INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH

SCIENCE DIPLOMACY CENTER HYBRID ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Executive Summary Report

28 April 2023

The IAI Science Diplomacy Center (SDC) Advisory Board held a hybrid board meeting at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington DC, USA in Washington, DC, USA on 6-7 March 2023. The Meeting had the attendance of ten (10) professionals including the Advisory Board members, the Center's Senior Advisor, the IAI Directorate, and representatives from AAAS. The main agenda item was to follow-up on discussions from its first in-person meeting in Uruguay including:

- Identifying the top 2-3 priority/flagship activities for SDC
- Discussing the timeline for executing these priority activities
- Identifying opportunities for sustainably funding the Center's priority activities - SDC Fundraising Strategy
- Identifying key partners, stakeholders, Parties and IAI Associates to support the Centers' priority activities

This report provides a high-level summary of the Meeting's major discussion items, activities, and recommendations for next steps.

Summary Comments and Recommendations:

- ➢ The vision, mission and goals of the SDC was revisited and revised where appropriate.
    - o **Vision:** The Science Diplomacy Center shall contribute to the maintenance of a peaceful and sustainable Americas through innovative transdisciplinary[1] collaborations to address the region's shared challenges and safeguard the livelihoods and well-being of future generations and the planet.
    - o **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.
    - o **Goals:**

        1. Build and sustain capacities in science and policy through multinational collaboration and diplomacy
            a. Identify and foster a curriculum and skill set necessary to develop an effective science diplomacy community
            b. 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.

2. Develop a science diplomacy knowledge hub
   a. Provision of science diplomacy knowledge, information, and resource based on the needs of diverse stakeholders
3. 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.
4. Promote and facilitate regional dialogue and international cooperation on shared global change challenges
5. Foster strategic communication
6. Promote open, just, and equitable science by facilitating the inclusion of diverse communities, knowledge, systems and networks.

➢ It was recommended that the SDC tailor its strategic communication strategy to showcase the important work the IAI has been doing over the years as well as drawing on its wide and diverse network of policy makers, academia, civil society organizations and private sector institutions across 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.

➢ Regarding the Center's added value to the region:
   ▪ The IAI has done extensive work in the Americas over the last three decades building a broad engagement with decision-makers and policy 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. 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 member countries and the wider region. This includes strengthening the science-policy interface among the 19 member Parties in the Americas; 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.
   ▪ The SDC is a facilitator and convener of the member states to raise awareness and engage in dialogue surrounding 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.
   ▪ The IAI can provide institutional continuity in Parties especially with the change of government representatives. The SDC is positioned to establish and maintain relationships with offices, and key personnel that are grounded in stability to continue capacity-building efforts and multilateral cooperation in the region.

➢ Recommended SDC Flagship / Priority Activities:
   ▪ Two main scoping exercises were recommended for initial action so as to tailor a strategic communications plan to foster collaboration and access 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.
      o Conduct a landscape analysis on how information is trafficked or communicated through the various arms of government, and how scientific information is converted into policy. This will be context specific for each country within the region. For example, how would a SDC debrief or synthesis document on food security from the UNFCCC COP reach the relevant officials in government? Are reports easily accessed and used by the target policymakers? Is it used, and if yes, how? If not, where are policymakers sourcing information instead?
      o 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 policymakers?

- It was also recommended to tie these scoping exercises with phase 2 of the Regional Assessment and to showcase to the CoP that the SDC has the capacity to be the implementing arm of the IAI; addressing the priority areas of Parties, investing in robust scientific research and strengthening the science-policy interface.

- Develop training courses for policy makers and country assigned negotiators that focuses on:
  - Science Diplomacy (curriculum and training materials currently being developed).
  - Understanding of the role of science in policy to current and future priority areas for the region.
  - Negotiation Best Practices (how to be sensitive to the negotiation process within a multilateral setting, how to diplomatically support a position etc.)

- Develop A Science Diplomacy Knowledge Hub: This should be a platform designed where science diplomacy resources can be easily accessed by various sectors of society, particularly government officials, and diplomats. 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 discourse 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.

- ➢ Recommended Engagement with the Conference of Parties
  - Engage member states in the co-design of the priority or flagship activities of the Center, especially since they will be benefitting from these services. This includes hosting virtual calls with Parties focal points prior to the CoP 31 to not only introduce the SDC and share the progress achieved, but to also consult them on Science Diplomacy needs and priorities in the region.
  - The IAI Directorate will prepare a communications packet to share with Party representatives who will be attending the CoP 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.
  - The IAI Directorate will host a side event at CoP 31 to have roundtable discussions with member states to discuss their proposed activities for the Center.
  - The deliverables from this engagement with member states will be a menu of short and long-term services and/or flagship activities that the SDC will embark on over the next three (3) years. This will also ensure that the Parties are not only co-designers and co-owners of the Center's initiatives, but also reinforce that the Center is meeting the need of the member states.

Conclusion

The output of this hybrid advisory board meeting was the decision to engage the IAI Parties in the co-design process to determine the top three (3) flagship or priority activities of the Science Diplomacy Center for the next three (3) years. This will also ensure that the member states are both co-designers and co-owners of the Center's initiatives. The combined output from the contributions and recommendations shared by Advisory Board members and the IAI Parties will be used to guide the drafting of the Center's Working Plan which will detail its activities, timeline, metric for monitoring and evaluation, as well as budgetary allocation.