

FORTALECIENDO EL ALCANCE Y PARTICIPACIÓN DE LAS PARTES DEL INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO PARA LA INVESTIGACIÓN DEL CAMBIO GLOBAL (IAI) DESDE EL CORAZÓN DE AMÉRICA: PANAMÁ

Elaborada por la Secretaría Nacional de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (SENACYT) de Panamá

Presentada a la

CONFERENCIA DE LAS PARTES DEL IAI (COP-XX)

26 de marzo de 2024



**Strengthening the Scope and Participation
of the Parties of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI)
from the Heart of America: Panama**

Prepared by the National Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation
(SENACYT) of Panama.

Presented to the

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE IAI

26 March 2024

**Short title: Strengthening the Scope and Participation of IAI Parties from
Panama**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposal invites the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) to establish its headquarters in the Republic of Panama, highlighting its strategic location, the City of Knowledge, and the country's commitment to climate action and biodiversity conservation. The proposal highlights Panama's competitive advantages, its role in environmental issues, climate action, biodiversity conservation, and the growth of its scientific community.

Panama presents itself as a strategic bridge for regional alliances, supported by its geographical position, logistics center, and the presence of international organizations. The City of Knowledge offers modern infrastructures and a scientific, innovative, and dynamic public policy community, supporting the idea that Panama is an ideal place for the actions of the new IAI headquarters.

Panama demonstrates leadership in international scientific events and has promoted the participation of young people in the fight against climate change. Panama's participation in the IAI's executive bodies is highlighted, accentuating its leading role in the region and its contribution to initiatives such as the 31st meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the IAI in Panama City, Panama on 21 and 22 June, 2023, the Plenary Meeting of the Belmont Forum, the Sustainable Research and Innovation Congress 2023 and most recently the 1st Regional Workshop on Science Diplomacy. The proposal suggests that the new headquarters in Panama will benefit both the country and the IAI, promoting regional initiatives and strengthening Panama's position as a key actor.

Panama stands as a leader in actively promoting the participation of young people, researchers, and professionals in the fight against climate change, as well as in the organization of international scientific events. Its prominent role in the IAI's executive bodies underscores his regional leadership and commitment to cutting-edge initiatives. To illustrate this leadership, Panama hosted the 31st meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the IAI, held in Panama City on June 21-22, 2023. It successfully hosted the Plenary of the Belmont Forum and, in October, developed, together with the Science Diplomacy Center, the 1st Regional Workshop on Science Diplomacy, with the participation of 11 member countries of the IAI. It also co-organized the Sustainable Research and Innovation Congress 2023 this same year. These milestones highlight Panama's strategic importance as a host and promoter of regional and global initiatives in favor of sustainability, consolidating its position as a key regional actor in combating the implications of Climate Change

In terms of objectives, this proposal highlights the need for a centralized headquarters in Panama to overcome logistical, operational, and participatory constraints, enabling the IAI to fully fulfill its mandate and increase participation in the Central American and Caribbean region. The proposal emphasizes the continuity of the IAI's existing functions at the new headquarters, while maintaining its primary role as a regional administrative and scientific body.

ENHANCING COLLECTIVE IMPACT: STRENGTHENING THE CONNECTIVITY AND ACTION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH (IAI)

1. INTRODUCTION

Generating transdisciplinary and holistic scientific information is crucial to guide adaptation and mitigation strategies in the face of global change. This need to understand the complex socio-environmental systems and meet the knowledge demands of the countries of the Americas led to the creation of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) under an instrument adopted in Montevideo, Uruguay on 13 May 1992 with representatives from 12 American nations.

The Republic of Panama signed the agreement to create the IAI during the meeting in Montevideo, ratifying that agreement on 11 January 1994. The National Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation (SENACYT) and the Ministry of the Environment serve as the focal points for the IAI in Panama. Panama actively participates in the institute's governing bodies, including the Executive Council and the Scientific Advisory Committee.

In the Declaration of Montevideo, the participating governments entrusted the Institute with the international coordination of scientific and economic research that would address, in an optimal manner, the extent, causes, and consequences of global change in the Americas. This initiative marked a milestone in regional collaboration to understand and address the challenges of climate change, as well as to facilitate evidence-based policy decision-making in the Americas.

At its nineteenth meeting on 15 February 2012 in Washington, USA, the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the IAI agreed that the Institute's Executive Directorate needs to expand its capabilities. The expansion would enable the provision of scientific information to all governments, strengthen their scientific actions, and increase public knowledge about the research on global change carried out by the IAI in collaboration with researchers, institutions, and other governments. The aim is to support the development of public policies and face the challenges of Global Change more effectively.

