

## Minutes

IAVS Council Meeting, Bozeman, Montana, USA 2018  
Tuesday, July 24, 18.00 - 21.00

### Participants

**Members present:** Martin Diekmann (President), Susan Wiser (Secretary), Alessandra Fidelis (Vice President), Monika Janišová (Vice President), Javier Loidi (Vice President), Peter Minchin (Vice President), Alicia Acosta, Zoltán Botta-Dukát, Elgene Box, Helge Bruelheide, Andraž Čarni, Alessandro Chiarucci, Milan Chytrý, Francesco de Bello, Guillaume Decocq, Jürgen Dengler, Kazue Fujiwara, Martin Hermy, Florian Jansen, Yukito Nakamura, Michael Palmer, Meelis Pärtel, Robert Peet, Valério Pillar, Wolfgang Willner, David Zelený, Martin Zobel = 27 votes

**Proxy votes:** Pavel Krestov (Vice President; Valério Pillar), Iva Apostolova (Monika Janišová), Sándor Bartha (Andraž Čarni), Sara Cousins (Susan Wiser), Nikolai Ermakov (Milan Chytrý), Jessica Gurevitch (Susan Wiser), Tomáš Herben (Milan Chytrý), Jan Lepš (Francesco de Bello), Ladislav Mucina (Valério Pillar), János Podani (Susan Wiser), John Rodwell (Wolfgang Willner), Joop Schaminée (Milan Chytrý), Nina Smits (Martin Diekmann), Otto Wildi (Valério Pillar) = 14 votes

**Absent:** Marcel Rejmánek

**Guests:** Lisa Hetherington (FASEB), Péter Török (EDGG Working Group), Daniel Sanchez-Mata (as organizer of possible IAVS 2021 venue; Madrid, Spain), Gerald Jurasinski (Website and Social Media Committee), Viktoria Wagner (Member outreach ideas); Marius Jean Bottin (South American Working Group); Steven Talbot (Circumboreal Vegetation Map)

### 1 Welcome

President Diekmann brought the meeting to order at 18:00.

### 2 Announcements of proxy votes (Wiser)

Secretary Wiser read the proxy votes. Proxy representation of 13 members was reported and approved (see above). Total voting members represented: 27 + 14 = 41

### 3 Finances

#### a. Report for 2017 - review (Diekmann)

[\[Attachment 1 IAVS 2017 Financial statement\]](#)

Diekmann explained that the financial report was late due to private matters and late receipt of necessary information from FASEB and that it is not as detailed as we would prefer due to the differences in the reporting systems of the Dutch account and the FASEB system.

Overall, our earnings exceed our expenses. The reason for this is not completely clear for several reasons. First, the information that we receive from Wiley about our income is sparse. Diekmann believes that we received an extra payment from Wiley 2017 that we had anticipated receiving in 2018. We also recently received the invoice from Wiley for the special issue; we had expected to receive this invoice in 2017. Another explanation could be that Wiley is making a higher profit from the journals than in the past. Unfortunately, communication with Wiley has been difficult over the past 18 months resulting in us not

receiving an adequate explanation for this. This is not a good situation. Last year Council was concerned with overspending, so the Governing Board was more conservative with spending this year. However, now we may have a tax liability in the Netherlands (10–20% on any ‘profit’), which we would prefer to avoid.

Peet asked whether this applies to funds in the Dutch account only or to both the Dutch and US accounts. If the former, should we migrate all our funds to the US accounts?

Diekmann replied that the Dutch authorities examine all accounts, regardless of the country in which they are held. The problem may be solved if we close the Dutch account completely, but this is not certain as we are registered in the Netherlands. He believes we need to close the Dutch account. Wisser asked whether we need a European account? There was discussion around that we operate in different currencies and transfer funds (e.g. for Working Groups, Honoraria) to different countries. One issue with having all of our funds in a US-based account is that moving money in and out of the US is expensive, owing to high currency exchange and transfer fees.

