

Report from the IAVS Global Sponsorship Committee: activities in 2019

David Zelený (zeleny@ntu.edu.tw)

In 2019, there has been some turnover in the **membership of GSC**. Current members are: Alessandra Fidelis (Brazil), Lauchlan Fraser (Canada), Alireza Naqinezhad (Iran), Peter C. le Roux (South Africa, newly appointed in 2019), Camilla Wellstein (Italy, newly appointed in 2019) and David Zelený (Taiwan, from 2019 appointed as a chair of the committee).

GSC approved several proposals by IAVS working groups:

- The proposal by the Executive Committee of the European Dry Grasslands Group (EDGG) for travel grants for the Eurasian Grassland Conference in Graz, Austria/Slovenia and Italy in May-June 2019). The allocated budget was 3500 EUR. Of the twelve applicants, nine were awarded as specified in the rules proposed by the Executive Committee of EDGG.
- The proposal by the Executive Committee of the EDGG for travel grants for the field workshop to Armenia and Switzerland. The allocated budget was 5600 EUR (4000 EUR allocated for the workshop and 1600 EUR from the EDGG savings). Of the 14 applicants, all have been awarded based on the rules proposed by the Executive Committee of EDGG.
- The proposal of the European Vegetation Survey (EVS) steering committee for travel awards to support the 2019 European Vegetation Survey Meeting in Madrid, with an allocated sum of 7500 EUR; 12 applicants applied, from which 11 were awarded, following the criteria set by the EVS Steering committee.

We updated the **selection criteria** for the Annual Symposia awards and made them more explicit and transparent. The current criteria are as follows:

- 1) Applicant must be a member of IAVS.
- 2) The applicant can be a student or researcher.
- 3) If the applicant has already received the grant for IAVS Symposium in the past two years, she/he can apply again but will receive only 70% of the total approved amount.
- 4) Applicants from high-income countries will obtain only 70% of the approved funding.
- 5) Evaluation by committee members is based on a) motivation letter (+CV) and b) abstract. The evaluation is done on scale 0 (poor) to 5 (excellent).
- 6) The final evaluation is including also professional age criteria: graduate (MSc or PhD) student = 5, post-doc = 4, researcher/professor/other = 2. This will be added to the table in the end.
- 7) The final calculation is based on the average from abstract + motivation letter/CV + professional age, with the following weights: abstract 2/5, motivation&CV 2/5, professional age 1/5.
- 8) The awarded budget is not based on the budget requested by the applicant, but on the budget estimated by GSC committee (estimated cost of flight ticket, early bird registration fee, budget accommodation – 1 person budget hotel room nearby the conference venue). Conservative criteria are applied: the applicant will not get a budgeted allocation that she/he did not request (e.g. if accommodation was not requested in motivation letter, it would not be awarded); on the other hand, if applicants requested a lower amount for an expense than we estimate the true

cost to be (e.g. for accommodation), we use our estimate to make the award comparable to that received by others.

- 9) The total award (after discounts) should cover at least the price of the registration fee.

For the **62nd Annual Symposium** of International Association for Vegetation Science, held on July 14-19 in Bremen, Germany, IAVS allocated 30,000 EUR for travel awards. We received 71 valid applications from 33 countries, mostly from graduate (master or PhD) students (35) and postdocs (18), but also from researchers and professors (9+3), an undergraduate student (1) and others (5). We were able to award 31 applicants (24 graduate students and 7 postdocs) travel awards ranging from 290 to 1700 EUR (966 EUR on average). Awarded participants are from 15 countries, with the highest number from Brazil (9), Taiwan (3), South Africa (3), UK (2) and New Zealand (2). In addition to the travel awards funded by IAVS, the conference organiser Dr Martin Diekmann solicited travel award funding from The Foundation Manfred-Hermsen-Stiftung (Bremen, Germany) of 6500 EUR. Participants who were selected according to GSC criteria who also met the requirements of The Foundation (participants from low-to-middle-income countries and submitted abstract with a conservation focus) were awarded travel grants from this source (six applicants: two from Egypt, and one each from Ghana, Indonesia, Ukraine and Philippines). As a result, 37 of the 71 original applicants received an award to travel to the IAVS Symposium in Bremen.