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**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 13(b)(i)

**Summary report of activities by the Science Diplomacy Center Steering Committee during the 2022-  
2023 intersessional period**

1. This report has been prepared by the IAI Directorate.
2. The Conference of the Parties, at its 30th meeting, adopted Decision XXX/8 and XXX/9 which state:

*XXX/8. The Parties are encouraged to participate in the training and education activities of the IAI Center for Science Diplomacy as lecturers or instructors with a view to providing participants with experience in and knowledge about the science-to-policy interface.*

*XXX/9. The Directorate is instructed to establish a steering committee, with the participation of Parties, the SAC and the SPAC, Associates, and experts on science diplomacy, to assist in and advise on the design and development of the IAI Center for Science Diplomacy and its programs and activities.*

Introduction

3. This report contains a summary of activities by the IAI Directorate in support of the implementation of the Science Diplomacy Center during the 2022-2023 intersessional period.
4. Two meetings were held with the Science Diplomacy Center Steering Committee (also referred to as the Advisory Board) where recommendations on the design and implementation of the Science Diplomacy Center were made.
5. Annex I to this report contains the proceedings and recommendation of the in-person Meeting of the Science Diplomacy Center Steering Committee, which was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 11 to 13 November 2022.
6. Annex II to this report contains the proceedings and recommendation of the in-person and videoconferencing meeting of the Science Diplomacy Center Steering Committee which was held at the

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington D.C., United States from 6 to 7 March 2023.

Recommendation

7. The Conference of the Parties is invited to take note of this information document.

## Annex I

### Meeting of the Science Diplomacy Center Steering Committee, Punta del Este, Uruguay

1. The IAI Science Diplomacy Center (SDC) Steering Committee (also referred to as the Advisory Board) held its first in-person meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay from 11 to 13 November 2022. The SDC Advisory Board currently consists of 11 professionals from the Americas and other regions, including IAI Parties, members of the IAI Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and IAI Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), experts in science diplomacy, and representatives from policy, academia, and the private sector.
2. The meeting had the attendance of sixteen professionals and Advisory Board members, a consultant assisting the IAI Directorate, the IAI Directorate staff, and representatives from the Belmont Forum Secretariat. The main goals of the IAI Science Diplomacy Center Advisory Board Meeting were to:

Co-develop the Center's work plan by defining its mission, vision, goals and objectives, and advising on the development of the Center's programs and activities, including training materials and timeline for building and strengthening science diplomacy capacities, as appropriate;

- i. Explore sustainable funding options and strategies to secure resources for the Center's medium and long-term operation;
  - ii. Explore ways of strengthening partnerships and collaboration with other national and international organizations to support the SDC and its programs; and,
  - iii. Provide guidance, insight and ideas on supporting diplomatic relations across the Americas in the area of global change.
3. This report provides a summary of the proceedings of the meeting's, including activities, recommendations, and outputs for capacity building, strategic initiatives, science diplomacy themes, and sustainable approaches to funding.
4. The IAI has broad engagement with policy and decision makers, a robust science community network, and has generated a wealth of scientific knowledge and training methodologies and approaches in relation to transdisciplinary research in global change on topics such as climate change, oceans, biodiversity, ecosystem services, and water resources, among others. However, there remains a need to strengthen the science-policy interface, namely, providing policy makers with sound scientific information to support their decision-making processes to address the complex challenges facing the region. The SDC was designed to support innovative science diplomacy mechanisms, suited to the context of the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, and facilitate science-policy dialogue and communication.
5. The SDC's vision, mission, and goals were agreed on by participants in the meeting during discussions related to the three pillars guiding the work of the Center: science for diplomacy, diplomacy for science, and science in diplomacy:

*Vision: The Science Diplomacy Center shall contribute to the maintenance of a peaceful and sustainable Americas through innovative transdisciplinary collaborations to address the region's shared challenges and safeguard the livelihoods and well-being of future generations and the planet.*

*Mission: The Center shall enhance the capacity of Parties to meet the objectives of the IAI Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals by developing a science diplomacy knowledge hub and open, just, and equitable programs and activities for the Americas to meet the challenges of global change.*

Goals:

- i. Strengthen the interface between science and policy;
- ii. Build and sustain capacity;
  - a. Regional training;
  - b. Identify and foster a skill set necessary to develop an effective science diplomacy community;
- iii. Develop a science diplomacy knowledge hub;
  - a. Provision of Science Diplomacy information;
- iv. Convene relevant communities;
- v. Raise awareness of current and emerging global change issues;
- vi. Facilitate regional and international collaboration;
- vii. Foster strategic communication;
- viii. Promote open, just, and equitable science; and,
- ix. Facilitate inclusion of traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities with their prior and informed consent.

