

Minutes

IAVS Council Meeting, Bremen, Germany 2019

Time: Tuesday, July 16, 18.00 - 21.00

Location: room Borgward

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, Sándor Bartha, Zoltán Botta-Dukát, Elgene Box, Helge Bruelheide, Andraž Čarni, Alessandro Chiarucci, Milan Chytrý, Francesco de Bello, Guillaume Decocq, Jürgen Dengler, Kazue Fujiwara, Tomáš Herben, Florian Jansen, Pavel Krestov, Meelis Pärtel, Robert Peet, Valério Pillar, John Rodwell, Joop Schaminée, Otto Wildi, Wolfgang Willner, David Zelený, Martin Zobel = 31 votes

Proxy votes: Iva Apostolova (Monika Janišová), Sara Cousins (Susan Wiser), Jessica Gurevitch (Susan Wiser), Jan Lepš (Francesco de Bello), Martin Hermy (Guillaume Decocq), Ladislav Mucina (Andraž Čarni), Yukito Nakamura (Kazue Fujiwara), Michael Palmer (Valério Pillar), János Podani (Robert Peet), Marcel Rejmánek (Francesco de Bello), Nina Smits (Susan Wiser) = 10 votes

Absent: Nikolai Ermakov

Guests: Carol Clark (Wiley), Lisa Hetherington (FASEB), Péter Török (EDGG Working Group), Daniel Sanchez-Mata (as organizer of possible IAVS 2021 venue; Madrid, Spain), John Hunter (to propose a possible venue for IAVS 2022: New South Wales, Australia), Reginald Guuroh (Young Scientists).

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 10 members was reported and approved (see above). Total voting members represented: $31 + 10 = 41$

3 Finances

a. Report for 2018 - issues (Diekmann)

President Diekmann explained that he received the report pertaining to our US-based accounts just a few days ago so hasn't been able to reconcile this with the Dutch account; therefore, no report was distributed. He did present a summary for discussion.

Our income was higher than had been projected; this was a surprise as we expected we may see an impact of the decreased value of the £, but this has not affected our income. Our expenditures broadly matched our income, based on our US accounts. The balance in the Dutch bank account dropped by ~ €13,000. The value of our second Dutch account (the large account was split into two accounts for safety several years ago) has remained stable. As the total value of the Dutch accounts decreases, we will transfer the funds from the second account into the original account, so we only have one Dutch account. Overall, we earned US\$20,000 more than projected and spent US\$20,000 more than projected.

Diekmann will send the full financial report details after the symposium. [A link to the report is provided [here](#)]

The outstanding issue is that the Bank of America statement is very difficult to interpret, and we are not receiving a bookkeeping/accounts statement from the FASEB accounting services. We have raised this issue in the past with FASEB and although the situation has improved from that of a year ago it is still not solved.

There were no questions from Council about the 2018 financial report.

[\[Attachment 1 IAVS Finances Development.pdf\]](#)

Diekmann described the graph showing the trends in the IAVS financial position since 2004. The IAVS financial position has remained stable over the last several years.

b. Auditing of financial report for 2018 (Wildi, Jansen)

Diekmann explained how the problems of our administration providing the level of detail required for our accounts to be audited persists. Wildi and Jansen are provided with no bookkeeping details that can be audited. Although Diekmann can download pdfs of transactions that he approves and so ascertain the nature of individual transactions, this isn't summarized in a way that is accessible to the auditors. Wildi pointed out that doing bookkeeping is not a task the President of IAVS should be doing and that clearly our administrator doesn't understand the task and what we require. Although the auditors haven't seen any sign that there are problems with the integrity of our finances, the current situation is far from satisfactory. In particular, the auditors need to be able to ascertain what the nature of each financial transaction was, that they are properly receipted, etc.

Hetherington explained that most FASEB societies have their auditors come into the FASEB offices and spend a day with the accounting staff, but she doesn't know how the process would work remotely with auditors who cannot travel to the FASEB office. She also doesn't understand how the actual accounting/bookkeeping system works.

Peet suggested that he and Wisser visit the FASEB office in person, discuss our needs with the FASEB accounting staff and facilitate a process for Wildi and Jansen.

