

## **Some useful information for (new) officers of IAVS Working Groups and Regional Sections**

Much of the scientific activities and personal communication within the IAVS takes place in the Working Groups or Regional Sections (groups / sections) of the association. In order to enable successful and efficient work in these groups / sections and to encourage participation, the Governing Board and Council of IAVS have made some decisions that also outline the relationship between the association and its groups / sections. The most important points are summarized here.

### *Bylaws*

According to the Statutes of the IAVS, each group / section shall adopt Bylaws that must be approved by the Council. These Bylaws specify, for example, the minimum frequency of meetings and how the officers of the group / section are elected. The Bylaws should preferably be simple; a template based on those of the *Ecoinformatics* and *EVS* Working Group Bylaws is found below.

### *Members*

Membership in a group / section should be open to all people free of charge. Members of a group / section do not need to be, but should be encouraged to become, members of the IAVS. At least one officer / member of the Steering Committee of the group / section (or all if the Bylaws specify this) shall be a member of the IAVS. Each group / section should have a membership administrator who keeps the membership records. Membership is obtained for example by an application to the Administrator or via participation in a group / section conference, workshop, or excursion. Membership is discontinued by a written statement to the Administrator or when no more functional email address is available.

### *Business meetings*

The officers of the Steering Committee and the members of the group / section should meet at least once each year, preferably at the annual meeting of the group / section or in conjunction with the annual IAVS symposium. The most important decisions should normally be taken during these meetings.

### *Annual report / Bulletin*

Each year the group / section should provide a written report for the Bulletin and preferably also an oral summary at the annual IAVS Council meeting. This report may include information on the main activities during the preceding year, contact addresses, aims and plans for future years, and announcements of the annual business meetings and excursions. The annual report is published in the IAVS Bulletin and is a pre-requisite for financial support from IAVS.

### *Appearance on the IAVS Website*

The names of the officers of the group / section (chair or co-chairs, secretary, membership administrator) should be listed on the IAVS website (<http://www.iavs.org/ParticipateGroup.aspx>), and links to the active email addresses should be provided. In case of a change of officers the group / section should make sure that the relevant information on the website is updated. In the near future updates to the website will be the responsibility of the IAVS office.

### *Working Group Website*

To encourage people to join a group / section and to provide information to its members, each group / section should preferably keep its own homepage (with a link from the IAVS website <http://www.iavs.org/ParticipateGroup.aspx>). The homepage of the group / section (and / or the main IAVS website) may also contain a link to a site on which people can subscribe to the group / section email list, as implemented for the *Ecoinformatics* Working group ([http://lists.unc.edu/read/all\\_forums/subscribe?name=vegdata](http://lists.unc.edu/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=vegdata)).

### *Financial support / Finances*

To be eligible for financial support from the IAVS, groups / sections should have Bylaws (approved by the IAVS Council) and officers properly elected by the members, and they should show substantial activities as documented on the website of the group / section as well as in the annual report. For a new group / section or one that has recently been re-organized, these rules are relaxed over the first years.

There is an automatic yearly support of 500 € to each group / section, and the chair/s of the group / section decide about its allocation in a manner consistent with the Bylaws. This money should not be spent for the participation in the annual IAVS symposium for which extra support (normally 1000 € for the chair or one of the officers, or shared by two or more officers) from the IAVS is available. Each group / section can make applications for up to 3000 € for special activities. Decisions are taken by the IAVS Governing Board.

No regular support is given to the organization of the annual business meetings or other meetings, excursions and workshops of the group / section. These activities should be financially self-sustaining. If the group / section has its own financial assets, these shall be held by and managed through the accounts of the IAVS.

### *IAVS Bylaws Requirements*

IAVS Bylaws for Sections and Working Groups are listed below. Please note that at least 15 current IAVS members must be involved in the petition to form a section or working group.

#### **Bylaw 11. Sections and Working Groups – for updates please check:**

<http://www.iavs.org/GovernanceByLaws.aspx>

11.1 Any group of fifteen or more members of the Association may petition for the establishment of a regional Section or a disciplinary Working Group as defined in Article 8 of the Statutes. The petition must specify the proposed general scope of the Section or Working Group and its proposed plan of organization. Any person of any class of membership in the Association may become a member of any Section or Working Group. Each Section and Working Group may arrange meetings, either in connection with meetings of the whole Association or separately, may arrange field trips, and may otherwise conduct its own affairs, so long as it does not encroach upon the activities of the Association, or other Sections and Working Groups, and its activities conform to Association norms and policies.

