

28 April 2025

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE
FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH
Thirty-third meeting
Asunción, Paraguay. Hybrid.
29–30 May 2025
Agenda item 7**

**Joint report of the
Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC)**

1. This document was prepared by the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) with the assistance of the 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 SAC membership includes Anahi Urquiza Gómez, Pedro Laterra, Inés Camilloni, Alexander Turra, Mercy Borbor-Cordova, Gilberto di Martino Jannuzzi, Barry Warner, Jenifer Silva, and Michelle Scobie, and three alternate members: Alexandra Mallett (Chair), Laura Ramajo (Vice-Chair), and Natalia Norden.
6. The current SPAC membership includes Maria Amparo Martínez Arroyo (Chair), Carlos Joly (Vice-Chair), Inty Arcos, David Smith, Gilma Mantilla, Margot Hurlbert, Carol Franco, and two alternate members: Nathalie Flores and Makyba Charles-Ayinde.
7. Notification no. [IAIDIR/2025/5](#) was issued on 28 March 2025, along with a letter from the SAC and SPAC, regarding vacancies on the SAC and SPAC:
 - In May 2025, the terms of two Science Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) members nominated by the Parties, Margot Hurlbert (full member) and Nathalie Flores (alternate member), will expire. Nathalie Flores has declined to be re-elected given her current commitments. Margot Hurlbert has demonstrated outstanding commitment and has made valuable contributions to the SPAC, and she is eligible for another term according to SPAC rules of procedure, subject to the submission of renomination by any Party. Therefore, the SPAC strongly recommended that the Parties support the renewal of her term.
 - Additionally, the terms of two SPAC full members nominated by the SPAC itself, Carol Franco and Amparo Martínez Arroyo (current SPAC Chair), will expire, and they are also eligible for another term according to SPAC rules of procedure. Due to the outstanding commitment and valuable contributions of both eligible full members, the SPAC decided to propose their term renewals.
 - In May 2025, the terms of three (3) Science Advisory Committee (SAC) members nominated by the Parties will expire: Alexandra Mallett (current SAC Chair and alternate member), Barry Warner (full member), and Jeniffer Silva (full member). The beforementioned members are eligible for another term according to SAC rules of procedure, subject to the submission of renomination by any Party. Both Alex Mallett and Barry Warner have demonstrated outstanding commitment and have brought valuable contributions to the SAC. Therefore, the SAC strongly recommended that the Parties support the renewal of their terms. Michelle Scobie, SAC alternate member, completed her first term and has declined to be re-elected given her current commitments.

Activities

8. Per Decision XXVI/9, the SAC and SPAC meetings have been held jointly during the intersessional period on the third Tuesday of every other month. The joint meetings have

been successful, resulting in enhanced communication and participation and increased knowledge exchange between the committees. However, as SAC and SPAC responsibilities and activities have increased, both committees agreed to meet separately every other month to devote more space and time for dialogue and to broaden the participation of all members.

9. At the time of writing, seven videoconferences had been held during the intersessional period: 18 June 2024, 20 August 2024, 17 September 2024, 29 October 2024, 26 November 2024, 18 February 2025, and 25 March 2025. Issues discussed included the creation of two ad-hoc committees, one on Open Science and Data and another on Oceans, Coasts and Islands; the work of the standing committees on Climate, environment and health, Equity, diversity, and inclusion, Transdisciplinary curriculum development, strategic engagement in multilateral meetings, and progress of the Regional Assessment on global change policy priorities for the Americas, among other topics.
10. The SAC and SPAC held additional virtual meetings on 28 and 30 April 2025 and a joint SAC-SPAC meeting on 9 May 2025 in preparation for the CoP-33. The goal was to discuss strategies to maximize the Directorate's impact and visibility and improve the linkage between SAC and SPAC members and their focal points.
11. The SAC and SPAC emphasize that the IAI is a unique platform in the Americas where governments and the scientific community come together to discuss and analyze perspectives on shared regional issues related to global change. This collaboration is essential to preserve and strengthen our collective efforts to respond to the challenges of global environmental change.
12. The SAC Chair and SPAC Vice Chair, Alexandra Mallett and Carlos Joly, respectively, served on the selection committee for the hiring of IAI's Science Director, announced on 30 July 2024 via Notification [IAIUYDIR/2024/22](#).
13. As per decision XXXII/19, which instructs the creation of two advisory committees: one composed of Indigenous representatives, and another composed of local community representatives, SAC member Alexandra Mallett and SPAC members Margot Hurlbert and Inty Arcos participating in the Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee guided the creation of the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee (IPAC), including through consultations with representatives and leaders of these communities. Document [IAI/COP/33/10e](#), under item 10e, provides more details on the contributions from SAC and SPAC members.
14. The newly formed IPAC committee is set to receive onboarding, select a Chair, and be introduced to the SAC and SPAC in May 2025, prior to CoP-33.
15. SAC and SPAC members, Laura Ramajo, Barry Warner, Alexander Turra, and Mercy Borbor-Cordova participated in the Oceans, Coasts, and Islands working group meetings every two months during the intersessional period. This committee participated in the scoping and development of the new Belmont Forum Ocean's 2 CRA and contributed to

drafting a statement for the UN Ocean Conference to be held in Nice, France in June 2025.