Wildi pointed out that he will not be serving on the new Council so this task should be transferred to someone else.

c. Update of budget for 2019 - discussion and approval (Diekmann)

[\[Attachment 2 IAVS 2019 Financial projection.pdf\]](#)

Diekmann explained that we gave more money to support travel grants and more to working groups and have estimated costs for launching the new journal, *Vegetation Classification and Survey*. This results in a small negative balance of -US\$20,000.

Diekmann also explained that in 2017 we had to pay tax in the Netherlands again (as we are registered in the Netherlands) because our income exceeded expenses. This was because the AVS special issue cost was deferred from 2017 until 2018. This will not be a problem for 2018 or 2019. We should receive some of this tax back the next time we file our return in the Netherlands.

Minchin commented on the US\$3000 budgeted for the costs of the new journal. He felt the actual cost could be higher as the new journal may initially make as much as a US\$15,000 loss. It might make sense to increase the budgeted cost to US\$10,000. Dengler pointed out

that these costs will not be incurred until the journal starts publishing articles, mostly in 2020, so there is no need for a change in the 2019 budget. Diekmann felt it appropriate to retain an extra US\$2000 because we may need legal advice regarding various issues arising from ongoing negotiations with Phytocoenologia. The projection was amended accordingly.

Wildi pointed out that this projection demonstrates the level of detail regarding how expenses are categorized that is what auditors require.

Council approved the 2019 projection and no further changes were required.

d. Financial projection for 2020 – discussion and approval (Diekmann)
[\[Attachment 3 IAVS 2020 Financial projection.pdf\]](#)

Diekmann explained that there is still uncertainty around our income and expenses for 2020. Regarding our income there is uncertainty around whether the £ will change in value relative to the US\$ and € when Britain leaves the EU. Diekmann suggested that Council should discuss i) the costs of the new journal (Vegetation Classification and Survey); ii) potential costs of new working groups; and iii) the partitioning of the GSC awards (currently \$US30,000 to support travel awards to the 2020 Vladivostok symposium, US\$5000 in travel awards for both the EVS and EDDG meetings. Diekmann pointed out that this year we had more funds for the Bremen symposium awards than we typically do because of extra grants and the profit from the Bozeman symposium.

Dengler expressed that if our income will support it, could we consider increasing the funds to the Working Groups to \$7500 each. Other Council members felt it would be better to allow the Governing Board some flexibility around these amounts. Wildi suggested that Council could approve a % change to give the Governing Board latitude around these amounts so that they don't have to seek approval from Council for a small increase over the projection. Zelený suggested to increase the total travel grants to US\$45,000, with \$30,000 allocated to Vladivostok and \$7500 to each WG. If the Working Groups spend less, any remaining funds could be used to support awards for Vladivostok.

Minchin suggested increasing the budget for the new journal to US\$15,000, which is the maximum already approved by Council.

Peet stated how for several years he has raised the issue that we are spending money without knowing what our future financial situation will be as we have no plan of maintaining a baseline investment. Jansen disagreed and felt that we currently have a sufficient buffer. Zelený reiterated that if we decide to move to Open Access with JVS/AVS that might also affect income, but as Diekmann said earlier we can't predict the impact of such a move on our finances currently.

Wiser described how FASEB is planning on no longer providing administrative services to societies like ours that are not FASEB members. The Governing Board learned of this only two weeks ago and has not yet had a discussion with FASEB about what the implications for IAVS are. There are no clear advantages to IAVS in becoming a FASEB member and it is quite costly (~US\$13,000). The new Governing Board will need to identify a new solution for the administration of IAVS.

Dengler asked whether honoraria should be increased for the editorial board. He also suggested that honoraria will be needed for the editors of the new journal. Chytrý felt this needs to be based on income generated by the journal; until the journal generates income,

financial support for the editors may not be justified. Jansen stated how he expects the new journal will be successful, but he also felt that IAVS is already being generous with the US\$15,000 and agreed that the new journal needs to earn funding for honoraria. Wisser suggested that if the new journal hasn't spent the US\$15,000 by March/April, perhaps some funds could be diverted to support one-off Honoraria for the Chief Editors.