Summary Comments and Recommendations

6. One of the SDC's goals is to serve as a platform or hub for countries to share their experiences in using scientific knowledge and information to support policies. Accordingly, the SDC aims at facilitating the exchange of information and best practices among IAI Parties.
7. The IAI has an established capacity-building program, and diverse partners from the scientific research and policy communities, private sector, and civil society across the Americas in climate, health, biodiversity conservation and water security. These are also priority areas for the region; therefore, it is recommended that the SDC strengthens synergies with these existing programs (e.g., LACI, STeP, etc).
8. In order for activities to be targeted, achievable and executed in a short period of time, the SDC initial initiatives should focus on a identified priorities and needs among Parties. Based on the IAI's Regional Assessment, climate action was identified as a local and regional priority among Parties. Possible sub-focus areas under climate action may include food security, ocean, and disaster risk reduction and management. The Board recommended the Directorate to consult IAI Parties about priority training activities in science diplomacy. This consultation would provide key insights for the SDC work plan.
9. The Center should develop a Communication Plan (CP) for both internal and external audiences. This includes aligning topics with the results of the IAI's Regional Assessment, as well as developing a

sustainable internal mechanism and/or capacity to create region-specific and/or country-specific communication materials (e.g., policy briefs, one-page synthesis of scientific information, etc.) to be shared with Parties and decision makers. Policy officials and decision makers require targeted reports that are not laden with scientific jargon, but are understandable, as well as locally and regionally relevant. This CP should also include input from IAI focal points to ensure that the Center's value is communicated and known and attract engagement of the governments.

10. It will be important for the Center to ensure that its initiatives and activities are framed by actionable justice, equity, diversity and inclusivity. Likewise, the Center should be able to track and communicate this progress.
11. The Center may consider requesting funds from IAI Associates and Parties through grants, contracts, donations, and/or an endowment fund. A matching fund structure, which is a cost-sharing contribution to the Center's initiatives, projects, trainings, or activities that will benefit multiple Parties throughout the region may also be considered as an alternative funding strategy.
12. The SDC Advisory Board meeting was held back-to-back with the IAI Science, Technology and Policy (STeP) "Leadership in Science Diplomacy Workshop" workshop, which held from November 12 to 15, 2022 in Punta del Este and Montevideo, Uruguay. This workshop was the first in-person meeting of STeP fellows. STeP fellows were given the opportunity to present their group science diplomacy projects to Board members for feedback.
13. Discussions also focused on leveraging the STeP Program. Some of the main comments and recommendations from this session are listed below:
  - I. There is an opportunity to strengthen and expand the reach of the IAI STeP Fellowship Program through the SDC to nurture the expertise that countries require, particularly in science diplomacy. The learning experiences being created by the SDC must be contextualized by and for the region. This aligns well with the science diplomacy (SD) Curriculum being developed by the IAI where context-specific science diplomacy ideas, concepts, experiences, and case studies are being generated for the STeP program and for training activities under the SDC;
  - II. The STeP fellows' science diplomacy projects can serve as a resource for how science diplomacy can deliver tangible results quickly. The strategic impact of STeP is for the policy host institutions to recognize the value of early career researchers in strengthening the human and institutional capacities, as well as strengthening the science-policy interface; and,
  - III. In establishing synergies with the STeP program, the Center may need to consider elements of training, education, and mentorship. Therefore, collaborating with universities to provide training and education may be an opportunity to explore. The mentorship program under the SDC could strengthen synergy with SAC/SPAC members and STeP fellows. The Center's mentorship plan for fellows should also leverage their expertise and experience, as well as ensure that a concerted effort is made in their growth within the policy space, as they expand their knowledge and experience in government processes, documentation, and operations.
14. The discussions reiterated the unique position of the IAI and its extensive reach across diverse communities in the Americas. The value to the SDC and its initiatives lies in defining its communication

strategy, establishing collaborative partnerships, and strengthening synergies between existing programs in the IAI. The Advisory Board recommendations will guide the development of the Center's work plan, which will detail its activities, timeline, metric for monitoring and evaluation, as well as budgetary allocation. In encouraging the co-creation and co-design process for the Center's initiatives, the Directorate will hold conversations with IAI Parties. Moreover, SDC board members will participate in virtual and in-person meetings to finalize the work plan which will be presented to the Parties at the IAI CoP 31 to be held in June in Panama

