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4 April 2024

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL
CHANGE RESEARCH**
Thirty-second meeting
Videoconference
22-23 May 2024
Agenda item 7

**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 Omar Lopez (Chair), Alexandra Mallett (Vice-Chair and alternate member), Anahi Urquiza Gómez, Pedro Laterra, Ines Camilloni, Alexander Turra, Mercy Borbor-Cordova, Barry Warner, Jenifer Silva, and

Michelle Scobie and two alternate members: Laura Ramajo and Mariana Meerhoff Scaffo (finishes her term as alternate this year).

6. In June 2024, two SAC members nominated by the Parties, Omar Lopez and Anahí Urquiza Gómez, will have concluded their terms. Omar Lopez and Anahí Urquiza Gómez are eligible to be re-elected for a second term if nominated by the Parties.
7. One SAC member nominated by the SAC, Mercy Borbor-Cordova, will conclude her first term and is eligible to be re-elected. The SAC submitted a nomination for her to be considered for re-election.
8. The SAC is missing one member elected from the nominations received from the Institute's Associates as stated in the Agreement establishing the Institute. This member should be elected by the Parties at this COP.
9. The current membership of the SPAC includes Carlos Joly (Chair), Maria Amparo Martinez Arroyo (Vice-Chair), Inty Arcos, David Smith, Gilma Mantilla, Margot Hurlbert, Carol Franco, and one alternate member: Nathalie Flores.
10. In December 2023, one alternate member of the SPAC, Jorge Rucks, resigned from the SPAC.
11. Notification no. IAIUYDIR/2024/05 was issued on 12 March 2024, inviting Parties and Associates to submit nominations for the SAC vacancies, noting the names of those that could be re-elected, and including recommendations from the SAC regarding the profile of nominees.
12. The Conference of the Parties shall elect two members from nominations received from the Parties, one SAC member from nominations from the SAC, and one SAC member from nominations from Associates. They also need to elect one member for the SPAC from nominations received from the Parties.

Activities

13. Per Decision XXVI/9, the SAC and SPAC meetings were held jointly during the intercessional period on the third Tuesday of every month. The joint meetings have been successful, resulting in enhanced communication and participation and increased knowledge exchange between the SAC and the SPAC. However, as SAC and SPAC responsibilities and activities have increased, both committees met separately every other month, aiming to find more space and time for dialogue in which to broaden the participation of all members.
14. Eight teleconferences were held (or will be held) during the intercessional period: 15 August 2023, 19 September 2023, 17 October 2023, 19 December 2023, 20 February 2024, 19 March 2024, 16 April 2024, 14 May 2024, as of this writing. Issues discussed included: the formation of two ad-hoc committees, one on Open Science and Data and another on Oceans, Coasts and Islands; ongoing work of standing committees on Climate, environment and health; Equity, diversity, and inclusion; and Transdisciplinary curriculum development; strategic engagement in multi-lateral meetings; progress of the Regional Assessment of global change policy priorities for the Americas; among other topics.

15. SAC and SPAC members participated in the Gender Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee according to Decision XXX/5, which approved the Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for IAI Scientific Projects and Capacity Building Activities established the standing committee to oversee the implementation of the policy. SAC members Dr. Pedro Lterra and Dr. Alexandra Mallett and SPAC member Dr. Margot Hurlbert participated in the committee meetings.
16. Current and former SPAC members, Carol Franco, María Amparo Martínez Arroyo and Javier García Garza, served on the IAI's Science Diplomacy Center Advisory Board.
17. Members of the SAC and SPAC participated in a working group for the regional assessment described in IAI/COP/31/13/d/i¹. They provided feedback on the methodology to analyze the gathered data from Parties and revised results. Two SAC members, Jeniffer Silva and Mercy Borbor-Cordova, and one SPAC member, Margot Hurlbert, collaborated on a manuscript presenting the results of this regional assessment and co-authored an article submitted to the scientific journal, Ecosystems and People, which is currently under review.
18. In support of Decisions XXVII/13 and XXIX/14, members of the SAC and the SPAC collaborated with the IAI Directorate to review and comment on the Strategic Plan for the next five years of the IAI's operations (IAI/COP/32/8/d).
19. Current and former SAC/SPAC members Dr. Ines Camilloni, Dr. Mercy Borbor-Cordova, Dr. Evelia Rivera-Arriaga together with the IAI's Science Director and other Directorate staff produced a policy brief with key messages on water security in the Americas based on the IPCC Sixth assessment report (AR6). The brief was disseminated in October 2023 during the Latin America Climate Week and in December 203 the UNFCCC COP28. The [brief](#) was shared with IAI Parties via notification IAIUYDIR/2023/33 issued on 10 November 2023.
20. SAC member Dr. Mercy Borbor-Cordova and SPAC member Dr. David Smith participated in a small working group to plan a project on integrated sargassum management with the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF). The project identification form (PIF) was submitted for the GEF 8 funding cycle, with support from Colombia, Panama, Dominican Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago.
21. SAC and SPAC members were informed and contributed to the scoping workshops to refine the Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Action text entitled "Tropical Forests: global implications and urgent needed actions." This multilateral transdisciplinary research funding call will be launched at SRI2024 in June 2024, as described in IAI/COP/31/13/e².
22. SAC and SPAC members Dr. Gilma Mantilla, Dr. David Smith, Dr. Mercy Borbor-Cordova, and Dr. Michelle Scobie, participated in the Climate, Environment, and Health (CEH) working group, which met monthly during the intercessional period. Considering the complexity and transdisciplinary nature of seed projects in Climate, Environment and Health, The Directorate is following up with the seed grant projects