On 7 November 2017, the IAI was approved as the host institution of the Belmont Forum at the Belmont Forum Plenary Meeting held in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The IAI was informed of this decision by the Belmont Forum Co-Chairs through written communications dated 13 December 2017, with a transition period for the move to Uruguay to take place in 2018. The Belmont Forum Host Agreement will remain valid unless terminated by either party. As part of this hosting agreement, the IAI becomes the legal entity that supports the offices of the Belmont Forum, and the Executive Director becomes a legal employee of the IAI and agrees to work within its policies and procedures.

The IAI and its Executive Director are the legal signatories to any documents necessary for the operations of the Belmont Forum, and they also manage the finances on behalf of the Belmont Forum. In addition, the IAI provides office space and additional support to staff.

The relationship between the IAI and the Belmont Forum benefits both institutions, as it allows them to work together towards a shared goal: support international transdisciplinary research in the global environmental landscape. The Belmont Forum provides a reliable mechanism for developing and delivering multilateral funding calls, providing opportunities to support the IAI community and link it to the broader global landscape. The IAI incorporates the Americas into the international dialogues of the Belmont Forum and supports community development, training, and engagement on issues relevant to them.

The IAI has been hosting the Belmont Forum (Notification IAIUYDIR/2017/003) since 2018, with the Executive Directorate supported by the IAI. The Belmont Forum is a global partnership of funding organizations, international scientific councils, and regional consortia committed to advancing transdisciplinary science. The members and partner organizations of the Forum collaborate to address this challenge by publishing international calls for proposals, committing to best practices for open access to data, and delivering transdisciplinary training.

Ten years after the COP's decision to establish the IAI Executive Directorate in Montevideo, Uruguay, as the host state (Law No. 19.144 of 2013), today, the opportunity arises to propose a new headquarters in Panama. This proposal seeks to continue promoting the consolidation of the successes of the IAI and its strategic partners, the Belmont Forum, with particular emphasis on strengthening the participation of the Central American and Caribbean region and proposes the Republic of Panama as the host country.

2. BOOSTING CONNECTIVITY: PANAMA'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Panama: Strategic Bridge for Regional Alliances

The proposal of Panama as the headquarters for the IAI Executive Directorate is based on its strategic location as a nerve center between North America, South America, and the Caribbean. Its privileged geographical position facilitates regional operations by providing expeditious access to both ends of the continent and being a dollarized financial center facilitating logistic and commercial activities.

In addition, connectivity is improved in Panama, as it has one of the leading international airports in the region. This will reduce the time, travel costs, and carbon footprint of the Institute and its staff.

Panama's attractiveness as a logistics and commercial center has been reflected in the presence of numerous intergovernmental agencies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and multiple United Nations agencies such as UNICEF, PAHO, UNDRR, with whom the IAI already collaborates, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) to set up offices in the city. In addition, multinational corporations, such as Nestlé, Procter & Gamble, and Microsoft, have established their regional headquarters here. The IAI's coexistence with this conglomerate of intergovernmental entities promotes an ecosystem that facilitates collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing among companies in the region. Panama also has a long history of hosting scientific research for 100 years with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), an ally of Panama in generating knowledge and conserving biodiversity.

A headquarters office in Panama will open direct and efficient communication channels, facilitating more significant engagement with states not currently part of the Agreement and that are in the Central American and Caribbean region. Currently, the IAI has 19 member countries out of the 35 countries of the Americas. The 16 non-member countries are mainly from the Caribbean and Central America. For this reason, the IAI's physical presence in Panama would allow for a deeper understanding of the unique cultural, economic, and political contexts of Central American and Caribbean nations, fostering better-tailored outreach and action efforts.

In conclusion, the perspective of communication, cultural understanding, and the potential to foster partnerships, the IAI headquarters in Panama represents an effective strategy for building partnerships and collaborations with local governments, organizations, and stakeholders, thereby fostering stronger relationships and possible future participation in the Agreement.

About the City of Knowledge

The City of Knowledge (CDS) is an urban complex dedicated to knowledge, innovation, education, and culture, and it is located in front of the Panama Canal. The CDS developed from the former Clayton military base after the reversion of these lands to Panama as part of the Torrijos-Carter treaties in 1979.

The City of Knowledge is an international reference center that concentrates more than 200 institutions, organizations, academic institutions, research centers, companies, and non-profit organizations, including the National Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation, which provides an environment to establish contacts, collaborations and strategic alliances with other government entities, academic institutions, and international organizations. The City of Knowledge offers a modern infrastructure, well-equipped facilities, and high-quality services that meet an intergovernmental agency's operational and work needs. This includes conference spaces, offices, laboratories, and facilities for international events.

The City of Knowledge works in its mission to promote social change through innovation, science, and business, and it maintains within its objectives a focus on sustainable practices and commitment to the preservation of the environment, an objective aligned with an intergovernmental agency such as the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research.

Panama and its role in climate action, biodiversity conservation, and sea sustainability.

