit a LoI will be eligible to submit full proposals.
- A person can be PI of only one LOI/proposal. The same person can be Co-PI in only one additional LOI/proposal. Alternatively a person can be Co-PI in a maximum of two LOIs/proposals.
- For submission a fully web-based system as well as online forms should be used.
- Clear control mechanisms need to be defined; signing subcontracts between the PI and all Co-PIs will be required before release of any funds.
- The SO will prepare a draft CRN announcement and send it to a group of SAC members for comments (Alejandro Castellanos, Mike Brklacich, Julia Paegle).
- Active SAC members will not be eligible to apply for program calls as PIs or Co-PIs; the IAI Conflict of Interest Policy outlines the rules concerning proposals from members of the IAI governing bodies

Considering the workload associated with the IAI programs, the SAC strongly recommends hiring a full-time IAI Program Manager responsible for all IAI programs.

9. SAC-EC Meeting, identification of participants and points of discussion

The COP recommendation for a meeting between a group of EC and SAC members resulted out of the concern that the revised IAI Science Agenda does not sufficiently reflect the priorities of the IAI member countries. The idea for such meeting was greatly welcomed by the SAC. To facilitate the discussions, the SAC would request the country delegates to specify the country priorities and communicate them to the SAC. Following the recommendation of the IAI Director, an initial meeting will be held on 3 November 2003 in Costa Rica between the EC and SAC Chair to develop an agenda for a meeting.

It was strongly recommended that after the country priorities have been specified, a presentation be prepared on the applications of the current IAI Science Agenda and how each Theme can address those priorities. Such presentation could also be used for the promotion of IAI in member countries or to interested countries that are not involved in the IAI so far. The presentation will be prepared by the SAC divided into the same two groups that had worked on the revision of the Science Agenda.

10. Summer Institutes

On behalf of the IAI Training & Communications Officer, the SO informed the SAC about the three Summer Institutes that were planned for this year.

1. Land Use and Cover Change (LUCC) in the Amazonian Region: Patterns, Processes and [Plausible] Scenarios (Cachoeira Paulista, Brazil, October 12-24, 2003)
2. Vulnerability Associated with Climate Change and Climate Variability in Central America and the Caribbean (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 26 – November 8, 2003). Organized jointly with the UN and the OAS.
3. Global Climate Changes: Causes, Mitigation Alternatives and International Actions (Piracicaba, Brazil, November 10-22, 2003). Organized jointly with CENA-USP.

The IAI Summer Institutes received a lot of interest by the regional scientific community, which is clearly reflected in the numbers of applications (e.g., for the Vulnerability Institute in Santo Domingo more than 200). For each Institute about 20 scientists were selected to participate. Participants represented 17 American (member and non member) countries. The IAI is currently planning another 2 summer institutes for 2004, their realization pending availability of human and financial resources.

The SAC suggested thinking about an alternative name for the Institutes, .e.g. IAI Institutes.

11. Open SAC positions to be (re-)elected by EC/CoP in June 2004

The first terms of Rene Capote, Walter Fernandez, Lynne Hale, and Julia Paegle (all candidates nominated by the countries) are over and open for nominations to the next EC/CoP in June 2004. Lynne Hale declared that due to the commitments in her new position at TNC, she will unfortunately not be available for re-nomination. Julia Paegle noted that she may volunteer not to be re-nominated in order to open the position for a younger scientist. After collecting suggestions from the SAC members, the SAC Chair will prepare a letter to the EC Chair informing on the needed profile/area of expertise of nominees in order to have a balance of scientific disciplines.

12. Other issues

- The SAC recommended preparing a synthesis of the impact and contribution to science by all the IAI Programs to demonstrate the achievements of the IAI. Such effort would likely require some funding. (*Action by SAC*)
- In the context of having a joint EC/COP – SAC meeting, the SAC noted that country representatives should be in a position to make commitments on behalf of their countries.
- The SAC suggests the preparation of a PowerPoint presentation along the lines of the 10th Anniversary Book as a tool for IAI promotion. The Book Editor should be approached on the possibility to prepare such presentation (*Action by Paul Filmer*).
- The SAC was informed that the IAI Annual Report 2004 is about to be finalized.
- Paul Filmer informed that the IAI External Evaluation is delayed. Due to the difficulties in conducting the evaluation and in order to finalize this issue, it might become necessary to hire a professional evaluator.
- The SAC responsibilities are set in the IAI Agreement. Currently the SAC is carrying out many tasks that are not priority of this body. For future SAC meetings, some time should be allocated in the agenda to concentrate on the responsibilities defined in the agreement.

13. Next meeting

The next SAC meeting will be held in Canada in early May 2004. Mike Brklacich will identify a suitable meeting venue and send the information to the Directorate.

Lynne Hale offers again to host a future meeting at the TNC facilities in Washington, USA. Rene Capote offers to host a meeting in Havana, Cuba; Silvia Garzoli offers to host a meeting in Miami, USA.

The meeting adjourned.