Wildi felt it was important not to make financial projections overly conservative.

Council approved the projection

e. Appointment of auditors (Diekmann)

Jansen agreed to continue in his role as auditor. Wildi would like to step down from this role as he is stepping down from Council. Pillar suggested Peet as a replacement. Peet agreed to serve in this role for one year.

Council approved the new auditors. Council also thanked Wildi for his years of serving as one of the auditors.

4 IAVS Business Office (Hetherington)

[\[Attachment 4 Hetherington-2019 IAVS Business Report.pdf\]](#)

Hetherington presented her report. She explained FASEB has been transitioning from using in-house proprietary systems to outsourcing services. The report provides more details about these services.

Peet enquired about the cost of becoming a FASEB member. Hetherington replied that this would be approximately US\$13,000/year

5 Reports on publications

a. Publishers report (Carol Clark, Wiley)

The 2018 Publisher report for IAVS was distributed to all Council members. Clark's goal at the Council meeting was to describe ongoing changes in the publishing landscape. Recently a Strategy day was held between the Wiley representatives, the Chief editors of JVS/AVS and Minchin. Clark summarized the discussion of that day. Issues raised subsequently included:

- There is great concern over Clark's suggestion to court article submissions from authors from countries that fund Open access as this is against IAVS policy of trying to reach out to all countries, including those that are not wealthy
- There is great concern of the huge impact of a shift to Open Access on countries whose governments do not fund Open Access. Hopes that these agreements will be sought with other countries to support authors. Pillar pointed out that if a country currently spends more on subscriptions than it would need to spend on Open Access fees, it would be better off if the journals went Open Access; similarly if there are few subscribers, then Open Access may be more expensive.
- Bruelheide asked what is the advantage to Wiley from moving from a subscription basis to Open Access?
- Bruelheide then asked why are JVS/AVS giving our rejected papers to Wiley to publish in their own Open Access journal? We only get a small part of the Open Access fee and Wiley makes most of the money. Is the 20% proportion to IAVS negotiable? [IAVS signed an agreement on 9 May 2019 to pass rejected papers onto the Wiley Open Access journal *Plant Interactions/Ecology Evolution*]. Dengler and

Wiser asked why we shouldn't be flipping JVS/AVS papers to our new Open Access journal?

- Bruelheide thanked Clark for her strategizing and forward thinking.

b. Publications officer (Minchin)

[\[Attachment 5b Publications Committee Report 2019.pdf\]](#)

Minchin provided highlights from his report. JVS and AVS continue to do well and generate most of the revenue for the association. The Impact Factor (IF) has increased for both. The high AVS IF is largely due to one article, so this may be short-lived, but the overall trend is good. The relationship with Wiley is much improved over recent years; Clark is very good to work with especially compared to the previous person.

- Wiley and Open Access strategy

Minchin explained that the strategy day was excellent. As articulated by Clark, the trend in scholarly publications to Open Access will be a continuing issue we have to deal with. One option for us would be to reduce our income by having a lower author page charge (APC). A new contract will need to be reviewed by the end of December 2020.

- Bulletin

Minchin expressed that Janišová continues to do an excellent job at editing and arranging for production. There have been some delays in production, but these problems have now been solved.

- Phytocoenologia/new journal 'Vegetation Classification and Survey'

Minchin reminded us that Council recently voted to approve the establishment of this new journal. A task for the new Governing Board will be to work with the new editors to get this off the ground. Most of the current Phytocoenologia editors are very interested in being editors for the new journal. The new Governing Board will need to decide whether any new editors needed. There are issues regarding the journal name and past content. The owner of Phytocoenologia is very unhappy about this move on the part of IAVS and currently we can't negotiate with him. Hopefully he will calm down and then we can discuss whether he will be willing to sell the name and past content. IAVS doesn't care so much about the name but we would want to keep the IF.

c. Chief Editors (Chytrý)

[\[Attachment 6. Chief Editors Report 2019.pdf\]](#)

Chytrý added the point that after a discussion with Clark and Minchin, the Chief editors, Associate editors and Editorial Board would like to switch to electronic only, continuous publication. Currently JVS has only five hard copy subscriptions. From Jan 2021, they would like to stop publishing hard copy journals. Wiley will provide a cost estimate for this change when the contract is renegotiated.