Climate Action:

Panama has stood out as a model in climate action, evidenced by its regional leadership after signing the 'Declaration of Carbon Negative Countries' at the UNFCCC COP26. The country is committed to sustainability and climate change mitigation, positioning it as an example for the region and a vital ally of the IAI.

Led by the Ministry of the Environment, one of the focal points of the IAI, Panama is promoting a policy on climate change mitigation. For example, the publication of the Climate Action Plan emerges as a key instrument that promotes the country's long-term national and sectoral ambitions on climate change and aims to facilitate and guarantee the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It is also planned to launch the Sustainable System of National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (SSINGEI) for the continuous improvement of the country's next inventories and thus give the preparation of the National Inventory Report (IIN), in addition to the other goals and lines of work under the responsibility of the Climate Change Directorate.

Reaffirming its commitment to the goals of the Paris Agreement and other global initiatives to address climate change, Panama hosted Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Week in October 2023, where policymakers, practitioners, businesses, and civil society met and exchanged ideas on climate solutions, barriers to overcome, and opportunities in different regions of the continent.

Strengthening the role of young people in strategies to address the challenges of climate change is of vital importance. In this regard, Panama is focused on empowering young leaders between the ages of 20 and 30 to enhance their leadership skills and actively participate in national initiatives to tackle climate change. As a result of the implementation of the Youth Leadership on Climate Change, seven editions have been held from 2019 to 2023, benefiting 149 young people (43 men and 106 women) nationwide. These programs have contributed significantly to strengthening their capacities to face the challenges associated with climate change.

Biodiversity Conservation:

Panama has implemented strategies to commit to the conservation of biodiversity and terrestrial and marine ecosystems to safeguard the connectivity of species and the functionality of their ecosystems. The country has been a party to the Convention

on Biological Diversity since 1995. Panama has applied and adopted comprehensive legal frameworks and policies dedicated to biodiversity conservation. These include laws that protect national parks, wildlife, and nature reserves, demonstrating a commitment to preserving diverse ecosystems. Proof of this is the recent organization and active participation in international forums.

Panama has 54.3% of its exclusive economic zone as marine areas and more than 30% of its territory as protected areas, which constitutes a natural and tourist attraction due to its biological richness and the recreational activities it offers globally.

In the Second Biennial Update Report on climate change, Panama concludes that Panamanian forests capture more carbon than the total emissions of gases that cause the climate crisis generated, consolidating the country as carbon negative. On 2 November 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland, Panama signed the "Declaration of Carbon Negative Countries" with Bhutan and Suriname, the three countries currently carbon-negative in the world.

In November 2022, Panama hosted the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In this meeting, Panama contributed to the protection of shark species (Carcharinidae family) around the world, species highly threatened by unsustainable fishing, thus demonstrating its commitment to their conservation.

From marine and terrestrial conservation, Panama joined the Global 30 x 30 Initiative, the Global High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People, and its concrete actions to achieve this goal reinforce its tangible commitment to biodiversity conservation at the international level. This commitment not only contributes to the protection of local ecosystems but is also an example of leadership for the global conservation of biodiversity and sustainability of the seas. In March 2023, Panama hosted the Our Oceans World Conference, which concluded with 361 international commitments to protect the oceans. Strengthening Panama's leadership as a globally recognized "Blue Leader" and as a host country formulated a call for joint action to save the planet.

A vibrant and growing scientific community:

Panama is at the forefront of a booming scientific community, marked by the proactive leadership of the National Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation (SENACYT). This entity has played a fundamental role in forming an outstanding critical mass of researchers and experts trained and instructed in the leading academic centers worldwide. The National Research System (SNI) is a flagship program of SENACYT that recognizes and brings together the most productive and dynamic researchers in the country's STi system. It is precisely from this SNI platform, recognized for its scientific and academic action in the country, that actions can be catalyzed together with the IAI, its Center for Science Diplomacy, and the Belmont Forum.

SENACYT is home to this community of researchers and supports a conglomerate of research institutes specializing in crucial areas such as biodiversity, political and social studies, infectious diseases, and bioprospecting. Among these institutes, the COIBA-AIP Scientific Station stands out, a research institute that promotes science, technology, and education activities aimed at the study and conservation of marine and terrestrial biodiversity in the Coiba National Park, located in the Panamanian Pacific. The vitality and relevance of these efforts are evident.

SENACYT promotes a comprehensive transformation of the Science System, promoting its internationalization, mainstreaming open science, and fostering continuous improvement to strengthen the link between science and politics. SENACYT was one of the first institutions in the region to participate in the Science, Technology, and Policy Internship Program (STeP), established to train early-career researchers and enable them to serve as scientific advisors and foster the integration of science in decision-making. SENACYT hosts and participates in the IAI's STeP Fellowship program, training early-career researchers to work in the science-politics interface. Panama clearly reflects its leadership, as demonstrated in recent events such as the Sustainable Research and Innovation Congress and the first Science Diplomacy workshop.

