

IAI activities plan July 2015 – June 2016

Institutional:

Despite substantial progress, the Directorate is still implementing parts of the tripartite structure, approved in June 2013. The host country agreement with Argentina still awaits minor revisions suggested by the Ministry of Foreign Relations. A renewed agreement with Brazil continues under review. Staffing of the Montevideo office is now complete and in the second half of 2015, the transition of administration from Brazil to Uruguay will be completed. The Directorate office in Buenos Aires now has a coordinator/director and operations are being linked to the Montevideo office and the activities of the SPAC. Despite these profound changes in administration, operations on science and capacity building are continuing uninterrupted. The change to new premises and the loss of the IT specialist have provided an opportunity to thoroughly redesign IAI's IT infrastructure: 1) the server with the new website is hosted commercially in Buenos Aires and the website and other communication tools are being developed further from the IAI communications office at the University of Buenos Aires. The telephone system has been rebuilt with an IT interface, that permits to tie the offices in Buenos Aires and Montevideo into the same operating environment and will allow the expansion to Brazil when that office become functional. Landline access is currently available in the US, and will be available in Uruguay later in 2015 once hardware has been installed there. Further refinements and reprogramming are underway and will be completed in 2015. A new autonomous customized video conferencing system is being tested, currently based on a fast server in Europe. This may be migrated to Montevideo if speed and band width of the local connections allow. We expect to migrate a lot of conferencing to the server later in 2015 while being able to provide a less interrupted, better quality conferencing environment that with common web-based solutions. SPAC, SAC and others will see improved networking in the second half of 2015.

Research:

All CRN3 projects are being closely monitored and apparently, the novel integrated science approaches present considerable difficulties to many of the scientists involved. The last meeting between the Directorate and SAC has resulted in a recommendation for a combined investigator and capacity building event. At the same time, the Directorate is preparing a small grants call on "the role of ecosystem services in adaptation". This takes the mandate from CoP 22 to strengthen adaptation research and combines it with the transdisciplinary demands of ecosystem service research to further promote the framing of IAI science programs in an interdisciplinary context.

In addition to the expansion of the CRN, the directorate is collaborating with ICSU on a proposal to the Swedish development agency (SIDA) for a science and capacity building program for Africa and Latin America, to be implemented by the IAI for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Capacity Building:

Several courses are in the process of planning and implementation:

A professional development seminar on Integrated Management of Underground Water to be held at the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) training center in Cartagena, Colombia (7-11 September 2015). Organizers are the Joint Research Center of the European Commission (JRC/EC), the Latin America Network of Knowledge Centres in the Water Sector (RALCEA), AECID and the IAI.

A conference and workshop on Sustainable Development and Global Environmental Change in Panama City, Panama (27-29 October, 2015). Organizers are SENACYT/Panama and the IAI.

Workshop on Climate Change Impacts on Biodiversity in the Tropical Andes: climate risks, vulnerability and decision making tools for the planning of conservation (tentatively scheduled for November 2015). Pending funding approval from the MacArthur Foundation.

Nine Training Institute Seed Grants are being implemented and monitored by the Directorate. During 2015-2016 an evaluation of the entire program will be carried out to assess its initial results and impact on the development of collaborative research networks, interdisciplinarity and science-policy linkages.

During the period 2016-2018 the IAI will develop four Professional Development Seminars for global environmental change science (GEC) and policy application:

1. Transdisciplinary Scientific Team Management Skills;
2. Managing Ecosystems Services from Tropical Forests;
3. Global Change and Health Approaches;
4. Impacts of Climate Change and Variability on Human Health in the MERCOSUR

The last seminar will contribute to the development of a new PhD Program on Health and Environmental Sciences at the university of the Litoral, Argentina;

The IAI is also a major partner of CROP (a program jointly funded by the International Social Science Council and the University of Bergen, Norway) in a proposal addressing “International Partnerships for Excellent Education and Research”. This proposal has been recently submitted to the Research Council of Norway and the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education and is now under review.

A capacity building proposal that will involve Canada, the USA and Brazil as part of an “International Partnership for Excellent Education and Research” by the Research Council of Norway is being prepared with a team from the university of Bergen.

Policy:

The Directorate continues its involvement in working groups of IPBES and the UNFCCC SBSTA process. The Science-Policy Directorate is now staffed with a coordinator and engaging with the SPAC. The coordinator has begun to develop strategic documents based on SPAC conferences and individual interviews. Strategic considerations will be presented to the CoP, and strategy development will continue. The capacity building event in Panama on behalf of the government of Panama will be coorganized by the Science-Policy office. Responding to country requests the office will design impact assessments of IAI research programs.