Peet asked whether there will be virtual issues or volumes? Chytrý said that Special Issues will be 'virtual' and published as they appear. There will also be 'Spotlight issues' that highlight a defined topic, e.g. vegetation survey, plant traits, vegetation of China.

d. Bulletin (Janišová)

Janišová explained that she had issues resulting in very long production times during the past couple of years. In January we stopped using FASEB for the design and layout and changed to using Anna Kuzemko. The designing and layout are now done very quickly, and production time has shortened. She also thanked the linguistic editors. Zelený asked whether it would be possible to professionally print some issues so hard copies could be displayed at conferences? Other suggestions included printing yearly highlights and producing electronic books as opposed to pdf formats as electronic books are easier to read on Smart phones.

Kuzemko uses Microsoft Publisher. Jansen, Zelený and Krestov think that this format can be produced from Microsoft Publisher and this would be useful to explore.

e. Phytocoenologia (Jansen)

[[Attachment 7. Phytocoenologia Report 2019.pdf](#)]

Jansen thanked Council for welcoming the journal (Vegetation Classification and Survey) into IAVS. The website vcs.pensoft.net is already online and there have been two submissions! At this point everything is still preliminary. There will be two more issues of Phytocoenologia published this year. Only one member of the editorial board declined to move to the new journal.

Bruelheide asked whether IAVS has any leverage to buy the name Phytocoenologia and the back catalog. He suggested offering a reasonable sum (e.g. €10,000) by a deadline.

Wiser asked whether Naegele (of Borntraeger) is seeking new editors to replace those who have resigned. Diekmann replied that he is.

Diekmann felt that Naegele is too angry to approach at the current time.

Čarni felt it is reasonable to offer €10,000 Euro. Bruelheide suggested to start with €3000 and go up to €10,000 if necessary. Diekmann has the impression that Naegele is stubborn. Herben asked whether Naegele could take legal action owing to our cancellation of the MOU.

f. Membership Committee (Dengler)

- Membership statistics

- Membership strategy

Dengler described how he had reconstructed the Membership committee comprising himself (Chair), Javier Loidi, Bianca Andrade, (BR), Frank Yonghong Li (CN) and Riccardo Guarino (IT). They met in March 2019 and provided a 2-page recommendation to the Governing Board with a top priority to revise the membership fee structure before the next membership renewal cycle including i) a 3-level fee structure based on the per-capita income of the country of residence; ii) discounted membership for students and unemployed persons; iii) options for 3-year and lifetime membership.

The committee began to prepare promotional materials but decided to wait until the new proposed fee structure could be implemented. Once the new membership structure is in place, they will develop specific membership campaigns.

Zelený felt the promises in terms of member numbers were a bit over-ambitious and that a more appropriate emphasis should be on attracting and motivating new members who will be actively engaged with the IAVS.

Chiarucci said that the journals need discounts for members to be pro-rated in a similar fashion, i.e. using the 3-level structure based on per-capita income of the country of residence.

g. Global Sponsorship Committee (Zelený)

[[Attachment 8. Global Sponsorship Committee Report 2019.pdf](#)]

Zelený explained how he recently became the Chair of the committee and there are also new members. The GSC approved the applications by EVS and EDGG for travel awards, and selected awardees for IAVS symposium awards (criteria were adopted that are more structured and transparent than in the past and are in detail reported in the GSC report). The symposium awards averaged €1200. The GSC hopes the same level of funding will be available in 2020.

h. Awards Committee (Schaminée)

[\[Attachment 9 Report of the IAVS Award Committee over the year 2019.pdf\]](#)

Schaminée expressed that he was very happy with the celebration today to honor Pierre Legendre, the 2019 recipient of the Alexander von Humboldt award and how we were in the midst judging the young scientist awards. He requested that any nominations for Honorary Members be submitted 1 Jan 2020.

i. Meetings Committee (Loidi)

[\[Attachment 10. MeetingsCommitteeReportBremen2019.pdf\]](#)

-Information on the IAVS symposium in 2020 (Vladivostok, Krestov)

Krestov delivered a presentation on the upcoming symposium in Vladivostok. The symposium website was launched in March of 2019. Soon after the Bremen symposium he will begin to distribute preliminary information in the first circular. He presented a list of potential partner organizations via which he hoped to obtain additional funding to support the symposium. He also reviewed the symposium themes and potential topics of special sessions.

