

1 **Report to IAVS Governing Board**

2 **IAVS Vegetation Classification Working Group**

3 Steering Committee: Scott B. Franklin (Chair), John T. Hunter (Secretary), Miquel De
4 Cáceres, Jürgen Dengler, Flavia Landucci & Pavel Krestov

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6 The general scope of the VCWG includes vegetation classification at any spatial or
7 organizational scale, particularly the underlying methodologies and standards,
8 ultimately allowing greater understanding and crosswalks among national
9 classification systems. To that end, the VCWG has developed 'specific tasks' focusing
10 on specific activities and maintains a website "The IAVS Vegetation Classification
11 Methods Website" (<https://sites.google.com/site/vegclassmethods/home>) as the
12 official outlet of VCWG activities, including a discussion forum for members and the
13 dissemination of agreed standards. In addition, the website aims to facilitate access to
14 bibliographic and technical resources for vegetation classification (data, programs,
15 tutorials, etc.). The website includes the Bylaws, geographical representation of
16 current membership, and contact information to become involved (by contacting the
17 working group Secretary John Hunter [jhunter8@bigpond.com]). Membership
18 (currently 195 members from 42 countries and six continents) is free and does not
19 require membership in IAVS. Over the next year, elections will be held for a new
20 steering committee.

21 The focus of the Steering Committee over the past year has been a special issue in
22 *Phytocoenologia*, "Global overview of plot-based vegetation classification systems"
23 and developing a collaborative effort towards a global biome classification. The
24 purpose of this Special Issue was to provide a common framework describing all
25 approaches of vegetation classification used throughout the world and thus allowing
26 for a thorough comparison among those approaches. The Special Issue in was
27 published as Volume 2 in 2018 (<https://www.schweizerbart.de/papers/phyto/list>).

28 The second endeavor is to help jumpstart a global classification system at the biome
29 level. At the 2017 IAVS meeting, the working group has established a special session
30 and workshop ("Rethinking Biomes") on the issue. The goals of the workshop were: 1.

31 Discuss current biomes classification approaches and systems 2. Start to develop
32 ideas for a new biome classification approaches/system (The goal of the workshop is
33 not a finished product but to kick start an INTL effort) and 3. Elect leaders for a sub
34 group of the IAVS VCWG to forward this effort. The working group received
35 funding from IAVS for the workshop. We are taking this a step further in 2018,
36 holding a day-long workshop at the IAVS meeting in Bozeman, MT. The workshop in
37 Bozeman has three aims. (1) Reviewing the existing global biome typologies and a
38 selection of continental systems with regard to a multitude of aspects, including the
39 definition and terminology of biomes, the number of biomes distinguished, criteria
40 used to derive a biome map and its resolution, frequency of application of a particular
41 biome typology and experiences from its use. This activity should lead to a joint
42 review and synthesis paper in an international journal. (2) Comparing digital maps of
43 existing biome typologies for their spatial congruencies and discrepancies as well as
44 their climatological “content”. (3) Discuss how the concept “biome” should be
45 defined in order to be most useful for science and how a new global biome map
46 meeting this concept can be derived.

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