

30 April 2026

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL
CHANGE RESEARCH
Thirty-fourth meeting
Videoconference
3-4 June 2026
Agenda item 6**

**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 Mercy Borbor-Cordova, Inés Camilloni, Gilberto di Martino Jannuzzi, Pedro Laterra, Alexandra Mallett (Chair), Natalia Norden, Laura Ramajo (Vice-Chair), Alexander Turra, Anahi Urquiza Gómez, and Barry Warner
6. The current SPAC membership includes Inty Arcos, Carol Franco, Margot Hurlbert, Carlos Joly, Gilma Mantilla, Maria Amparo Martínez Arroyo (Chair), David Smith (Vice-Chair), and one alternate member: Makyba Charles-Ayinde.
7. Notification no. [IAIDIR/2026/6](#) was issued on 25 March 2026, regarding vacancies on the SAC and SPAC:
 - In May 2026, the first terms of three Science Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) members nominated by the Parties will conclude: Carlos Joly, Gilma Mantilla and Inty Arcos. The aforementioned members are eligible for a second term in accordance with the SPAC Rules of Procedure, subject to the submission of renomination by any Party. Dr. Joly, Dr. Mantilla and Dr. Arcos have demonstrated outstanding commitment and have made valuable contributions to the SPAC and the Directorate. Therefore, the Directorate and the SPAC strongly recommend that the Parties support the renewal of their terms.
 - Also, the second term of Dr. David Smith, member of the SPAC nominated by the Parties will conclude. The Directorate and the SPAC would like to express their deep gratitude to Dr. Smith for his exceptional commitment and his valuable contributions during this period.
 - In May 2026, the second terms of Dr. Alexander Turra and Dr. Inés Camilloni as members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) nominated by the SAC and Parties, respectively, will conclude. The Directorate and the SAC would like to express their deep gratitude to Dr. Turra and Dr. Camilloni for their exceptional commitment and valuable contributions throughout all their mandate. The SAC will nominate its candidates in due course, before 30 April 30 2026, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties, for consideration at CoP-34.
 - In addition, the first terms of service of two members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) appointed by the Parties, Dr. Laura Ramajo (current Vice-Chair of the SAC) and Dr. Pedro Laterra, will expire in May 2026. Both are eligible for a second term of service in accordance with the SAC Rules of Procedure, subject to the submission of renomination by either Party. Dr. Ramajo and Dr. Laterra have demonstrated exceptional commitment and have made valuable contributions to the SAC. Therefore, the Directorate and the SAC strongly recommend that the Parties support the renewal of their terms.

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, improving communication and participation and increasing knowledge exchange between the committees. However, as the Advisory Committee's responsibilities

and activities have increased, the committees agreed to meet separately every other month to dedicate more space and time for dialogue and to broaden the participation of all members. The newly created Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee (IPAC) was fully integrated into this working arrangement.

9. At the time of writing this report, seven videoconferences had been held during the intersessional period: July 29, August 26, September 30, October 28, and November 26, 2025, and February 24 and March 31, 2026. The topics discussed included the work of the ad hoc committees on Oceans, Islands, and Coastal Systems; the work of the standing committees on Climate, Environment, and Health; the development of the Transdisciplinary Curriculum; strategic participation in multilateral meetings; the impact of changes in IAI funding; and progress on the Regional Assessment of Global Change Policy Priorities for the Americas; among other topics, including efforts to hold a virtual event on energy transitions, which, although not feasible, continues to be considered.
10. In response to the announcement by the United States of its withdrawal from several international organizations, including the IAI, the SAC, SPAC, and IPAC reaffirmed that the IAI constitutes 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 preserving and strengthening our collective efforts to address the challenges of global environmental change. The chairs and vice-chairs of the three advisory committees reiterated this message in a statement confirming their support for the IAI. See the notification published on February 4, 2026: [IAIDIR/2026/4](#) and its [Annex](#). Laura Ramajo, a member of the SAC, wrote an [opinion piece](#) in the Chilean digital news outlet "El Mostrador" to reinforce the importance of the IAI in the Americas.
11. Alexandra Mallett of SAC and Margot Hurlbert of SPAC contributed information to the IAI's response to [CBD Notification 100](#).
12. SAC members Mercy Borbor-Cordova, Laura Ramajo, Alexander Turra, and Barry Warner, participated in the bimonthly meetings of the Oceans, Islands, and Coastal Systems working group during the intersessional period. This committee was involved in defining the scope and development of the Belmont Forum's new CRA Oceans 2 Call and contributed to drafting a declaration for the United Nations Ocean Conference held in Nice, France, in June 2025. Additionally, SAC members Laura Ramajo and Alex Turra were involved in designing and teaching the course "A Transdisciplinary Perspective on the Future of the Oceans" in collaboration with the Center for Climate Science and Resilience (CR2) in Chile.
13. SPAC members Amparo Martínez and Carol Franco, who are also members of the Science Diplomacy Center's Advisory Board, participated in a virtual meeting on October 27, 2025.
14. The Scientific Director regularly briefed the members of the three advisory committees on the status of the regional project for the eighth cycle of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) entitled "Promoting Integrated Sargassum Management: Building Resilient Tourism and Fisheries through Marine Ecosystem Conservation (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 development of this project from its inception. The Project Document (ProDoc) was in its final development phase during the last half of 2025 and was finalized with workshops in September (San Andrés, Colombia) and November (Dominican Republic) of 2025.