11.2 Each Section and Working Group shall elect a Chair (or Co-chairs) and other officers, whose duties, terms of office, and manner of election are determined by that Section or Working Group. Each Section and Working Group shall select from among its elected officers one individual who is a member of IAVS to serve as the official representative of the officers of the Group or Section to IAVS. This person may be, but is not required to be, the same person as is appointed to represent the Group or Section on Council as specified in IAVS Statutes 4.2.b. The Bylaws of the Section or Working Group and future amendments are subject to the approval of the Governing Council of the Association.

# Bylaws

## Working Group XXX

### of the International Association for Vegetation Science

#### Article 1. Name and status

The name of this organization shall be "XXX" (XXX). It shall be a Working Group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS).

Comment [MD1]: Abbreviation, optional

#### Article 2. Purposes

The main purposes of the XXX include:

- (a) doing this and that;
- (b) etc.

Comment [MD2]: Or objectives

As a Working Group of IAVS, the XXX shares the IAVS goals and supports its activities. The XXX is subject to the Statutes and Bylaws of the IAVS.

#### Article 3. Membership

Membership in the XXX is open to all persons free of charge, and membership in the IAVS is optional. Membership in the XXX is obtained by:

- (a) written application to the XXX Membership Administrator, or
- (b) registration for participation in a conference, workshop or fieldtrip of the XXX;
- (c) specification when joining or renewing membership in IAVS;
- (d) subscribing to the XXX List Server.

Comment [MD3]: Can also be called Secretary

Comment [MD4]: This is, for example, implemented in the EVS Bylaws

Comment [MD5]: (c) and (d) are implemented in the draft for the Bylaws of the Ecoinformatics Working Group

Membership is discontinued by a written statement (electronic or hardcopy) sent to the XXX Membership Administrator that the member no longer wishes to be member of the XXX. It is the responsibility of members to provide the Membership Administrator with a functioning e-mail address. Membership is discontinued when no functioning e-mail address is available to either the Membership Administrator or the IAVS Secretary.

#### Article 4. Business meeting

A business meeting shall be held annually in conjunction with a meeting of the Working Group. All members attending may vote in the business meeting. A member may assign a proxy vote for the business meeting to another member by notifying the holder of the proxy and the Membership Administrator. Any one participant may carry up to three proxy votes.

Comment [MD6]: Which in turn can take place in conjunction with the Annual IAVS Symposium

#### Article 5. Steering Committee

The Working Group shall have a Steering Committee (SC) with five elected members. All SC members shall be members of IAVS. Each SC member shall be elected for a period of four years. Elections shall take place at least two months prior to the business meeting at which the regular four-year term of the SC is ending, or following a vacancy. At least one month prior to the start of an election, it shall be announced to the members via e-mail by the Membership Administrator, who then shall receive nominations made by any member by e-mail or in person. Elections take place by means of an electronic ballot over a period of one month.

Comment [MD7]: The number may vary.

Comment [MD8]: This is a suggestion. According to the Bylaws, at least one elected officer needs to be a member of IAVS

Comment [MD9]: The length of the period may vary.

Comment [MD10]: The article may further specify: possibility of re-election, what happens in case of a tie for the 5<sup>th</sup> position in an election, etc.

The SC shall elect a Chair and a Membership Administrator from its members for a period of four years. All decisions on behalf of the XXX except those explicitly assigned otherwise are made by the SC with majority.

Comment [MD11]: In the EVS Bylaws, membership is not required for the Membership administrator.

#### Article 6. Duties of the Steering Committee members

- (a) The SC members promote the interests of the XXX, and supervise Working Group operations and scientific activities;
- (b) The Chair presides at the SC and XXX business meetings;

- (c) The SC may call upon members of the Working Group or appoint committees to assist with the Working Group affairs;
- (d) The Chair supplies an annual report to IAVS;
- (e) The Membership Administrator keeps records of the XXX and its members and conducts elections and ballots.

Comment [MD12]: Or Chair

#### Article 7. Finances

The XXX financial assets shall be held by and managed through the accounts of IAVS.

#### Article 8. Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a 3/5 vote of the members participating in the business meeting of the XXX. Proposed amendments must be circulated to the membership by e-mail at least two weeks in advance of the business meeting at which they are voted on.

Comment [MD13]: May differ

Comment [MD14]: The Ecoinformatics Group conducts an electronic ballot.

Changes in the bylaws are contingent on approval by the IAVS Council.