In addition, SENACYT has actively sought the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to promote a research agenda that addresses crucial issues such as Climate Change and gender inclusion in scientific and territorial development. This initiative, combined with the robust portfolio of funding opportunities that SENACYT offers the scientific community, promises to create a dynamic ecosystem of knowledge exchange and flow with the IAI and its collaborators.

Panama and its actions at the IAI:

Panama's active participation in the IAI's executive bodies over the past five years highlights a firm commitment to the IAI's objectives in the region, as well as Panama's participation and empowerment as a key player in the region. Panama is currently a member of the Board of Executive Directors, as Vice Chair, and in the Scientific Advisory Committee as Chair. This participation has created a new leading role for Panama and the IAI's actions in the region and to promote new regional

initiatives on climate change

Recently, the National Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation (SENACYT) co-organized the Sustainable Research and Innovation Congress in collaboration with the IAI, with the participation of more than 2,000 experts and practitioners from more than 100 countries, 300 sessions on sustainability and transdisciplinary solutions to the complex problems we face in the face of Global Change. In conjunction with SRI2023, the annual plenary of the Belmont forum was held, which includes 39 funding agencies and transdisciplinary science partners on global change. Thus, Panama demonstrates its commitment and significant contribution to global conversations on sustainability.

In October 2023, under the organization of SENACYT, Panama hosted the first Science Diplomacy Workshop, an initiative of the new IAI Center for Science Diplomacy, an activity that sought to promote dialogue and scientific-political collaboration for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable America.

Establishing the headquarters of the IAI Executive Directorate in Panama benefits both the host country and the IAI. Panama's aspiration to lead climate action initiatives at the regional level could serve as a platform for the IAI to influence the region, especially in the Caribbean, where more severe impacts of climate change are expected.

Panama's strategic location positions it as a focal point and bridge between the Americas, making it an ideal site for regional cooperation on actions related to climate change. Its wide diversity of ecosystems, rich biodiversity, and interculturality provide an ideal natural environment for studying climate change and applying nature-based solutions.

Considering the success observed with the IAI headquarters in the Southern Cone, it is pertinent to highlight how it has generated tangible results in the countries of that geographical area. Likewise, the new office in Panama has the potential to create similar benefits, allowing the creation of specific projects and encouraging the participation of countries to promote concrete actions in the region.

3. IAI OBJECTIVES

In 1992, the Parties came together to establish the IAI as a "regional network of collaborative research entities" guided by the principles of scientific excellence, international cooperation, and free exchange of scientific information on global change. The unique mission of the IAI is to strengthen the capacity of the Americas to understand the past, present, and future impacts of global changes in regional and continental environments, promoting cooperative and well-informed actions at all levels. The purpose is to enable scientists and decision-makers to collectively address crucial issues related to global change.

Today, the relocation and establishment of the IAI Executive Directorate to a new headquarters in Panama, due to its geographical location, which is highly connected to South America, North America, and the Caribbean, presents advantages and new opportunities. This office in Panama would help overcome the current logistical, participatory, and operational constraints, enabling the IAI to fully fulfill its mandate and increase its engagement in the Central American and Caribbean region.

A centralized office in Panama would facilitate access to the IAI to all member countries, promoting broader and more inclusive participation, especially among those with the lowest participation so far, without disconnecting from the relative contribution of the countries of the South and the North. In short, an office in Panama would enhance the IAI's ability to develop the necessary science, assessments, and syntheses, providing crucial information for the actions of all governments in the Americas.

However, it is important to note that the relocation and establishment of the IAI's headquarters in Panama maintain the existing functions of the institute's Executive Directorate, Integrated Operations, and Finance. The Scientific Development Directorates and the Science-Policy interface will retain their roles and responsibilities.

Taking into account these considerations, the general objectives of the headquarters in Panama will continue to be to serve as the primary administrative organ of the Institute, according to the Agreement Establishing the IAI of 1992, whose objectives are:

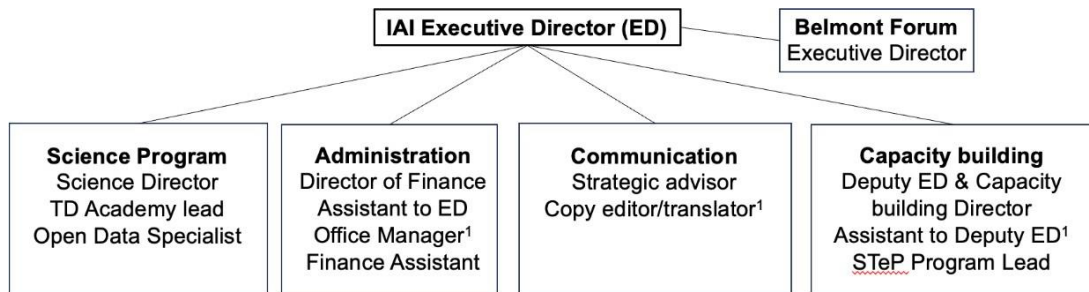
- a) Implement the strategic vision and scientific agenda of the IAI and strengthen its regional relevance;
- b) Provide scientific knowledge to Governments to facilitate the design of public policies and to develop future scientific capacities and directions;
- c) Raising public awareness.

4. STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The governance structure of the IAI will maintain its existing standing bodies:

- The Conference of the Parties,
- The Executive Council,
- The Associates to the IAI
- The Executive Directorate (the Directorate)
- The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)
- The Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC)
- The Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Advisory Committee (IP&LC-AC)

Additionally, the IAI hosts the Belmont Forum.



1. Staff positions provided by Panama

Picture 1: IAI Organizational chart

The Conference of the Parties:

It is comprised of all the countries that ratified the Montevideo Agreement. As the principal policy-making body of the Institute, it establishes, reviews, and updates its policies and procedures. It also reviews and approves its Scientific Agenda and its annual and long-term plans and budget.

The Executive Council:

It is composed of nine member countries, each of which is elected by the Conference of the Parties for a two-year term. The Executive Board makes recommendations on the policies of the Institute for consideration and approval by the Conference of the Parties and notes that the Directorate implements the policies adopted by the CoP.

The Associates:

The Conference of the Parties invites States outside the region and regional or international intergovernmental bodies, as well as industry and other non-governmental and private organizations interested in supporting the Scientific Agenda and the programmatic activities of the IAI, to join the IAI.

The Executive Directorate (Directorate):

The office of the IAI Executive Directorate is located in the host country, and it is headed by the Executive Director of the IAI, who is elected by the Conference of the Parties and is responsible for the programs and operation of the IAI.

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC):

It is composed of ten members elected by the Conference of the Parties for three-year terms. As the principal science advisory body, it recommends to the Conference of the Parties on the Institute's scientific agenda, long-term plans, and the annual program. He also directs the peer review system to evaluate scientific proposals and results obtained in scientific programs funded by the IAI.

The Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC):

The SPAC was created at the 2013 CoP to provide advice to the CoP and IAI Directorates on the application and design of science for policy formulation and decision-making. Its initial membership was approved at the 2014 IAI CoP. This group was responsible for defining the terms of reference and other rules of operation of the Committee.

The Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Advisory Locales (IP&LC-AC):

During the XXXI/16 Conference of the Parties, the IAI Executive Directorate is instructed to establish an Advisory Committee on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LC-AC) to make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties regarding the Scientific Agenda, the IAI Strategic Plan, and the Institute's annual program, thereby strengthening the work of the Institute and facilitating the equitable participation and contributions of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Belmont Forum:

The Belmont Forum is a partnership of funding organizations, international scientific councils, and regional consortia committed to advancing transdisciplinary science. Since its inception in 2009, the Forum has successfully led 19 calls for proposals, supporting 134 projects and more than 1,000 scientists and stakeholders representing more than 90 countries. International transdisciplinary research provides insights to understand, mitigate, and adapt to global environmental change.

The relationship between the IAI and the Belmont Forum benefits both institutions by allowing them to work together towards a shared goal: to support international transdisciplinary research in the global environmental landscape.

The IAI was approved to host the Belmont Forum as the host institution on 7 November 2017 at the Belmont Forum Plenary Meeting held in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The IAI was informed of this decision by the Belmont Forum Co-Chairs through written communications dated 13 December 2017, with a transition period for the move to Uruguay taking place in 2018.

As part of this agreement, the IAI becomes the legal entity supporting the Belmont Forum's offices, and its Executive Director agrees to work within its policies and procedures. The IAI and its Executive Director are the legal signatories to any documents required for the operations of the Belmont Forum and also manage the finances on behalf of the Belmont Forum. In addition to this, the IAI provides office space and additional support staff.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE, RESPONSIBILITIES, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER RESOURCES

In the event of a favorable decision to establish the IAI headquarters in Panama, the host country proposes to provide the physical space and equipment and hire the support personnel necessary to operationalize the IAI. Diplomatic privileges and immunities to the staff of the IAI headquarters office as an International Mission as established by Cabinet Decree No. 280 of 1970 of the Republic of Panama. In particular, concerning articles 107 (legal personality), 109 (inviolability of premises), 110 (exemption from taxation), 111 (inviolability of archives and documents), 113 (recognition by international organizations of the privileges and immunities granted to diplomatic agents) and 114 (exemptions to officials of international organizations), and they must not circumvent the concordant provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961.