The symposium will take place from 20–24 July 2020. There will be two pre-symposium excursions from 10 to 19 July, one to the Altai and the other to the Caucasus. There will be two 7-10-day post-symposium excursions to Kamchatka and the Sikhote-Alin Mountains. Excursion guides have been arranged and excursion prices will be released in October. He described the conference venue and options for accommodation (ranging from hotel-style to dormitories for students).

There are excellent flight connections from both Narita and Seoul. Visas will be required for travel from many countries and may take as long as 3-4 weeks to obtain.

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

Sanchez-Mata delivered a proposal to host the 2021 symposium in Madrid. 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 28 June – 3 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. The symposium theme has not yet been decided.

-IAVS symposium in 2022 (NSW, Australia, Hunter)

John Hunter explained that he is exploring the feasibility of hosting the 2022 symposium in Armidale, New South Wales, Australia, located an hour's flight from either Sydney or Brisbane. There are two options. One is to have a normal stand-alone IAVS symposium (September-October). The other is to hold a joint symposium with the group involved with the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy in January 2023. This would be a much larger experience and would be new to IAVS members. He has a conference company in mind and University provides facilities for free. There would be a wide variety of habitats for excursions.

Krestov suggested IAVS should focus on parts of the world not recently, or ever, visited. He suggested Taiwan. Zelený pointed out that Taiwan is a problem as Chinese people would not

be able to attend. An option would be to hold a meeting in Okinawa that was jointly hosted with Taiwanese colleagues.

Loidi also pointed out that IAVS can organize excursions without symposia

- j. Ethics committee (Wiser)
 - proposal to form a standing committee
 - task to prepare a formal complaints procedure

Wiser described that an ethics investigation in 2019 made the Governing Board aware of the need for a standing committee on Ethics. One of the first tasks of this committee would be to draft a formal complaints procedure, as the guidelines in the Code of Professional Ethics are insufficient for this.

6 Reports of Working groups / Regional sections

All reports were tabled. Any comments/discussion are noted below

- a European Vegetation Survey (EVS) (Chytrý)
[\[Attachment 11 EVS Report 2019.pdf\]](#)
- b Group for Phytosociological Nomenclature (GPN) (Theurillat/Willner)
[\[Attachment 12 2019_GPN Report_Bremen.pdf\]](#)

Willner announced that a new nomenclature code has been launched and that further details would be available at the Groups meeting at the symposium.

- c Vegetation Classification (VCWG)
[No report tabled]
- d Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) (Török)
[\[Attachment 14 IAVS-Report-EDGG 2019-final.pdf\]](#)
- e Ecoinformatics (Jiménez-Alfaro)
[\[Attachment 15 Ecoinformatics WG Annual Report to IAVS -2019.pdf\]](#)
- f North American Section (Minchin)
[No activity, no report]
- g Young Scientists (Guuroh)
[\[Attachment 17 Young Scientists 2019.pdf\]](#)

Reginald Guuroh (Ghana) is the new chair for the Young Scientists steering committee. Committee members come from Italy, Serbia, Argentina and Indonesia. They are working to promote communication within the group as they have not been very active in the last year. Their emphasis is on social media including LinkedIn and Twitter. They had their largest meeting in several years today. This year they engaged with the Chief Editors of AVS/JVS to compile a virtual issue of AVS/JVS that featured papers published by early career scientists. The group is very grateful for this opportunity.

- h Historical Ecology Working Group (Decocq)
[\[Attachment 18 Historical Vegetation Ecology WG annual report 2019.pdf\]](#)

7 Other business

None.

The meeting adjourned at 21:00