Modifications were made, and the document was submitted to the GEF in December 2025. To date, two rounds of consultations and comments from the GEF have been addressed, and an updated proposal with increased counterpart funding has since been submitted. The IAI is awaiting the GEF's final decision.

15. Gilma Mantilla, David Smith and Mercy Borbor-Cordova, members of SAC and SPAC, have continued to participate in the regular meetings of the Climate, Environment and Health (CEH) Working Group.
16. In line with the IAI's strategic priority on Climate and Health, Dr. Gilma Mantilla and Dr. David Smith, members of the SPAC, also actively participated in drafting a proposal to establish an infrastructure center focused on food systems. This initiative aims to strengthen the synthesis of scientific evidence through innovative tools, including artificial intelligence, to inform public health decision-making, addressing challenges related to nutrition and environmental sustainability on a global scale. The proposal was developed in response to the Wellcome Trust's call for proposals titled "Establishing infrastructure hubs to drive evidence synthesis in low- and middle-income countries." The IAI coordinated the formation of an international consortium comprising eight institutions to develop the proposal. Dr. Smith and Dr. Mantilla contributed their expertise to the formulation of the proposal, providing scientific and public policy perspectives at the intersection of climate and health. Their participation in this initiative helps strengthen the science-policy interface, as well as position the IAI and its networks in international processes for resource mobilization and the generation of applied knowledge in priority areas such as climate, health, nutrition, and sustainability. The proposal is scheduled to be submitted on May 7, 2026.
17. SAC and SPAC members continue their leadership and breadth in the science of global change in the Americas by participating in various activities. Some of these include:
 - a. The election of SPAC member Margot Hurlbert to the research board of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
 - b. The selection of Laura Ramajo, SAC member, by the United Nations Environment Programme, to lead one of the chapters of the report entitled "The 2026 Climate Technology Progress Report (CTPR): Beyond the Blue Horizon" in April 2026;
 - c. Inés Camilloni is Vice-Chair of IPCC Working Group I for the seventh assessment cycle;
 - d. Mercy Borbor-Cordova was delegated by the government of Ecuador, through the Ministry of Environment and Energy, as Lead Author of the Special Report on Cities and Climate Change, having been appointed in 2024 and currently serving as part of the group of scientists and authors from 2025 to 2027.
 - e. Gilberto Jannuzzi, a member of the SAC, participated in the academic pre-conference "Global Science & Policy Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels: Academic Dialogue of the First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels," held on April 24 and 25, 2026, at the University of Magdalena, Santa Marta, Colombia. Gilberto Jannuzzi was selected to participate as one of three chairpersons for the Scientific Panel for Global Energy Transition (SPGET).
 - f. Gilma Mantilla, a member of SPAC, will moderate the webinar entitled "Climate-sensitive infectious diseases: dengue, water and environmental risks" to be held in May 2026. This webinar is part of the 2026 Webinar Series: Climate, Environment and Health for the Americas. See notification: [IAIDIR/2026/8](#).

18. Under the title “Amplifying the Voice of Latin America and the Caribbean in the Governance of Emerging Climate Techniques,” and with the support of the IAI working with the Alliance for Just Deliberation on Solar Geoengineering and the Degrees Initiative, three workshops on Solar Radiation Modification in the Americas were held. Two of these workshops took place online, in April and June 2025, with the participation of Alexandra Mallett, a member of the SAC in the April session. The third and final session was a workshop held in person in Bogotá, Colombia, in October 2025 and included the participation of SAC members Gilberto Jannuzzi and Natalia Norden, where participants focused on SRM governance issues through simulation exercises.
19. 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 as training programs, and the full implementation of the Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy and the Open Data Policy.

Recommendation

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

Annex

Draft decisions of the Conference of the Parties

Directed to Parties

XXXIV/2. Parties are encouraged to strengthen their participation in the IAI including both focal points and the scientific community related to global change research.

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXXIV/3. The Directorate is advised to maintain strong linkages across the IAI network, including the scientific community, national focal points, working groups, and associates.