

**INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR
GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH**



EC-XXIV & CoP-XIV
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Manaus, Brazil

Report of the 24th SAC Meeting

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**24th Meeting of the IAI Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)
6-8 December 2006, Cuernavaca, Mexico**

Participants:

SAC Members: Michael Brklacich (MB, Chair), Vicente Barros (VB), René Capote (RC), Telma Castro (TC), Walter Fernandez (WF), Rana Fine (RF), Silvia Garzoli (SG), Luiz Legey (LL)

Absent: Luiz Mata, Juan Valdés

Observer: Paul Filmer (PF, NSF)

IAI Directorate: Holm Tiessen HT, (Director), Gerhard Breulmann (GB, Scientific Officer), Roseli Luz (RL, Assistant to the Scientific Officer)

Open Session, December 6, 2006.

1. Welcome, introductions & regrets

- The SAC Chair welcomed the participants to the meeting and thanked Telma Castro for the local arrangements.
- He excused the absence of Luis Mata who underwent heart surgery and Juan Valdez who had previously scheduled commitments.
- Paul Filmer and Walter Fernandez would be arriving in the afternoon.
- Travel problems prevented Bob Swap from AAAS to attending.

2. Approval of Minutes from 23rd SAC Meeting

- The minutes of the 22nd & 23rd SAC meeting were approved

3. Approval of the Agenda for the 24th SAC Meeting

- Item 6 was canceled due to Bob Swap's non-attendance.
- Paul Filmer's presentation was moved to accommodate his afternoon arrival.
- Item 15 "Reserved business" will be a closed session
- No other additional changes to the agenda.

4. Update from the IAI Director

- Holm Tiessen based his presentation on the UNESCO-SCOPE Policy Brief: "How to improve the dialogue between science and society. Key-points included:
- IAI value added needs to be clarified in order to maintain the institution, obtain new funding and fostering new linkages
- Scientific excellence underpins CRNII but it is necessary to improve the societal relevance of IAI science.
- The Directorate will steer CRNII projects in order to develop research clusters, strengthen partnerships, share analytical tools, sites and methodologies
- SAC role: Facilitate opportunities beyond individual projects, explore opportunities for new research and plan for the future synthesis
- IAI does not have country offices and therefore there is a need to spread the load and SAC members can act as a conduit to the science community in their countries and scientific disciplines.

Other topics highlighted:

- What does society needs as part of IAI mandate?
- How to identify country needs for GEC? (see RIOCC)
- Human dimensions supplemental funds granted (SGP-HD, US\$800K) provides an opportunity to integrate human dimensions research into exiting CRNs and promote interdisciplinary science.

Country science priorities:

- RIOCC Country Survey, declared priorities: Hydro, Health Forestry, Biodiversity, Urban

5. Update from the NSF

- Paul Filmer presentation “It is not business as usual” and highlighted the need to improve the societal relevance of GEC research
- LL highlighted the importance of learning from other disciplines (e.g. engineering) that have focused on providing solutions.
- MB indicated he would address several of these issues in the Chair’s remarks and HT stressed ALL are important but the SAC needs to set priorities .

6. AAAS: Status of IAI appraisal

- Canceled

7. Remarks by the SAC Chair

- MB noted that IAI and the SAC are entering a transition period. The next several years of science are in place and the SAC has the opportunity to place less emphasis on reviewing science proposals and devote more time to strategic planning.
- Several factors will guide the re-orientation of the SAC during this transition period including changes in GEC science, the increased urgency surrounding GEC science, revisions to the mandates of funding agencies, increasing interest by the international development community in GEC and renewal of the SAC.
- It is important to remember the SAC is an *independent* organ but it is not *isolated* from the realities of conducting science in particular countries. The challenge is understand the interests in GEC science in the member countries but to also rise above this individual concerns and forge IAIs future science.

8. Actions items from SAC 23 meeting

- All action items to addressed in SAC 24 under various agenda items

9. SAC Priorities: 2007 & 2008

The key points after considerable discussion were the SACs short-term agenda should include:

- Supporting the transition of IAI science from individual projects to programs of research (as presented by HT).
- Achieving a better balance amongst the key elements of IAIs science portfolio, including bolstering the consideration of climate uncertainties, ethical and equity aspects of GEC, and adaptation to GEC
- Focusing on SAC – CRN II relationships (see Agenda Item 10) and furthering the development of an IAI Strategic Plan (see Agenda Item 11).

