



ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

26 April 2023

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL
CHANGE RESEARCH**
Thirty First meeting
Panama City, Panama
21-22 June 2023
Agenda item 7(a)

Agenda item 7(a): Election of the new IAI Executive Director

Background

1. The Conference of the Parties, at its 2013 Extraordinary meeting (2023, Videoconference), elected Dr. Anna Stewart Ibarra as the IAI's Executive Director and adopted Decision 2023/Extra-CoP/1 which states:

The Conference of the Parties requests the Chair of the Executive Council to offer the post of IAI Executive Director to Dr. Anna Stewart Ibarra

Summary report of the election of the new IAI Executive Director

2. The account of the proceedings and discussions of the 2023 Extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties are provided in the meeting report of the 2023 Extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties (IAI/COP/31/3(a))¹.
3. The report of the Chair of the Selection Committee to elect the new IAI Executive Director is available as an Annex to this document.
4. The Chair of the Selection Committee will provide an oral report on the processes leading to the selection of the new Executive Director.

Recommendation

5. The Conference of the Parties is invited to take note of this report.

¹ See: <https://www.iai.int/administrador/assets/images/ckfinder/files/IAI-COP-31-3a-en.pdf>

Report from IAI Executive Director Search Committee

Search Committee members:

IAI Parties: Maria Uhle (USA – Chair), Ricardo Araujo (Brazil), Stephanie Janetos (Canada), Priscilla Ulloa Menares (Chile), Ana Chan (Guatemala), and Milagro Mainieri (Panama).

Additional members: Evelia Rivera (Science-Policy Advisory Committee - SPAC Chair), Omar Ramsés López (Scientific Advisory Committee -SAC Chair), Nicole Arbour (Belmont Forum Secretariat) and Marcella Ohira (IAI Directorate Staff).

Process

As agreed at the 30th IAI Conference of the Parties held in Montevideo, Uruguay and videoconference on 14-15 June 2022, the Executive Council with the support of the IAI Directorate began the recruitment process for the new Executive Director of the IAI. The IAI Directorate issued a notification on August 15, 2022, to invite interested Parties to join the Committee for the Selection of the New IAI Executive Director. IAI Executive Director search process was overseen by a 10-member committee consisting of representatives from various member countries as well as representatives from the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) and the IAI Directorate Staff.

A notification was sent to the Parties on September 13, 2022, announcing the vacancy of the post of Executive Director of the IAI and providing the post description. A subsequent notification was sent to the Parties on September 21, 2022, outlining instructions for the submission of applicants. The position was open to candidates nominated by the Parties except for citizens of Uruguay as stated in the Agreement to Establish the IAI. The committee received 10 nominations by the Parties by the deadline of 1 November 2022.

All application information was contained on the IAI website and was password protected. The members of the committee evaluated each candidate according to the criteria (posted on the IAI website) agreed to by the CoP and Executive Council members. Each committee member provided a short list of up to 5 candidates identified as suitable for an initial virtual interview. The chairs of the SPAC and SAC provided input from their members, as well as staff members from the Belmont Forum Secretariat and the IAI Directorate.

During the virtual meeting on 30 November 2022, the search committee decided on a short list of 4 candidates that were provided the opportunity to interview with the committee. The interviews were conducted on 13 and 14 February and were recorded with permission from each applicant. Access to the recorded interviews was provided to all committee members.

The Parties were provided with the official documents to Extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties for the election of the IAI Executive Director on 21 March 2023 and all Parties received access to the application materials of all candidates nominated by the Parties.

After review of the initial virtual interviews, the committee invited 2 candidates for final interviews held virtually on 11 and 13 April 2023. The interviews were recorded, and all members of the search committee were given access to the files. The search committee discussed the candidates during a teleconference on 13 April 2023 and agreement on the recommendation of the finalist was concluded on 14 April 2023.

Recommendation

Based on the procedure outlined above, the search committee recommends Dr. Anna Stewart-Ibarra as the next Executive Director of the IAI. As discussed at the 30th Conference of the Parties, the Americas face critical challenges adapting and mitigating to global environmental change. Now more than ever, science-based decisions are necessary to provide sustainable solutions to ensure that the countries of the Americas can meet these

challenges and aid policy decisions. Scientific knowledge now needs to be generated in broad transdisciplinary ways that address the needs of knowledge users and provide profound understanding of complex socio-environmental systems. The IAI must play a critical role in the Americas to bring actionable knowledge to decision-makers of the region. Building on 30 years of scientific and capacity building excellence, IAI is poised to make a critical transition to toward making the strong IAI science relevant and accessible to decision-makers in the region. It is imperative that the science enterprise evolve to co-develop sustainable solutions and support countries and regions in meeting policy commitments and develop goals. Over the next several years the IAI requires an Executive Director with experience of bridging the gap between science and policy by leading an international transdisciplinary research organization to enable the science, policy and local communities to co-develop solutions. The IAI requires an Executive Director adept at building multilateral partnerships through co-design processes to help realize a transition towards more just, equitable, and sustainable Americas.

Dr. Stewart-Ibarra has the necessary background and experience to help the IAI move to the next level (application materials were provided earlier). For over 15 years, she has worked within academia and the intergovernmental space with the IAI, serving as its Scientific Director since 2019. During this time, Dr. Stewart-Ibarra has worked closely with academic, community, and government partners across the Americas at the global environmental change (GEC) science-policy interface. She has spearheaded fundraising for the IAI science program from international development banks, foundations, and national funding agencies to support transdisciplinary science and science diplomacy on various global environmental change challenges. Dr. Stewart-Ibarra has been instrumental in positioning the IAI, and other organizations working in the Americas, to meet challenging goals relevant to global environmental change, through strategic planning. Her previous work employed transdisciplinary research approaches with particular focus on climate, environment, and health. Currently, these are topics of great importance to the IAI member countries.

Dr. Stewart-Ibarra has a proven record of effective management, collaboration, communication, and network building in cross-cultural and multi-lingual settings in academic and intergovernmental organizations. Her current and previous work clearly demonstrate a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and she provided several suggestions on how to position the IAI as a leader in the region for these efforts. During the interview, she presented a clear, ambitious vision for the IAI over the next several years and she recognized the need to engage members of the CoP to make these efforts successful. Dr. Stewart-Ibarra has experience in managing staff and providing a constructive, supportive work environment that is based on both team-work and individual responsibility and accountability.

The committee fully supports Dr. Anna Stewart-Ibarra for the position of Executive Director of IAI.