

23 April 2025

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE
FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH
Thirty-third meeting
Videoconference
29–30 May 2025
Agenda item 8**

Science Diplomacy Center

1. This document was prepared by the IAI Directorate.

Background

2. The summary below describes the main recommendations made by the Advisory Board of the IAI Science Diplomacy Center (SDC), drawing upon discussions held during the hybrid meeting in Washington, D.C. (November 2024), the virtual meeting of 31 March 2025, and ongoing strategic consultations with the Chair and Co-Chair of the Advisory Board and the leadership of the Working Group on Emerging Issues regarding Decision XXXII/17 approved by the Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research, at its 32nd Meeting, 22–23 May 2024¹.
3. Some recommendations are categorized according to the IAI SDC pillars: Capacity Building, STeP Fellowship Program, Emerging Issues and Knowledge Hub. Additionally, general recommendations for the IAI SDC were provided.

¹ See CoP-32 Decisions at: https://www.iai.int/administrador/assets/images/ckfinder/files/CoP-32_Decisions-En.pdf

Recommendations categorized according to the IAI SDC pillars

Capacity Building

4. The Advisory Board encourages the continuation and geographical expansion of in-person science diplomacy workshops, focusing on tailoring each workshop to local contexts and engaging diverse, multisectoral participants using the new Science Diplomacy and Innovation curriculum.
5. The Advisory Board supports the regional dissemination and visibility of the new online self-paced Science Diplomacy and Innovation curriculum, encouraging its training use across sectors and recommending its continued development through feedback and case studies relevant to the Americas.
6. The Advisory Board further recommends that the curriculum be integrated more explicitly with the Knowledge Hub and other SDC activities to promote cross-program coherence and long-term engagement beyond course completion. Including supplementary materials—such as guided discussion prompts, practitioner interviews, or templates for local adaptation—was suggested to increase the curriculum’s practical value for different user groups.
7. In the interest of strategic alignment and effective dissemination, the Advisory Board also emphasized the importance of sharing data on user engagement and course outcomes. This would not only inform potential redesigns but also serve as a valuable tool to demonstrate impact and relevance when engaging external partners and institutions.
8. The Advisory Board encourages collaboration with the IAI Transdisciplinary Academy to co-develop initiatives integrating scientific, policy, and community-based knowledge, ensuring that co-creation and inclusivity remain central to the Center’s efforts.

STeP Fellowship Program

9. The Advisory Board supports the redesign of the STeP Fellowship program, emphasizing the importance of monitoring the outcomes of the Cohort on Bioeconomy in Brazil and using the experience to inform the design of future cohorts in other countries.
10. Fellows are to be encouraged to deliver impactful policy and science diplomacy outcomes following the fellowship to strengthen science-policy- diplomacy efforts within their host institutions and Parties.

Emerging Issues

11. The Advisory Board implemented the recommendation made by CoP-32 to establish a Working Group on Emerging Issues, initially addressing artificial intelligence as the annual theme for 2025–2026. It further calls for including regionally representative experts to develop an issue brief that will inform strategic discussions and policymaking. The brief will be reviewed by the SDC Advisory Board, and its main recommendations forwarded to the CoP at its 34th meeting in 2026.

12. It is further suggested that the working group's operational cycle be aligned with the administrative calendar of the IAI Conference of the Parties and the IAI fiscal year (July 2025–June 2026).
13. Webinars were recognized as a key tool for engagement, and their continuation was encouraged. The Board recommended enhancing opportunities for interaction and incorporating content that reflects regional priorities and emerging global issues.

Knowledge Hub

14. The Advisory Board welcomes the development of the Knowledge Hub and recommends its launch as an accessible digital platform for sharing science diplomacy practices, events, and outputs, serving as a resource to connect actors and raise the visibility of regional efforts. The Knowledge Hub will be developed in coordination with the IAI website to maximize institutional resources.

General recommendations for the IAI SDC:

15. Recognizing the growing interest in and evolving landscape of science diplomacy, it was recommended that the SDC expand its engagement beyond traditional public institutions to include universities, NGOs, and private-sector actors, many of whom are leading innovation and applied research in IAI Parties.
16. The Advisory Board encourages strengthening regional and international partnerships in support of science diplomacy, including active participation in key global events and collaboration with multilateral institutions such as the ISC, UNFCCC, UNCDB, and WMO.
17. To support adaptive management of SDC activities, impact indicators were recommended to track effectiveness and inform decisions regarding the continuation or redesign of fellowships, trainings, and webinars.
18. The Advisory Board recommends that the Center continue implementing flexible and accessible program formats, including virtual and decentralized models, to reduce participation barriers and promote inclusive regional representation.
19. To ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of the Advisory Board, alignment with the procedures of other IAI advisory bodies (i.e., SAC, SPAC) was recommended. Specifically, introducing a phased renewal mechanism and establishing clear expectations for member engagement would promote transparency, continuity, and the integration of new expertise over time.
20. The Advisory Board recommends the CoP and the Directorate support the sustainable growth of SDC programs and staff to design and implement innovative science diplomacy initiatives, partnerships, and strategies to serve IAI Parties.

Conclusions

21. In less than two years, the Science Diplomacy Center has made significant progress in developing innovative, context-responsive capacity-building initiatives, particularly through its curriculum and fellowship programs, which the Advisory Board considers valuable assets for regional science-policy-diplomacy integration across the Americas.
22. In addition, some IAI Parties, Associates, and international organizations have recognized the IAI Science Diplomacy Center as a regional reference and partner to promote science diplomacy on global change in the Americas. The Advisory Board recommends the CoP and member countries take advantage of the resources and expertise of the Center in Science Diplomacy, develop synergies with national and regional efforts, and avoid duplication of efforts and resources.
23. Strengthening institutional partnerships, both regionally and globally, and creating strategic mechanisms such as the Emerging Issues Working Group and the Knowledge Hub, will enhance the Center's role as a platform for forward-looking science diplomacy.
24. Continued emphasis on inclusivity, adaptability, and evidence-based program refinement will be critical to ensuring long-term impact, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with the broader mission of the IAI and its Conference of the Parties.

Recommendation

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