

Guidelines for organizers of IAVS annual symposia



The Annual Symposium is the most important activity of IAVS. The meeting organization should be conducted in collaboration between IAVS (as represented by the Meetings Committee) and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). Both have unique knowledge and important roles to play in organizing the event. It is important that throughout the planning process the local organizers and the IAVS Meetings Committee interact on a regular basis and are partners in making all important decisions. The IAVS Meetings Committee will keep the IAVS Governing Board (GB) informed of all major decisions and will consult the GB when appropriate.

Inclusion as part of the meeting of short, mid-symposium excursions, and longer pre- and post-symposium excursions, is an important and widely appreciated tradition of the Association. For organizers of excursions, a separate document, "Guidelines for organizers of IAVS excursions" is available and complementary to these instructions for the Annual Symposia.

Where

Any group of members from anywhere in the world can be a candidate for organizing the Annual Symposium (in the following referred to as the Symposium). As the majority of IAVS members are presently from Europe, it is recommended the Symposium be in Europe roughly every other year. Proposals should be sent in writing to the IAVS President or to the Chair of the Meetings Committee. In addition, those proposing to host future meetings are invited to make a presentation in person during a Council meeting, preferably 3-4 years prior to the proposed meeting. The proposal should include a description of the following items:

- Location, how to get there
- Venue, information about meeting facilities (rooms for oral presentations, space for posters)
- Approximate dates and preliminary deadlines for special sessions and workshop proposals, travel grant applications and decisions, abstract submission and acceptance, early bird and final registration

- Suggestions for pre- and post-symposium excursions (including preliminary dates and vegetation to be seen) as well as mid-symposium excursions
- Preliminary budget including potential sponsors
- Information on support for young researchers
- Ideas about main topic(s)
- Ideas about keynote speakers that represent the diversity in the association / field of vegetation science with respect to age, gender, and nationality
- People in the Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

Proposers should attend, if at all possible, (1) at least one IAVS Symposium prior to presenting a proposal, (2) the two Symposia immediately prior to the meeting they propose to host, (3) Council and General Assembly meetings twice, so that the officers and general membership know the proposed hosts and can convey important information to them, and (4) at least one pre- or post-symposium excursion in order to understand the expectations of the participants. Once a venue has been formally selected, IAVS will pay for travel expenses for a representative of the LOC to participate in each of the two meetings immediately preceding the proposed meeting.

The review of proposals to organize the Annual Symposium by the GB will consider the following criteria:

- (1) The financial, scientific, and personnel support that will be provided for the organization of the Symposium and scientific program,
- (2) The timeline of the Symposium (see below),
- (3) Planned excursions including the types of habitats to be visited,
- (4) Predicted costs and sponsorships, and registration fees, travel and lodging costs for participants,
- (5) Travel logistics and visa requirements in the host country,
- (6) Geographic balance between continents and climatic types within the IAVS Symposium sequence (see Appendix 1),
- (7) Scientific program,
- (8) Experience of the proposer(s) and of the LOC.

When

The period chosen for the Symposium must inevitably be a compromise involving (1) phenology of the vegetation so as to allow interesting excursions, (2) the academic schedules of the membership, (3)

avoidance of conflicts with other meetings (e.g., INTECOL, the International Botanical Congress, national ecological conferences, such as Ecological Society of America annual conference), and (4) costs and logistic considerations related to the venue and availability of accommodations and facilities for the meeting. Potential organizers should note that the best time to optimize participation of members associated with universities in Europe and North America is mid-June to mid-August, but there may be good reasons to meet outside this period. On average, IAVS plans for one Symposium per year, but as meetings may occur in different hemispheres, the interval between two consecutive Symposia may be significantly shorter or longer than one year. The only absolute requirements are that the interval between two Symposia should not be shorter than six months, and that there be a meeting associated with each year (though perhaps held one or two months outside of the specific calendar year).

Contract

The decision of the GB for a Symposium host will be accompanied by an informal contract between the GB and the organizers specifying that this decision is based on the premises stated in the proposal. Any major change in the planning and implementation of the symposium compared to the proposal should be reported and explained to the Meetings Committee and the GB. The latter will discuss these changes and any problems associated with the changes, and try to help the local organizers to proceed according to plan. In case of unjustified changes to the proposal that are not in accordance with the policy of IAVS and the current guidelines, and if the organizers and the GB do not succeed in solving the issues, the GB may decide to withdraw the decision for the Symposium host in question.