16. Amparo Martínez, Chair of the SPAC, represented the IAI in the Climate Change Program Workshop at FAPESP (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo) in August 2024. She presented the IAI during the Plenary Session on Open Science and Science Co-production.
17. SPAC members Amparo Martínez and Carol Franco also serve on the [Science Diplomacy Centre's Advisory Board](#).
18. The Science Director regularly briefed the SAC and SPAC members on the status of the regional project identification form (PIF) for the GEF8 entitled, "Promoting the Integrated Management of Sargassum: Building Resilient Tourism and Fisheries Sectors through the Conservation of Marine Ecosystems (SargMarine)," developed with the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) and the Organization of American States (OAS). Mercy Borbor-Cordova, Carol Franco, and David Smith contributed to the Project Identification Form (PIF). The project was submitted and approved to advance to the PRODOC stage for the GEF 8 funding cycle. The IAI, CAF, and OAS are co-producing a Project Document (PRODOC) for funding.
19. Carlos Morales from Ministerio de Ciencia, Chile, Technical Focal Point of the IAI and STeP Fellow, briefed the SAC and SPAC on 26 November 2024, on a proposal for establishing a Regional Network of Climate Change Scientific Councils. This initiative aims to foster collaboration among scientific councils in Latin America and the Caribbean, drawing on his experience with Chile's Scientific Advisory Committee on Climate Change. The primary goal of the Regional Network is to promote capacity building by implementing communities of practice and ongoing training at the science-policy interface. Additionally, it seeks to provide an open repository that centralizes public policy documents and scientific evidence relevant to local challenges. The initiative will enhance collaboration by integrating global and local experiences, focusing on science diplomacy and knowledge transfer. There will be a webinar on April 29th to share the experience of Climate Change Scientific Councils across the Americas.
20. Inés Camilloni, a current SAC member, briefed the SAC and SPAC on 25 March 2025 on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s call for authors and editors for the seventh assessment report (AR7). She announced a coordinated webinar session between the IPCC and the IAI to promote the call for authors and editors. Mercy Borbor also discussed the special IPCC report on climate and cities and opportunities for the IAI to support this report. This webinar took place on 3 April 2025 and was attended by nearly 400 participants from various countries.
21. The SAC and SPAC are collaborating on an initiative to expand a roster of experts in IAI member states who are available for consultation by actors such as decision-makers, journalists, students, scientists, and civil society. A notification requesting expert nominations will be issued to the Parties in May 2025.

22. SAC and SPAC members, Gilma Mantilla, David Smith, and Mercy Borbor Cordova, have continued to participate in regular meetings of the Climate, Environment, and Health (CEH) Working Group. In recent discussions, the Working Group contributed to a request from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for feedback on the development of indicators for the recently adopted Global Action Plan on Health and Biodiversity.
23. SAC and SPAC members, Pedro Laterra, Inés Camilloni, Carlos Joly, and Science Director Omar Lopez—participated in the Open Science and Data Working Group, which met every two months during the intersessional period. The SAC and SPAC made valuable contributions to the IAI's open data policy draft, presented in agenda item 11¹. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed with La Referencia to enhance the visibility and access of IAI funded projects literature.
24. SPAC member David Smith played a lead role in the organization of the hybrid symposium in Jamaica, entitled, "Hurricanes in the Caribbean: Best Practices, Lessons Learned and Resilient Development," co-hosted by the University of West Indies, the IAI, and the World Meteorological Organization on 3 October 2024.
25. SAC alternate member, Natalia Norden, organized an event with IAI participation in the Green Zone during the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) CoP-16, held in Cali, Colombia, in October 2025, entitled, "Reflections from the Global South for Planetary Change: Effectiveness and Governance Challenges for Conservation."
26. The SAC and SPAC discussed strategies for the Directorate to bolster communication and engagement ahead of the upcoming UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (CoP-30) in Belem, Brazil. The main objective is to align the IAI's activities with the needs of Parties, enhancing both preparedness and participation. They highlighted the importance of documenting the methodologies and outcomes of regional initiatives, such as the Climate, Environment and Health transdisciplinary training program and seed grants, suggesting the creation of articles and repositories to systematize the information produced by IAI-funded projects.
27. SAC chair Dr. Alexandra Mallett participated as a mentor of the Science, Technology, Policy (STeP) Fellowship program fellows on the science diplomacy project topic of Energy Transition.
28. The SAC and SPAC have had ongoing discussions regarding the importance for the Parties and the Directorate to seek and diversify financial and in-kind support for research and non-research-based actions, such training programs, and the full implementation of the Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy and the Open Data Policy.

Recommendation

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

¹ See Document [IAI/COP/33/11](#)

Annex

Draft decisions of the Conference of the Parties

Directed to Parties

XXXIII/xx. The Parties are encouraged to submit their timely contributions to the IAI core budget and to seek mechanisms to diversify funding for the extramural programmatic activities of the Directorate, by engaging donors, development banks, and the private sectors, and by strengthening regional programs to optimize investments in research, training, and other activities relevant to the IAI's strategic plan.

XXXIII/xx. The Parties are encouraged to meet with members of the SAC, SPAC, and IPAC of their respective countries, along with the Directorate, to promote awareness of ongoing funded research and actions that mutually support national and regional priorities along with the IAI strategic plan.

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXXIII/xx. The Directorate is tasked with facilitating greater engagement between national representatives to the IAI, SAC and SPAC members, Associates, investigators from IAI-funded projects, STeP fellows, and other partners during the preparation for multilateral environmental conventions, and other regional and international meetings, that align with the IAI's science agenda and strategic plan, to strengthen the role of science in supporting the formulation of policies and plans.