## Annex II

### Meeting of the Science Diplomacy Center Steering Committee, Washington, D.C., United States

1. The IAI Science Diplomacy Center (SDC) Advisory Board (ie the Steering Committee) held a an inperson and via videoconferencing meeting at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington, D.C., United States, from 6 to 7 March 2023. Participants included 10 professionals and Advisory Board members, a consultant assisting the IAI Directorate in the development of the Center, the IAI Directorate, and representatives from the AAAS. The objective of the meeting was to follow-up on discussions held during the Meeting of the Science Diplomacy Center Steering Committee, which was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 11 to 13 November 2022. Topics of discussion included:
  - i. Identification of the top 2-3 priority/flagship activities for the SDC;
  - ii. Discussion on the timeline for executing these priority activities;
  - iii. Identification of opportunities for sustainably funding the Center's priority activities - SDC Fundraising Strategy; and,
  - iv. Identification of key partners, stakeholders, Parties and IAI Associates to support the Centers' priority activities.

#### Summary Comments and Recommendations:

2. The vision, mission of the SDC were reviewed and revised:

*Vision: The Science Diplomacy Center shall contribute to the maintenance of a peaceful and sustainable Americas through innovative transdisciplinary<sup>1</sup> collaborations to address the region's shared challenges and safeguard the livelihoods and well-being of future generations and the planet.*

*Mission: The Center shall enhance the capacity of Parties (IAI member states) to meet the objectives of the IAI Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals by strengthening the interface between science and policy, establishing a science diplomacy knowledge hub, and developing open, just, and equitable programs and activities for the Americas to meet the challenges of global change.*

3. The goals of the SDC were reviewed and revised:

- i. Build and sustain capacities in science and policy through multinational collaboration and diplomacy;
- ii. Identify and foster a curriculum and skill set necessary to develop an effective science diplomacy community; and,

- iii. Implement and deploy the science diplomacy curriculum and skills through regional training activities to the relevant stakeholders: policy makers, diplomatic community and other decision makers.
  - iv. Develop a science diplomacy knowledge hub:
    - a) Provision of science diplomacy knowledge, information, and resource based on the needs of diverse stakeholders.
  - v. Convene relevant communities (policy makers, decision makers, diplomatic community, scientists, businesses, civil society) to raise science-policy awareness and promote dialogue of current and emerging global change issues.
  - vi. Promote and facilitate regional dialog and international cooperation on shared global change challenges;
  - vii. Foster strategic communication; and,
  - viii. Promote open, just, and equitable science by facilitating the inclusion of diverse communities, knowledge, systems and networks
4. It was recommended that the SDC tailor its communication strategy to showcase the important work the IAI has achieved as well as drawing on its extensive and diverse network of policy makers, academia, civil society organizations and private sector institutions in the Americas. This is a significant investment for the IAI, particularly to amplify the narrative on multilateralism across the region, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. The SDC can play an institutional role of strengthening collaboration among member states.
5. Regarding the Center's added value to the region:
- i. The IAI achieved extensive work in the Americas over the last three decades building a broad engagement with policy and decision makers, a robust science community network, and has generated a wealth of scientific knowledge and training methodologies and approaches. The institutionalization of knowledge generation and capacity building efforts through the SDC is the evolution of the many successful work executed by the IAI. The SDC is now uniquely positioned to bring together diverse knowledge, expertise and experience to serve the IAI Parties and the broader region. This includes strengthening the science-policy interface among the 19 member countries, providing policy makers with sound scientific information to support their decision-making processes to address the complex challenges facing the region that cannot be solved by a single country due to limited scientific, technological, financial, human, institutional and other resources;
  - ii. The SDC is a facilitator and convener of the IAI Parties to raise awareness and engage in dialogue around emerging issues that is of national and regional importance. It also considers the implication of these emerging topics to the realities of member states and their policy measures; and,
  - iii. The IAI can support programmatic continuity in Parties especially with the change of government representatives. The SDC is positioned to establish and maintain relationships



with offices, and key personnel to continue capacity building efforts and multilateral cooperation in the region.