¹ See: <https://www.iai.int/administrador/assets/images/ckfinder/files/IAI-CoP-31-13-d-i-en.pdf>

² See: <https://www.iai.int/administrador/assets/images/ckfinder/files/IAI-COP-31-13-e-en.pdf>

to assess their progress with guidance and help from the CEH steering committee including the SAC/SPAC members.

23. SAC and SPAC members Dr. María Amparo Martínez Arroyo, Dr. Omar Lopez, Dr. Pedro Laterra, Dr. Ines Camilloni and Dr. Carlos Joly participated in the committee on Open Science and Data, which met monthly during the intersessional period. The committee produced a plan of action, presented in the document IAI/COP/32/9.
24. SAC and SPAC members Dr. Laura Ramajo, Dr. Barry Warner, Dr. Alexander Turra and Dr. Mercy Borbor-Cordova participated in the committee on Oceans, Coasts and Islands, which met monthly during the intersessional period. This committee aims to guide the new Belmont Forum Ocean's CRA and generate a transdisciplinary program for the Americas in this field.
25. SAC and SPAC members Dr. Omar López, Dr. Alexandra Mallett, and Dr. Anahi Urquiza participated in the Transdisciplinary (TD) curriculum steering committee that met regularly with the consultants developing the TD training program. The resulting TD training program curricula will be made available for TD research groups interested in the Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Action text entitled "Tropical Forests: global implications and urgent needed actions."
26. SAC members Dr. Alexandra Mallett and Dr. Anahi Urquiza participated in the Financial Working Group, composed also by focal points, which held its meetings during the intersessional period, to provide guidance to the IAI Parties regarding increases in Party contributions to the core budget of the IAI Directorate. The report of this committee is available at IAI/COP/32/3e.
27. Members of the SAC and SPAC also participated in science and science policy knowledge dissemination activities hosted by the IAI, including, but not limited to:
 1. Virtual side events held during the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 28), on 30 November -13 December 2023, with the participation of Dr. Alexander Turra, Dr. Ines Camilloni, Dr. Carol Franco, and the IAI Directorate addressing topics related to oceans sustainability, science diplomacy, and solar radiation modification.
 2. Dr. Alexander Turra coordinated and invited the Directorate to participate in a side event on oceans research funding held during the Global Research Council Americas meeting in Buenos Aires, in November 2024.
 3. Dr. Omar Lopez was the Chair of the Scientific Committee of the Sustainability, Research and Innovation Conference (SRI2023) co-hosted by IAI with Belmont Forum, SENACYT Panama, and Future Earth on 26-30 June 2023 in Panamá City.
28. The SAC and SPAC discussed strategies for the IAI Directorate to improve communication and engagement with focal points to facilitate and increase engagement from the Parties and promote greater interaction among SAC and SPAC members with their local/regional counterparts, noting that eight Parties will hold general elections in 2024.
29. The SAC and SPAC also discussed the importance of the Parties and the Directorate seeking financial and in-kind support for non-research-based actions such as the Open Science and Data initiative to achieve their objectives.

Recommendation

30. The Conference of the Parties is invited to consider adopting the draft decisions in the Annex to the present document.

Annex

Draft decisions of the Conference of the Parties

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXXII/xx. The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate to foster communication between focal points, SAC/SPAC members, and PIs of funded projects, and the larger scientific community, to strengthen the strategic exchange of information and knowledge relevant to global change science, to increase the use of science in decision making and policy processes, and to improve the implementation of IAI's strategic plan.

XXXII/xx The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate to monitor and evaluate the activities of the Directorate as dictated in the IAI's strategic plan, to periodically solicit feedback from the Parties to include in the evaluations, and to report on these outcomes during the annual Conference of the Parties.

Directed to Parties

XXXII/xx The Conference of the Parties is encouraged to develop robust financing strategies, aimed at securing sustainable resources for the IAI Directorate, including increasing Party contributions, identifying external funding sources, identifying in-kind (non-financial) resources from Parties, and other flexible funding mechanisms, thus ensuring the continuity and long-term impact of the IAI.

XXXII/xx The Conference of the Parties is encouraged to increase the engagement of IAI with other sectors and institutions within their respective countries, for example by inviting the Directorate or SAC/SPAC members to present at virtual or in person meetings or by identifying additional alternate focal points from other agencies, with the aim of increasing visibility, impact, and partnerships across sectors at the national level.