Pillar expressed the view that it is good for the society to save some funds as a buffer for future years and that it would be good to keep increasing a base fund. He believes it would be worthwhile to pay tax if this allows us to retain funds in this way. Peet asked about the tax rate. He is concerned about whether our revenue will be sustained in the future, given the moves to Open Access for journals and the loss of subscription revenue. If it is between 10–20% on the surplus, he would rather pay tax and accumulate funds.

Diekmann felt that we already have a reasonable buffer of €400K and perhaps we should spend more on working groups or student symposium attendance.

Jansen agreed that currently we have a good financial buffer, but we are ‘flying blind’ without knowing how much we are receiving from Wiley.

Diekmann explained that the Governing Board generally tries to constrain expenditures to match the projection approved by Council. Wisser asked whether the Governing Board should contact Council if we have an unanticipated increase in income that may justify increased expenditure. Dengler agreed. Bruelheide suggested that Council approve a buffer within which GB can operate, e.g. 10–20%.

There was no clear consensus on whether it makes more sense to accumulate funds and pay tax or spend our income, in part to avoid paying tax. Diekmann felt that the Governing Board needs to consider these issues arising from the Dutch tax rules and make a decision regarding the Dutch accounts. Diekmann will approach a lawyer with expertise in this area to get advice on this.

Diekmann also explained that FASEB is getting a new financial system soon that we hope will provide more detailed and understandable reporting.

#### b. Auditing of financial report for 2016 and 2017 (Wildi, Jansen)

Jansen explained that it was not possible to conduct an audit because the financial report is so opaque. Diekmann agreed that the auditors need to be able to see the rationale for every transaction. The current system doesn’t deliver this. Details about currency conversions also

need to be more transparent. Pillar felt that for auditing purposes all transactions need to be visible in their original currency.

Diekmann asked whether Council want to set a deadline for the Governing Board to do this. Martin Zobel suggested by the end of this year.

- c. Update of budget for 2018 - discussion and approval (Diekmann)  
[[Attachment 2. IAVS 2018 Financial projection](#)]

Diekmann explained that the projection has not changed from that approved in Palermo.

Jurasinski suggested it would be good to consider increasing travel grants for student and working groups. Diekmann explained that there is no current need for this as we are nearing the end of activities for 2018. Pärtel pointed out that the Governing Board can increase expenditure by 20% if the need arises.

The 2018 budget was approved unanimously.

- d. Financial projection for 2019 - discussion and approval (Diekmann)  
[[Attachment 3. IAVS-Finances2019 forBozeman-update.xlsx](#)]

Diekmann presented the projected budget for 2019. Discussions ensued on the following items

#### Working Groups/Sections

Wiser suggested an increase in total Working Group funding to accommodate our two new working groups/sections (Historical Ecology and proposed South American section). Dengler suggested an increase in the maximum available to working groups providing the example of the current financial constraints on the EDDG that results in it being difficult for the entire steering committee to meet in person.

Diekmann agreed with these suggestions and emphasized the need for flexibility in Working Group funding as some groups are very active whereas others are less active. He reiterated that the current funding thresholds for individual Working Groups are guidelines and can be revisited on a case-by-case basis. He suggested to increase the overall allotment to Working Groups/Sections to €20,000.

#### Phytocoenologia

Willner suggested reserving some funding for negotiations with Borntraeger (publishers of Phytocoenologia)

#### Travel Grants

Minchin suggested increasing the symposium travel grants by €10,000. This would put the funding level back to what it has been in previous years (€30,000). Fidelis described how she heavily advertises the travel grants within Brazil. She encouraged all Council members to advertise the travel grants in their home countries.

#### Honoring Bastow Wilson/David Goodall

Chiarucci suggested funding for an award to honor Bastow Wilson and David Goodall. This could be referred to Awards committee. Diekmann described the New Zealand initiative led by Stephen Roxburgh to complete a book that Wilson was writing on plant community ecology. Roxburgh and his co-author Andrew Agnew have offered to donate the proceeds to IAVS for an award to an early career scientist working in the areas of community ecology

reflecting Wilson's interests. Pillar felt we could create a permanent fund to support some specified activities with this as the seed funding. Loidi did not agree with the idea of an ongoing award; he felt the funds from the Wilson memorial book would be better used to fund a one-off award. Diekmann agreed to raise these ideas with the Awards committee.

