



Guidelines for organisers of IAVS annual symposia

The Annual Symposium is the most important activity of IAVS. The meeting organization should be conducted as a collaboration between IAVS (as represented by the Meetings Committee) and the Local Organizing Committee. Both have special knowledge and both have 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 Executive Committee informed of all major decisions and will consult the Executive Committee 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, "Instructions and suggestions to organisers of IAVS excursions," is available and complementary to these instructions for annual symposia.

Where

Any group of members from anywhere in the world can be a candidate group for organizing the Annual Symposium. As the majority of IAVS members are presently from Europe, it is recommended the annual symposium be in Europe roughly every other year. Proposals should be sent in writing to IAVS President or 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, typically at least three years prior to the proposed meeting. The proposal should include a description of the venue, information on facilities, approximate dates (including announcement and deadline dates), and probable excursions (including general routes and dates). Proposers should attend, if at all possible, (1) at least one IAVS annual meeting prior to presenting a proposal, (2) the two annual meetings immediately prior to the meeting they propose to host, (3) Council and 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 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 organizing committee to participate in each of the two meetings immediately preceding the proposed meeting.

The review of proposals to organize the IAVS annual symposium will consider the following criteria: (1) support that will be provided for the organization of the scientific

program, (2) planned excursions including types of habitats to be visited, (3) predicted costs and sponsorships, and registration fees and lodging costs for participants, (4) travel logistics and expenses for participants, and (5) geographic balance between continents and climatic types within the IAVS Symposium sequence.

When

The chosen period for the annual 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), 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-July to mid-August. On average, IAVS plans for one Annual 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).

Announcements and meeting information for participants

A first announcement and invitation to participate should be distributed approximately two years before the date of the Symposium. This information will be posted on the IAVS web site, published in the IAVS *Bulletin* and sent to the membership e-mail list.

At least one year in advance of the symposium, a First Circular should be posted on the IAVS web site and announced to the membership by e-mail, including a reply form for the members to express interest in attending the meeting. The First Circular should include at least the exact symposium dates, location, the main theme of scientific program, the proposed excursion itineraries and their durations, the recommended airport for international visitors, approximate registration fees, and the names of the members of the organizing and the scientific committees.

A Second Circular, including more detailed information on the symposium, information on accommodations, and a call for submission of abstracts of contributions should be posted on the IAVS web site and announced to the members by e-mail at least 8 months prior to the meeting. Subsequent announcements (usually including a Third Circular) will typically be sent only to those who have already registered for the meeting. Deadlines for abstracts, pre-registration, excursion bookings and payments should be decided by the local organizers in consultation with the IAVS Meetings Committee, but should be early enough to ensure efficient functioning and financial planning for the meeting.

A symposium website should be established for participants to learn about the meeting and register to attend, and should be available for public use at the time of publication of the Second Circular (IAVS plans to develop a web site template for meeting organizers, but is not yet able to provide this service). Whenever important

information is added to the web site, a short announcement with a link to the web site should be sent by e-mail to registered participants.

Symposium Structure

The Annual Symposium is typically a one-week meeting (five days), with one day for local excursions in the middle. A scientific organizing committee assisted by an International Advisory Committee (containing representatives from the Executive Committee, Council, and organizers of previous symposia), should be consulted regarding the scientific program, and the program for the excursions. The program should include time during the first half of the meeting (usually in the evening) for meetings of the Council and Editorial Board, and on the fourth or fifth day a meeting of the General Assembly (often as the last event of the Symposium). It is also a tradition that there be a welcoming reception on the first evening and a closing dinner on the fourth (or sometimes last) evening. The symposium scientific program will normally include plenary talks by invited speakers plus sessions for contributed oral and poster presentations. 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 two parallel oral sessions. Poster sessions should not take place simultaneously with oral sessions. Members of the IAVS should be invited (generally about 9 months in advance) to propose organized sessions for contributed papers. 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.

Abstracts of papers and posters to be presented at the meeting must be prior to the start of the meeting. The abstracts should be organized as a publication, preferably with a proper ISBN or ISSN, which after the meeting should be made digitally available on the IAVS web site. Participants must also receive upon arrival the meeting program and a list of participants, including institutional address and e-mail address. The organizers should request and retain digital copies of all PowerPoint presentations and posters for posting on the IAVS website after the meeting.

Symposium finances and liabilities

The IAVS Annual 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 IAVS Executive Committee 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 IAVS Secretary within six months of the completion of the meeting, and in the event that IAVS contributed with a financial advance any positive balance should be equally shared between the local organizing committee and IAVS. As IAVS cannot assume responsible for legal liability regarding the conduct of the annual symposium or associated excursions, the organizers should arrange for liability insurance as appropriate for the venue.

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