According to Decree 280 of 1970, international organizations are able to contract, acquire, and dispose of movable property. SENACYT will address the space needs of the Executive Directorate, which is at least 160 m² covered, which will be conditioned with furniture and subdivided according to the requirements of the Institute. The executive offices would be four in total and shared between the Executive Directorate and its assistant, for three sub-directorates: the Deputy Executive Director, the Science Director, and the Belmont Forum Executive Director. A shared space for six people and a hybrid-capable meeting room are also needed for the exclusive use of the IAI.

The IAI will also have access to a Convention and Events Center at the City of Knowledge. In addition, the CDS campus has a set of accommodations with 96 rooms available, which can accommodate 190 people. This accommodation is ideal for those who organize or participate in congresses and events on the CDS campus and for temporary stays of fellows, teachers, and professionals in the IAI's training, capacity building, or research project programs.

The host country, through SENACYT, undertakes to provide the space to accommodate the staff of the IAI headquarters office.

Table 1. Detail of the distribution of office staff by position, number of people and entity responsible for salary. Please note that the IAI organizes the Belmont Forum.

Post/Role	Salary Responsibility	Space Requirements	Diplomatic Status
Executive Director	IAI	Executive Office	Diplomatic
Deputy Executive Director /Capacity Building Director *	IAI	Executive Office	Diplomatic
Science Director	IAI	Shared Executive Office	Diplomatic
Belmont Forum Executive Director	Belmont	Shared Executive Office	Diplomatic
Executive Assistant to the Executive Director	IAI	Office shared with AESubD	Diplomatic
Finance Director	IAI	Shared Executive Office	Diplomatic
Executive Assistant to the Deputy Executive Director	Panama/SENACYT	Office shared with AED	Local
Office Manager	Panama/SENACYT	Shared Executive Office	Local
Translator/Editor	Panama/SENACYT	Co-working space	Local
TD Academy Lead	IAI	Co-working space	Diplomatic
Strategic Advisor for Communication	IAI	Co-working space	Diplomatic
Open Data Specialist	IAI	Co-working space	Diplomatic
Finance Assistant	IAI	Co-working space	Diplomatic
STeP Program Lead	IAI	Co-working space	Diplomatic

* It should be noted that the position of Deputy Executive Director and Director of Capacity Development is currently held by a single person, funded by the IAI's operating budget.

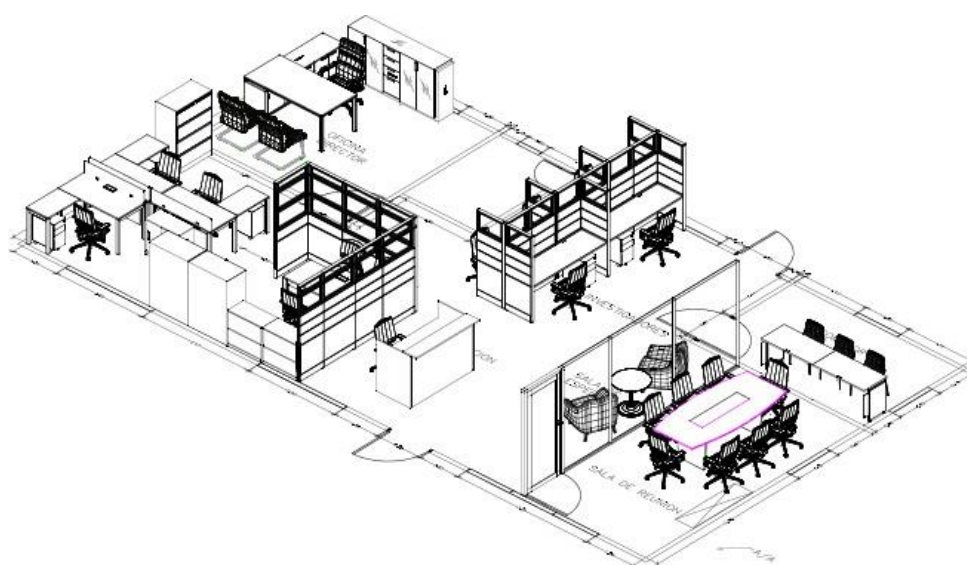
The selection and hiring of the executive assistant staff for the deputy executive director, administrator, translation officer, and editor will be Panama's responsibility through the National Secretariat of Science, Technology and Innovation, in accordance with local legislation.

The offices will be located at the City of Knowledge, where there are 160 square meters of available spaces, and will have:

- Adequate coworking spaces for the development of the work of the Institute's administrative staff, coordinator of the STEP program, and fellows

- Four (4) executive offices for IAI and Belmont Forum leadership positions.
- Meeting room with hybrid capacity to accommodate 9-12 people present and virtual participants.
- Basic equipment, such as furniture (desks, cabinets, filing cabinets), electronic equipment (computers, printers) and high-speed internet access.
- In addition, they will have complete services such as shared kitchens, access to a restaurant and cafeteria, cleaning, and maintenance, 24/7 security, their own parking, and green areas.