#### Associate Editor Honoraria

Diekmann pointed out that the funding level for Associate Editor honoraria has sometimes been too low. Pärtel felt the current value was fine as a target, but that it would be good to have flexibility for years when more Associate Editors want to attend the symposium than is typical. Diekmann agreed that the Governing Board can be flexible in this regard.

#### Specifics on budget projection changes

Zobel asked whether we can get an advance indication from Wiley about the level of profit coming to IAVS so we can be more effective in our planning. Diekmann replied that Wiley has never provided us with any sort of projection.

Dengler proposed \$45K be allocated to travel grants with this amount being split as up to \$30K for symposium and up to \$7.5K for each working group, contingent on availability of funds.

Minchin seconded.

There were 27 votes in favour of this proposal.

Pillar suggests that Council could authorize the Governing Board to spend up to this increased amount, contingent on positive funding prospects from Wiley. This would mean that the current budget projection could remain.

Council unanimously approved 2019 projection

#### e. Appointment of auditors (Diekmann)

Our current auditors, Otto Wildi and Florian Jansen, have agreed to continue in this role

#### f. Future financial strategy

Diekmann asked for ideas from Council regarding a strategy for the financial future of IAVS. Wisner pointed out that we have tried to form a financial strategy committee, but so far, no members have volunteered to lead such a committee. Pillar suggested Peet, but Peet pointed out that he has no experience in this area. Peet and Wisner agreed to discuss the development of a financial strategy with FASEB in late August. Dengler felt it was inappropriate for such a committee to be formed this late in the term of the current Governing Board, as it would have to be reformed in a year. Palmer felt that any investment strategy should make ethical investments a priority.

## **4 IAVS Business Office**

Report from FASEB (Hetherington)

[\[Attachment 4. Hetherington-2018 IAVS Business Report.pdf\]](#)

Lisa Hetherington, who replaced Silvy Song as the IAVS administrator in February 2018, introduced herself. She admitted that there has been a high turnover in this role for IAVS

(Stefan, Silvy now Lisa) and acknowledged that this could be disconcerting and disruptive for us. There have been substantial changes in FASEB in recent years. Lisa has worked for FASEB since 2007 and plans to be with FASEB in the role of the IAVS administrator for at least 8 years so there should be more continuity. Especially after getting to know more about IAVS at this symposium, she is very interested in assisting us for a longer term.

Hetherington has been reaching out to various Working Group, Section and Committee chairs, as well as members of Council. She is especially interested in working more with the Membership committee.

Peet asked whether Council members should contact Hetherington directly or via the Governing Board. She said Council should feel free to contact her directly. Peet also asked about the other societies for whom she provides support. Hetherington replied that they are the RNA society, the Paleontological society, and the ISCBFM (international Society for Cerebral Bloodflow and Metabolism).

## **5 IAVS website (Hetherington, Jurasinski)**

Jurasinski explained how at the Palermo symposium he and Silvy Song had proposed a number of changes to the website, but unfortunately, they did not achieve very much. He had hoped for more flexibility with Working Group webpages. The lack of flexibility combined with costs meant that EDDG did not develop a new website within the IAVS website framework. He and Hetherington have met and discussed the potential of a different website design and platform, to make it easier for Working Group websites to be embedded in the IAVS website; some of the barriers encountered by EDGG may have resulted from communication issues, rather than limitations of the IAVS website content management systems. They also discussed potential changes to the membership system. FASEB has recently adopted a new database and content management system called 'MemberClicks'. MemberClicks is an integrated system for managing membership, registrations, website, email marketing and online communities. If IAVS decided to adopt this system, it would allow the membership part of the IAVS website to be improved.

Hetherington also plans to assist with interactions with the Membership committee.

Jurasinski also suggested that IAVS needs to be mindful of the potential of other types of social media. There was no TWITTER account for IAVS until today, when Minchin set one up for the symposium. Given that a blog is being set up for JVS and AVS, it would be good to have more interlinkage between these different media. The important thing is that both the Social Media and Membership committees become active.