Announcements and meeting information for participants

If the decision about the location of the Symposium has already been taken, a first announcement and invitation to participate should be distributed approximately one to two years before the date of the Symposium. This information will be posted on the main IAVS web site, published in the IAVS *Bulletin* and sent to various e-mail lists including all IAVS members, participants of previous meetings and other interested people. As soon as possible a Symposium web page should be created. This initial web page should include a timeline (see example in Appendix 2) with information about dates, deadlines and fees, together with the usual information about the venue, excursions, organizers, topics, etc. It may also include a reply form for the members to express interest in attending the Symposium. Members of the IAVS should be invited to propose organized sessions for contributed papers. The Symposium web page should have a template page for registering and paying the fees. The web page will progressively be

extended with more and more details along the period until the symposium happens. Whenever important information is added to the web site, a short announcement with a link to the site should be sent by e-mail to registered participants. A Symposium website may include the following items:

- Home
- Registration (fees, deadlines, cancellation policies, selection of special events such as symposium dinner, accompanying persons program, excursions)
- Travel award application (eligibility, deadline, how to apply)
- Program (general schedule, keynote talks, special events)
- Presentations (instructions for oral and poster presentations)
- Important news and dates (deadlines)
- Abstract submission
- Excursions (description of pre-, mid- and post-symposium excursions)
- Special events (student courses, etc.)
- Travel information (venue, getting there, visa requirements)
- Accommodation
- Sponsorship and support
- Photo gallery
- Local organizing Committee (and Scientific Advisory Council)
- Contact (symposium secretariat, IAVS business office)

The LOC should establish and consult a Scientific Advisory Committee (containing representatives from the Governing Board, Council, and organizers of previous symposia) to help with the scientific program and the program for the excursions. All proposals for organized sessions should be reviewed by members of the Scientific Advisory Committee, and each abstract for an oral paper and poster should be reviewed by at least one member of the Scientific Advisory Committee. If the organizers decide to extend the deadline for abstract submission, the decision timeline should remain unchanged for those people who submitted their abstract by the original deadline. For those who submit under an extended deadline, their time for acceptance should be adjusted accordingly.

Symposium Structure

The Symposium is typically a one-week meeting (five days), with one day for local excursions in the middle. A meeting from Monday to Friday may have the advantage that travelling on weekends allows par-

ticipants to not take more time off work than necessary. The program should include time during the first half of the Symposium (usually in the evening) for meetings of the Council and Editorial Board, and on the fourth or fifth day for a meeting of the General Assembly (often being the last event of the Symposium). It is also a tradition that there be a welcome reception on the first evening (or the evening preceding the official start of the Symposium) and a closing dinner on the fourth (or sometimes last) evening. The Symposium scientific program will normally include plenary talks (45 to 60 minutes per talk) by invited speakers plus sessions for contributed oral and poster presentations. In the past there have often been two plenary talks per day, but this reduces the time available for the regular oral presentations, therefore only one plenary talk per day is recommended. Speaking time for contributed papers is typically 20 minutes per talk (including ~5 minutes for discussion). If at all possible, the program should not have more than 4-5 parallel oral sessions. An example of a symposium schedule is found in Appendix 3.

Poster sessions must NOT take place simultaneously with oral sessions. The location of the poster session should be in one venue, preferably close to the rooms where the talks take place, and the posters should remain in place for the entire Symposium if possible. Associated 'lightning' talks can help to highlight the contents of posters.

In most cases IAVS will use the Symposium to award Honorary membership or the Alexander von Humboldt Award to an outstanding scientist. The awardee is invited to give a plenary talk on this occasion, which means that the organizers should plan for another 1-hour time slot for the celebration and presentation.

Meeting/break-out rooms should be made available for IAVS Working Group and Committee meetings. These are often held during lunch or in the early evening, after the conclusion of the oral and poster sessions.

Upon arrival, the participants should receive the printed meeting program and a printed list of participants, including e-mail address. Abstract books should be made available as a pdf provided by the meeting organizers. Fewer participants these days want printed abstract books, meaning that by default they should not get one. However, the registration form should have a checkbox if a person wants a printed copy available for a given fee. The abstracts should be organized as a publication, preferably with a proper ISBN or ISSN and DOI. For the symposium excursions printed excursions guides (possibly also with ISBN or ISSN and DOI) should be distributed to the participants.