- Where appropriate, identify ‘umbrella themes’ which would add value to the existing CRNs and thereby identify potential new strategic research areas.
- Facilitating the synthesis of CRN research activities at the mid-point of the CRN II (that is, it is important that synthesis begin prior to the end of CRN II)

Day 2, December 7, 2006

10. SAC-CRN II relationship

The SAC discussed its role in enhancing CRN II activities and concluded it should:

- Assisting with identifying synergies across existing CRNs and the potential for new CRN II research clusters
- Fostering interdisciplinary research across the natural and social sciences
- Nurturing policy relevance & synthesis throughout the CRN II 5-year period
- Tracking the development of emerging scientific issues
- Working with CRN II PIs to show and nurture new opportunities but to also ensure “new” demands do not detract from accomplishing existing research objectives but do add value to on-going research.
- Recognize that decisions to act on new opportunities rest with the PIs
- Identify and review strategies and processes to create synergies and research clusters, including roles for PIs, the Directorate and the SAC.

11. Strategic Plan

The SAC continues to endorse the IAI mission statement, including the recognition that high-quality science is the foundation for all other activities of the Institute but there is a need for better balance amongst science and informed action. Future strategic planning action needs to consider several factors, including

- Embedding GEC science within broader issues (e.g. economic development, poverty alleviation, equity)
- The interplay amongst spatial scales play and the strategic value of IAI research potentially as a broker between macro and micro scales
- Building upon the 3 page document produced at the 23rd meeting of the SAC in Toronto). The SAC reconfirms its support of the document
- IAI needs an overarching strategic plan
- All strategic planning exercises must be consistent with resources available from IAI
- Enhancing the relevance of IAI science by improving outreach and applications of scientific products, including addressing issues that are of importance to the countries and the region.

Other discussions relating to longer term planning included:

- the SAC should increase its efforts to identifying problems that are of specific concern to the Americas or IAI subregions,
- the thematic areas for future IAI-funded research and delivery mechanisms (for example, Small Grants, Summer Institutes or a CRN III) that will enhance the societal relevance of IAI research,
- the responsibility of SAC members to promote IAI extends beyond IAI activities and they should actively promote IAI with their national institutions.

12. SAC Renewal

- GB explains the selection and election process

- As part of the rejuvenation of the SAC, it is important that SAC members contribute beyond their particular areas of science and focus more closely on the intellectual and scientific well-being of the IAI as an institution.
- The expertise areas to be covered by the new members are:
 - ✓ Meteorology & climatology
 - ✓ Biodiversity & ecosystems services
 - ✓ Urban & energy
 - ✓ Environment & economy
- Potential candidates should meet several ‘general attributes’ including: a high-caliber scientific background; ability to work beyond the discipline & home country; have a genuine “interdisciplinary appetite”; positioned at a high-enough level to serve independently and unbiased.
- Attributes of secondary importance, but considered an asset include:
 - ✓ Links to international conventions or development agencies
 - ✓ Links to the broader GEC community
 - ✓ Interdisciplinary science capacity
- Departing Members in mid-2007 are: VB - end of 1st term, but cannot continue to serve, RC, WF and LL – completed 2 terms. All four positions are CoP nominated and new candidates will be elected at the next CoP in June 2007 in Manaus, Brazil. Departing members in mid-2008 are: MB and SG, both completing 2 terms. MB and SG are SAC nominated. Election will be at the CoP in mid 2008

13. SAC 25: Tentative Dates & Location

- Strategically the meeting should be held jointly with the first CRN II PI meeting which should also include the PIs of the projects approved under the SPG-HD program. Hence the date would be in the third quarter of 2007.
- The meeting may be held in Argentina in August (date TBA)

14. Other Business

- The Chair thanked HT and PF for their presentations and all participants for their contributions to this very open meeting.
- The SAC recognized and thanked departing members WF, VB, LL, and RC for their contributions to the SAC and IAI more generally
- HT thanked and congratulated Telma for the excellent local arrangements.
- The Chair closed the session with thanks for everyone’s contribution to the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 14:24