Zelený asked about the barriers to the IAVS blog being hosted on the IAVS website and the desire that the Blog could use WordPress, a free and open-source content management system. Hetherington said that the security features of WordPress do not meet FASEB's standards; FASEB doesn't host any WordPress sites because of this. Blogging features in the current FASEB content management system Kentico were as expensive as using a third party. This means it is more cost-effective for Zelený to use WordPress, outside of the IAVS website.

Peet and Wisner will discuss these issues in more depth when they visit the FASEB office in late August.

## 6 Reports on publications

### a. Publications officer (Minchin)

No report was prepared as the important details have all been provided in the Chief Editors Report.

### b. Chief Editors (Chytrý)

[\[Attachment 5. Chief Editors Report 2018.pdf\]](#)

Chytrý presented highlights of the Chief Editors Report. This year the journals have adopted a new design and there are now new author guidelines. To increase visibility within the ecological community, Zelený is constructing a blog for the journals. Each author of an accepted paper will be invited to submit a plain language summary of their article, background details and photographs. The blog will be linked to social media so with one click one can link to Twitter, Facebook etc.

### c. Bulletin (Janišová)

Janišová described how four issues of the Bulletin were produced since the last Council meeting. Stefan Bradham resigned from FASEB this year, so now Janišová is working with a new person, Chelsea Broschart. The two of them, working with Hetherington, are trying to figure out how to be more efficient in the production phase. There is also a problem that each issue has a lot of content. To email the Bulletin to the membership as pdfs requires that the resolution is low and this results in poor quality. One option is to require members to click through to the website to access the Bulletin.

Palmer commented that the Bulletin has never been better! All applauded.

### d. Phytocoenologia (Jansen)

[\[Attachment 6. Phytocoenologia Report 2018 Bozeman.pdf\]](#)

Rather than reiterate the contents of the report, Jansen raised the most troubling issue for Phytocoenologia -- that the editors are very unhappy with the publisher and would like to be solely owned and published by IAVS, using our publisher Wiley. The editors feel that Phytocoenologia could be a third IAVS journal that would be complementary to JVS and AVS. They have discussed this with the Chief Editors and the Governing Board. However, there have been no discussions with the publisher Borntraeger yet, as the editors wanted a clear steer from Council and the Governing Board first. The editors believe they are in a strong position to negotiate with Borntraeger as all members of the editorial board are also members of IAVS.

Peet asked how we move forward?

Jansen, Loidi, Minchin, Peet, Bruelheide, Dengler, Palmer, Willner, Zelený and Diekmann all contributed to the ensuing discussion. Points raised were:

#### Lack of clarity regarding the ownership of Phytocoenologia

Although the journal has been labeled as an official journal of IAVS, it is not owned by IAVS. In the 2014 discussions that resulted in an MOU between Borntraeger and IAVS, it was agreed that the publisher owns the journal. If the journal were to be published by Wiley, it would make sense for IAVS to become the owner. This could incur a cost and IAVS may need to seek legal advice

### Wiley as potential publisher of Phytocoenologia

To date Wiley has not been interested in publishing Phytocoenologia. However, it is felt that we now have compelling arguments and could revisit this with Wiley, particularly if it becomes an online-only journal. If IAVS becomes the owner of Phytocoenologia, it would make sense for all or our journals to be published by Wiley. There have also been discussions with Wiley about publishing a 'data' journal and this could potentially fit under the scope of Phytocoenologia. We will be renegotiating the Wiley contract over the next year, so now is the appropriate time to raise this option.

### Value to IAVS of publishing Phytocoenologia

Adding this third journal would assure that IAVS journals encompass the entire scope of the field of vegetation science.

### The name 'Phytocoenologia'

Some feel the name 'Phytocoenologia' is perceived, outside Germany, as very old fashioned; perhaps it is time for a new name. Others felt this would destroy the historical links and also the linkage to the Impact Factor and could kill the journal. The point was made that maybe it is time for a radical change – a new name, publisher, new scope etc. This would parallel the situation when JVS was created as an entity distinct from Vegetatio.