6. Recommended SDC flagship / priority activities:

- i. Recommendations included the organization of two scoping exercises to tailor a communications plan to foster collaboration and access external funding. The SDC could capitalize on the knowledge, expertise, and experience of its STeP fellows to execute these scoping exercises, possibly as one of their science diplomacy projects.
- ii. Conduct a landscape analysis on how information is communicated through the various government ministries and departments, and on how scientific information is taken into account in the development of policy. These activities should be context specific for each country within the region. For example, how would a SDC debrief or synthesize a document on food security from a session of the United Nations Framework Convention (UNFCCC) so that it is brought to the attention of relevant government officials? Are reports easily accessed and used by the target policy makers? Is it used, and if yes, how? If not, where are policy makers sourcing information instead?
- iii. Conduct a scoping exercise on organizations already synthesizing climate action information for the Americas. How is information synthesized and disseminated? Are they focusing on the priority areas identified by IAI Parties (food security, agriculture, ocean, water, disaster risk reduction and management)? Are they easily accessed and used by the target policy makers?

7. It was also recommended to link these scoping exercises with phase 2 of the Regional Assessment and to showcase to the IAI CoP-31 that the SDC could assist in the implementation of the *Agreement establishing the IAI*, addressing the priority areas of Parties, investing in robust scientific research and strengthening the science-policy interface. In this context, participants recommended to develop training courses for policy makers and country assigned negotiators that focuses on:

- i. Science Diplomacy (curriculum and training materials currently being developed);
- ii. Understanding of the role of science in policy to current and future priority areas for the region; and,
- iii. Negotiation Best Practices (how to be sensitive to the negotiation process within a multilateral setting, etc.).

8. Development of a science diplomacy knowledge hub:

- i. Such a knowledge hub should be a platform designed where science diplomacy resources can be easily accessed by various sectors of society, particularly government officials. These resources include information on regional case studies, scientific literature, policy papers, national strategies for science diplomacy etc. It can also be a platform to connect partners and stakeholders to facilitate continued dialogue that was initiated through in-person forums, workshops and conferences. It was recommended to use the REDD+ digital platform as a possible template to tailor the SDC Knowledge Hub where various stages of science diplomacy work can be documented, easily accessed, and where best practices and lessons learned can be shared and reviewed.

9. Recommended Engagement with the Conference of Parties:

- i. Engage Parties in the co-design of the priority or flagship activities of the Center. This includes hosting virtual calls with Parties focal points prior to the IAI CoP-31 to introduce the SDC and share the progress achieved, and to consult them on Science Diplomacy needs and priorities in the region;
- ii. The IAI Directorate will prepare a communications packet to share with Party representatives who will be attending the IAI CoP-31 in preparation for discussions on their priority activities for strengthening human and institutional capacities on science policy interface in global change, and nurturing multilateralism in the region;
- iii. The Directorate, in collaboration with the SDC board members, will host a side event at the IAI CoP-31 to have roundtable discussions with Parties to discuss their proposed activities for the Center; and,
- iv. The deliverables from this engagement with member states will contribute to the work plan of short and long-term flagship activities that the SDC will embark on over the next 3 years.

10. The combined output from the contributions and recommendations shared by Advisory Board members and the IAI Parties will be used to guide the Center's work plan which will detail its activities, timeline, metric for monitoring and evaluation, as well as budgetary allocation.

11. Fundraising efforts:

- i. The Directorate is negotiating with Brazil's Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation joint actions and collaboration within the scope of the work of the SDC.
- ii. Additionally, the IAI Directorate and the AAAS Center for Science Diplomacy are collaborating on fundraising initiatives to support joint activities on science diplomacy for the Americas. This collaborative effort is timely given AAAS years of experience in facilitating and convening science diplomacy training activities in North America and abroad and will position both organizations to be major references of science diplomacy in the region. This effort will be developed under the framework of the IAI-AAAS MoU<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.iai.int/pdf/es/MOU-IAI-AAAS.pdf>