In short, the office in Panama will be adequately equipped and offer a complete, pleasant, and safe working environment in the renowned City of Knowledge.



Picture 2. Real estate scheme for 120 m2 spaces in CDS (for illustrative purposes)

The Directorate will also have the following employees to be paid by the Government of Panama:

- Office Manager
- Assistant to the Deputy Executive Director (trilingual)
- Communicator (translator/editor)

The selection and recruitment of national staff shall be governed by local legislation.

6. OF THE INVIOABILITY OF THE FACILITIES, DOCUMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS, THE LEGAL PERSONALITY OF THE INSTITUTE AND THE LEVEL OF PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES TO BE GRANTED TO ITS MEMBERS

According to the agreement of the parties in Article XIV, the host country of the IAI Executive Directorate shall grant to the Executive Director and its staff, who are not nationals of Panama, the privileges and immunities usually awarded to international governmental organizations, which allow the Executive Director and staff to carry out their functions.

Nevertheless, the host country of the Executive Directorate shall enter into a Headquarters Agreement with the Institute, which, taking into account international law, shall stipulate such privileges and immunities in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Privileges and immunities, as well as inviolability, taxation, or tariff rights, are contained under Cabinet Decree No. 280 of 1970. However, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama to control the privileges and immunities to be granted, to give effect to international reciprocity, and to absolve any doubts that may arise regarding the provisions established in Cabinet Decree No. 280 of 1970.

Panama recognizes that the IAI is a legal entity, and if established in the country as an organization, its assets and assets, offices, personnel, documents, and communications will enjoy the same privileges, immunities, and inviolability as other international agencies.

Taxes and immunities

The tax treatment to be granted to the IAI is regulated by Cabinet Decree No. 280 of 1970 of the Republic of Panama and what is contemplated in its articles 12 and 22 to 27. The Decree establishes that all acquisition of goods used by the aforementioned agencies will be tax-free.

The Institute shall have a legal personality in the Republic of Panama, which shall enable it to have the capacity to contract, acquire, and dispose of movable property and to institute judicial and administrative proceedings.

Regarding IAI staff, their income, capital goods, transactions, and equipment purchases (computers, cars, etc.) will be tax-free. Its status will also be similar to other international agencies based in the country.

The regulations that apply to administrative officials are the same as those that apply to diplomatic missions (except for Panamanian citizens working at the Institute).

The agreement to be signed between the Government of the Republic of Panama and the IAI may include the authorization to work in the country for family members of officials of the Institute, in which case, they must waive their immunity from labor disputes and must pay the same taxes as Panamanian citizens.

Free entry and exit or personnel and equipment

For the entry of persons and equipment, IAI personnel shall enjoy the same conditions as diplomatic agents: free import and export of personal property and complete exemption from customs duties and other taxes, with the exceptions provided for in Article 34 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Communications Infrastructure

A local area network with cutting-edge fiber optic cabling technology will be installed for the IAI offices in the City of Knowledge, Panama. The venue will have Wi-Fi service to offer public connectivity so that visitors have access to the Internet without compromising the security of the IAI's information.

The IAI headquarters office will have two channels of communication with the Government of the Republic of Panama: **i.)** for technical issues, communications will be with the focal point, the Ministry of Environment and the National Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation; **ii.)** for diplomatic matters shall be resolved with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Monetary Regulations and Negotiable Instruments

Panama does not impose restrictions or taxes on capital movements in any currency that the Institute chooses to use. The balboa, pegged to the U.S. dollar, is Panama's official currency. The controls and requirements for opening and operating bank accounts comply with international recommendations for preventing money laundering and financing terrorist activities.

Dispute resolution

Any dispute regarding the application or interpretation of the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement to be signed between the Government of the Republic of Panama and the IAI shall be settled by amicable agreement between the parties using diplomatic channels.

If an amicable settlement is not possible, the dispute will have to be referred to international legal means such as the International Court of the United Nations.

7. COSTS

Table 2 presents the distribution of the operating budget under the structure of a new headquarters of the Executive Directorate in Panama.

Note: The travel expenses of the Science Director and Science-Policy Liaison shall be covered by the IAI Operating Budget, subject to the approval of the Executive Director.

Table 2. *Estimated Host Country Contributions to the Establishment and Operation of the IAI Headquarters Office*

	Panama
Investment Costs	
Office furniture (desks, chairs, tables, racks, etc.)	\$80,000.00
Electronic equipment (audiovisual equipment, telephones, faxes, etc.)	\$10,000.00
Total investment costs	\$90,000.00
Annual operating costs	
División Director salary and benefits	\$ 0.00
Support staff salaries and benefits	\$151,200.00
Office rental	\$ 21,600.00
Utilities (electricity, water, connectivity, cleanliness and security)	\$ 14,000.00
Office Supplies	\$ 5,000.00
Total annual operating costs	\$191,800.00

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Article V4(j) of the Agreement between the parties to the IAI explicitly gives the CoP the power to "Make decisions about the location of the Executive Directorate."