Diekmann proposed the Council authorize the Governing Board to work with the Phytocoenologia editors to take actions including discussion with Wiley and Borntraeger regarding these issues and then report back to Council. If there are major financial implications the Governing Board will report back to Council and allow two weeks for approval of any expenditure.

Council unanimously approved this.

## **7 Committee reports**

### a. Membership Committee (Janišová)

[[Attachment 7. IAVS membership committee report2018.pdf](#)]

- Discussion of the results of the member survey printed in Bulletin 2018/2
- What has changes since last year?
- Membership statistics

Janišová presented the membership report, including providing a map of how our membership is distributed geographically. Membership numbers have declined since last year as membership renewal is driven mainly by the symposia dynamics (fee reduction, increase in number of members in the venue country). Janišová then presented highlights from the member survey conducted earlier this year. There were 189 respondents. Of these, one-third are younger than 35. The strong interest in plants and vegetation started early in the lives of most members. Janišová also presented the strategy of the membership committee that has five main foci:

- Openness and networking
  - Collaboration with close professional societies
- Attracting new members
  - Posters, booklets, pamphlets, invitation letters
  - Re-design of the membership area on the IAVS website
- Trial membership for young scholars
- Special offers for members of the IAVS working groups
- Using social media

Viktoria Wagner then presented additional ideas for attracting members. Wagner is very active on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, she has a blog). She feels IAVS is lagging behind other societies in our use of social media and feels recent efforts (the IAVS blog, Facebook page) are essential, but IAVS still needs to be more visible, e.g. we could be using Instagram. However, this requires activity from a group of members; activity by one person alone never works.

A discussion regarding membership and the Membership committee followed with input by Dengler, Fujiwara, Jurasinski, and Talbot. Dissatisfaction was expressed with the inaction by the Membership committee, especially given that this issue has been raised at the past two meetings of Council. Some Council members have offered to be members of the committee to help but have been turned down. There still seem to be issues with the linkage between the Membership database and Working Group membership, particularly that there is no mechanism to update the Working Group email lists (currently these are 'Google Groups' lists and they are not synchronized with the Membership database). Currently not all regions have a regional section; ensuring that they do could increase membership. For example, currently there is no Asian section. The option for auto-renewal of membership or longer-term membership could increase our membership. The option for an equivalent of 'family' membership was also raised.

Diekmann agreed to write a letter to Krestov to express the concern of Council with the current Membership Committee's low level of activity. In addition, Diekmann will seek Krestov's advice as to whether, given his heavy time commitment to preparation for the 2020 meeting, some form of additional support should be provided to help with the Membership Committee's activities.

b. Global Sponsorship Committee (Fidelis)

[\[Attachment 8. Global Sponsorship Committee Report 2018.pdf\]](#)

Fidelis summarized the activities of the Global Sponsorship Committee for the last year. Dengler asked how many applications for free membership had been received from disadvantaged countries. Hetherington (FASEB) receives these and can provide the statistics. Fidelis said that the committee had received no special requests.

c. Awards Committee (Diekmann)

[\[Attachment 9. Report of the IAVS Award Committee over the year 2017.pdf\]](#)

The annual report was tabled with no further discussion.

d. Meetings Committee (Loidi)

[\[Attachment 10. MeetingsCommitteeReportBozeman2018.pdf\]](#)

- Revised symposium guidelines

[\[Attachment 11 Guidelines for organizers of IAVS annual symposia June2018 Final.pdf\]](#)

Loidi presented the annual report and the revised guidelines for symposium organisers. Jansen expressed appreciation for the revision to the guidelines.