Symposium finances and liabilities

The Symposium and the associated excursions should be self-supporting, based on revenue from sponsors and the fees paid by the participants. With respect to sponsorships, care must be taken to avoid possible conflicts of interest with IAVS goals. The fees should be kept affordable to maximize participation by IAVS members and also attract students and young scientists. Members of the IAVS should pay a substantially lower fee than non-members. The GB may offer monetary advances, but the financial solvency of the Symposium is the responsibility of the local organizers. In all cases a final accounting report should be submitted to the GB within six months of the completion of the meeting, and in the event that IAVS contributed with a financial advance a positive balance should first be used to reimburse the association. Any remaining positive balance should be equally shared between the LOC and IAVS. As IAVS cannot take legal liability regarding the conduct of the Symposium or associated excursions, the organizers should arrange for liability insurance as appropriate for the venue. In case there is a negative balance (not being caused by the organizers, for example a much lower number of participants than anticipated) IAVS will back up the organizers.

Prepared by the Governing Board of IAVS

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Appendix 1. Locations of IAVS Annual symposia since 1990

Year	Symposium no.	Location	Country	Continent	Time
2017	60	Palermo	Italy	Europe	June
2016	59	Pirenópolis	Brazil	South America	June
2015	58	Brno	Czech Republic	Europe	July
2014	57	Perth	Australia	Oceania	September
2013	56	Tartu	Estonia	Europe	June
2012	55	Mokpo	South Korea	Asia	July
2011	54	Lyon	France	Europe	June
2010	53	Ensenada	Mexico	North America	April
2009	52	Crete	Greece	Europe	June
2008	51	Stellenbosch	South Africa	Africa	September
2007	50	Swansea	United Kingdom	Europe	July
2006	49	Palmerston North	New Zealand	Oceania	February 2017
2005	48	Lisbon	Portugal	Europe	July
2004	47	Hawaii	United States	Oceania	July
2003	46	Naples	Italy	Europe	June
2002	45	Porto Alegre	Brazil	South America	March
2001	44	Freising	Germany	Europe	August
2000	43	Nagano	Japan	Asia	July
1999	42	Bilbao	Spain	Europe	July
1998	41	Uppsala	Sweden	Europe	July-August
1997	40	Ceske Budejovice	Czech Republic	Europe	August
1996	39	Lancaster	United Kingdom	Europe	September
1995	38	Houston	United States	North America	June
1994	37	Bailleul	France	Europe	September
1993	36	Santa Cruz de Tenerife	Spain	Europe	April
1992	35	Shanghai	China	Asia	September
1991	34	Eger	Hungary	Europe	August
1990	33	Warsaw	Poland	Europe	April

Appendix 2. Template for a symposium timeline

Example: Symposium in July 2021

- *Ca* 3-4 years before the symposium: proposal submitted to the Meetings Committee and Governing Board (GB)
- *Ca* 2-3 years before the symposium: Proposal accepted by the GB, dates finalized, informal contract between GB and organizers
- 2-1.5 years before the symposium: first announcement of the symposium with location, dates and a preliminary list of excursions. First E-mail to IAVS members and interested non-members
- 1.5 years before the symposium: Conference venue booked, blocks of hotels and student rooms reserved
- 1.5-1 year before the symposium: construction of meeting website with information about dates, deadlines and fees, venue, excursions, topics, etc. E-mail to IAVS members and interested non-members
- 0.5-1 year before symposium: discussion among LOC, GB and Meetings Committee about plenary speakers, sessions, etc.
- 0.5-1 year before symposium: registration open
- Until End of December 2020: Preliminary program with plenary speakers
- Until End of December 2020: Expressions of interest sought for participants in excursions
- January 15, 2021: Deadline for Special session proposals
- February 15, 2021: Deadline for IAVS travel grant applications
- March 15, 2021: Decision on IAVS travel grant applications
- March 30, 2021: Abstract submission deadline
- April 20, 2021: Abstract decision deadline
- May 15, 2021: Early registration deadline (reduced fees)

Appendix 3. Program template

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	8:00-9:00		Registration	Registration		
	9:00-9:30		Symposium opening	8:45: Plenary talk 2		8:45: Plenary talk 3 8:45: Plenary talk 4
	9:30-10:15		Plenary talk 1	Parallel sessions	E	Parallel sessions
	10:15-11:00		Parallel sessions		X	
	11:00-11:30		Coffee break	Coffee break	C	Coffee break
	11:30-12:45		Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	U	Parallel sessions
					R	
	12:45-14:00		LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	S	LUNCH BREAK
				I		
Afternoon	14:00-15:30		Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	O	Parallel sessions
	15:30-16:00		Coffee break	Coffee break	N	Coffee break
	16:00-17:30	Registration	Parallel sessions	Poster session 1	S	Poster session 2
	17:30 / 18:00--		JVS/AVS Editorial meeting	IAVS Council meeting		1900: Symposium dinner
	18:00-21:00	Continued registration and Welcome reception				
						until 15:00: Parallel sessions
						until 15:30: Coffee break
						Award celebration
						General Assembly and Closing ceremony