9. TIMELINES AND OBJECTIVES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Schedule for ratification of the legal procedures involved.

SENACYT Panama proposes the following schedule for compliance with the legal procedures involved in this arrangement¹:

Activity/Action	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
Preparation and signing of the Country Agreement Panama, IAI Headquarters						
Drafting and signing of the Agreement SENACYT-CDS-IAI						
Approval by the executive branch and legislative						
Refurbishment of offices and Electrical & Information Systems						
Development of terms of reference, recruitment of staff, selection, and recruitment of support staff						

10. LEGAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN HOST COUNTRIES AND THE IAI

Legal agreements will be signed between the IAI and the Republic of Panama, the host country of the IAI Executive Directorate.

11. LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

The proposal has been prepared in Spanish, and this version will serve as the base document in the event of a dispute. The document's final version will be translated into the host countries' languages.

The legal agreements between Panama and the IAI will be drafted in Spanish. An unofficial translation of these agreements into English will be made for ease of reference by the CoP. The original language versions of each agreement shall be legally binding in the event of a dispute.

12. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The proposal to establish IAI's headquarters in Panama not only leverages the host country's strategic position and competitive advantages but also builds on the country's commitment to climate action, conservation, and the development of a vibrant scientific community, promising a significant contribution to IAI's mission in the region. In summary, this proposal has the following strengths:

¹ The agreement between the IAI and the Government of the Republic of Panama requires the approval of the Executive and Legislative branches to enter into force.

a) Panama as a Strategic Hub:

- The proposal to establish the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) headquarters in Panama capitalizes on the country's strategic position as a vital bridge of connectivity and equidistant between North and South America.
- The presence of numerous multinational corporations and intergovernmental entities in Panama demonstrates its attractiveness as a logistics and trade hub, offering an environment conducive to collaboration and knowledge sharing.

b) Commitment to Climate Action and Conservation:

- Panama, committed to climate action, has led regional initiatives, and demonstrated its active participation in protecting endangered species and biodiversity conservation, hosting key events such as the CITES CoP.
- Its proactive role in promoting climate action and conservation, supported by youth leadership programs in the field of climate change, reflects Panama's commitment to sustainability.

c) Vibrant Scientific Community under SENACYT:

- Panama stands out in developing a growing scientific community led by the National Secretariat of Science, Technology and Innovation (SENACYT), researchers from the National Research System, and young professionals empowered by the Climate Change schools of the Ministry of Environment.
- With specialized research institutes and an orientation towards open science, Panama is not only home to trained researchers in world-renowned academic centers but also promotes the internationalization of science and strengthens the link between research and public policy.

ANEXO: MAIN IAI OBJECTIVES

The long-term chemical, biological, and physical processes and cycles of the Earth System undergo continuous alterations of both natural and anthropogenic origin. In the past century, human activities have played an increasingly important role in this disruption, and global environmental change has become one of humanity's most significant challenges.

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) is a regional intergovernmental network of research entities that cooperate with each other. The IAI was created following the recognition of the limited understanding of the Earth system, the environmental, economic, and social effects of such changes, the need for regional cooperation between nations and research institutions, and the importance of accurate information for decision-making and policy-making.

The IAI's mission is to develop the capacity to understand the integrated impacts of past, present, and future global changes on the regional and continental environments of the Americas and to promote cooperative and well-informed actions at all levels. This mission seeks to enable scientists and decision-makers in the Americas to jointly address critical issues associated with global change.

The IAI adheres to the principles of scientific excellence, international and interdisciplinary cooperation, and free and open exchange of scientific information relevant to global environmental change. To do so, the IAI has the following objectives:

- a) Promote regional cooperation for interdisciplinary research on aspects of global change related to the earth, ocean, atmospheric and environmental sciences, and the social sciences, with particular attention to impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity, socio-economic impacts, as well as technologies and economic aspects associated with mitigating and adapting to global change;
- b) To carry out or select for sponsorship scientific programs and projects based on their regional relevance and scientific merit as determined by the scientific assessment;
- c) To conduct research on a regional scale that no country or institution can undertake alone and to address scientific issues of regional importance;
- d) To improve the scientific and technical capacities and research infrastructure of the States of the region by identifying and promoting the development of facilities for the implementation of data management and the scientific and technical training of professionals;
- e) Promote the standardization, collection, and exchange of scientific data related to global change;

- f) To raise public awareness and provide scientific information to Governments for the development of public policies related to global change;
- g) To promote cooperation among research organizations in the region; and
- h) To promote cooperation among research organizations in the region.