[\[Attachment 12 Guidelines for organisers of IAVS excursions June2018.pdf\]](#)

Loidi presented the revised guidelines for symposium excursion organisers. Jansen suggested an alternate solution for the potential problem of lack of field trip leaders would be to use IAVS members, who are knowledgeable of the flora, rather than rely solely on local experts.

e. Information on the IAVS symposium in 2019 (Bremen, Diekmann)

Diekmann explained how the proposal has been accepted by the Governing Board and dates are confirmed for 14-19 July 2019.

f. Information on the IAVS symposium in 2020 (Vladivostok, Loidi)

Loidi confirmed that the 2020 IAVS symposium will be held in Vladivostok and organized by Pavel Krestov.

g. IAVS symposium in 2021 (Madrid, Sanchez-Mata)

Loidi explained that a proposal had been received from Daniel Sanchez-Mata to hold the 2021 IAVS symposium in Madrid. Sanchez-Mata gave a short presentation with information to support his proposal. He explained how the location provides access to Mediterranean ecosystems to the south and more temperate ecosystems to the north and supports a diversity of ecosystems and species. There is an extensive network of Natura 2000 sites nearby; as such a theme focused on protected areas may be appropriate. The city of Madrid is a cultural center and has excellent public transport. The university is large (80,000 students), has both historic and new buildings and good conference facilities. The planned dates are 5-11 July, so as not to be too hot for a pre-symposium excursion in Southern Spain. The post-symposium excursion is planned to be to the north. Mid-symposium excursions will include cultural landscapes, historical centers and gardens and some of the locations visited in the pre- and post-symposium excursions.

Dengler asked whether it would be possible to run more than one pre- and post- symposium excursion. Sanchez-Mata replied that he would consider this.

h. Ethics committee (report tabled, no discussion required)

[\[Attachment 13 IAVS Ethics Committee 2018.pdf\]](#)

## **8 Reports of Working groups / Regional sections**

a. European Vegetation Survey (EVS) (report tabled, no discussion required)

[\[Attachment 14 EVS Report 2018.pdf\]](#)

b. Group for Phytosociological Nomenclature (GPN) (report tabled, no discussion required)

[\[Attachment 15 2018 GPN Report 20180702 Bozeman DEF.pdf\]](#)

c. Vegetation Classification (VCWG) (report tabled, no discussion required)

[\[Attachment 16 IAVS VCWG annual report 2018.pdf\]](#)

d. Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) (report tabled, no discussion required)

[\[Attachment 17 IAVS-Report-EDGG 2018-final.pdf\]](#)

e. Ecoinformatics (report tabled, no discussion required)

[\[Attachment 18 EcoinformaticsWG Annual Report to IAVS -2018.pdf\]](#)

f. North American Section (report tabled, no discussion required)

[\[Attachment 19 North American Section Report 2018.pdf\]](#)

g. Young Scientists (report tabled, no discussion required)

[\[Attachment 20 Young Scientists 2018.pdf\]](#)

h. News from the initiative for the Regional section "South America" (Bottin)

Bottin reported that there had been a lot of momentum after the symposium in Brazil, but there has been less activity recently. The draft bylaws need to be finalized with the Governing Board. Currently, there are roughly 40 members.

Peet asked about the geographic limits. Bottin replied that the group had decided to limit their scope to South America. Fidelis explained that the group had reached out to colleagues in Central America, but there had been no replies. Current interest is mainly from Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, with a few people from Colombia.

Diekmann asked that the completed Bylaws and a list of potential members be sent to the Governing Board, who will then have these ratified by Council by email vote.

- i Presentation of the initiative for a new "Historical Ecology Working Group" (Decocq)  
[[Attachment 21 Historical Ecology WG factsheet.pdf](#)]  
[[Attachment 22 Bylaws Historical WGDraft.pdf](#)]  
- Approval of the group and of the Bylaws

Decocq described the goals of the group. The idea was first discussed at the 2015 Brno symposium. The founders had a follow-up meeting at the 2016 Brazil symposium and drafted final text for the Bylaws and factsheet. The Bylaws were then submitted to Council for approval. Decocq then reviewed the progress the group has made to date and described the increased momentum around this discipline.

Council members pointed out some errors in the current version of the Bylaws. In Article 1, the text 'Historical Vegetation Ecology' – needs to be followed by the text 'Working Group'. In Article 7, the text 'Young Scientist group' needs to be replaced by 'Historical Vegetation Ecology Working Group'.

Diekmann asked whether Council approved the new working group.

All Council member approved.

Diekmann moved that the Bylaws be approved, contingent on the above changes being made.

All Council members approved.

## **9 Other business**

There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned at 20:40.