IAVS 2022 Council Meeting

Minutes

Date: June 28, 2022, 17:30 – 20:30 CEST

Location: in-person (School of Pharmacy, Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Participants

Members present: Susan Wiser (President), David Zelený (Secretary), Javier Loidi (Vice President), Peter Minchin (Vice President), Alicia Acosta, Helge Bruelheide, Andraž Čarni, Alessandro Chiarucci, Milan Chytrý, Guillaume Decocq, Kazue Fujiwara, Tomáš Herben, Meelis Pärtel, Valério Pillar, Peter Török, Wolfgang Willner, Elgene Box, Alessandra Fidelis, Borja Jiménez-Alfaro, Jan Lepš, Jürgen Dengler (EDGG), Viktoria Wagner = 21 votes

Proxy votes: Martin Diekmann (gave proxy to Susan Wiser), Monika Janišová (gave proxy to Andraž Čarni), Idoia Biurrun (gave proxy to Javier Loidi), Jürgen Dengler (gave proxy to Wolfgang Willner), Riccardo Guarino (gave proxy to David Zelený), Robert Peet (gave proxy to Susan Wiser), Sara Cousins (gave proxy to Alicia Acosta), Anna Kuzemko (gave proxy to Milan Chytrý), Francesco de Bello (gave proxy to Jan Lepš), Florian Jansen (gave proxy to Helge Bruelheide), Laco Mucina (gave proxy to David Zelený), Alireza Naqinezhad (gave proxy to David Zelený), Michael Palmer (gave proxy to Alicia Acosta), John Rodwell (gave proxy to Jürgen Dengler), Emma Shidolo (gave proxy to Susan Wiser), Martin Zobel (gave proxy to Meelis Pärtel), Iva Apostolova (gave proxy to Andraž Čarni) = 17 votes

Absent: Vladimir Onipchenko, Joop Schaminée.

Invited Guests: Marie Mahieux (MCI), Miquel Alvarez (African RS), Gwendolyn Peyre (LACS), Felícia Fisher (YS), Sebastian Schmidtlein (Ecoinformatics), Carol Clark (Wiley), Luyobmir Penev (Pensoft).

1. Announcements of proxy votes (Zelený)

Wiser welcomed all the participants and introduced the outline of the session. Zelený announced the participants present and proxies.

2. Finances
   a. Report for 2021 - (Wiser)

   [Attachment 01 IAVS 2021 Financial statement]

Wiser presented the 2021 finances and highlighted the points which differed from the revised version presented in the last Council Meeting:

- Wiley-Blackwell income slightly higher than expected due to exchange rate.
- Lower membership dues linked to issues with the online membership renewal system.
- Late filing of 2019 tax return (overlooked during transition from FASEB to MCI).
● Lower Honoraria due to fewer claims received.
● Slightly lower bank expenses.
● Substantially higher Dutch taxes than anticipated due to underspending.
● Lower DOIs fees than budgeted.
● Slightly higher business office management fees due to EUR to USD conversation.
● Higher fees for the new website than anticipated due to the higher amount of content to migrate from the old website to the new one. Zelený was able to back up the former website on his university servers for free.
● Awards and grants: less spent than expected due to the travel grants for students, which were retained in the budget just in case, but were not used in 2021.
● The same happened with the Working Groups (WG): some money was kept and available. but there was no opportunity to spend it.
● Publications: the expenditures were slightly higher than expected, due to the annual fee for the VCS journal not included in the budget.
● Miscellaneous: fair amount of legal fees around establishing a virtual office in the USA.
● The subsidy for the Virtual Symposium was about 23,000 EUR less than anticipated.

Questions and comments:

[Wiley] Pillar asked if there is a financial report available from Wiley. Minchin and Wiser confirmed that there is one, which will be shared with the Council (was sent by Minchin Council by email on 6/29)

b. Auditing of financial report for 2020 (Peet, Jansen)

Bob Peet and Florian Jansen audited the 2020 Financial Reports last year and no issues were reported.

c. Update of the budget for 2022 - discussion and approval (Wiser)

[Attachment 02 IAVS 2022 Financial projection]

Wiser stated the proposed changes to the 2022 revised projection:

Expenses:
● Honoraria for the editors were adjusted because Jodi Price did not attend the symposium this year.
● Bank expenses are higher than expected due to very high bank charges for international transfers and high fees related to the payment management system (Bill.com) which is needed for processing the payments out of the US bank account.
● Reduced travel fees of the Administrative Officer since the symposium was held in Europe.
● Higher budget for website due to exchange rates on payments to YourMembership and the domain registration fees not initially budgeted.
● Awards and grants: slightly lower than projected. 14,000€ had been budgeted for Travel grants for students and financially disadvantaged (Working Group Meetings) but the EVS spent considerably less than forecasted (more than half of supported
participants could not attend). The report from the GSC mentioned 7,500€, this was corrected into 4,000€ that were actually spent.

- **Working Groups:** this year the financial support for Working Groups is consistent with the projection. There is a budget of 8,000 EUR remaining to be spent between now and end-2022.
- **Item 13.6, Special support for Ukrainian scientists:** does not pertain to travel grants for Ukrainians but to the special research support voted on by Council when measures to support Ukrainian scientists were discussed. Wiser suggested a 5,000€ amount to support this fund but this proposal is not based on any calculation. Currently, there is no mechanism to run an award process. A sub-Committee should be set up to manage this process. This was discussed later in the meeting (Item 2d, section Support for Ukrainian Scientists). Kuzemko expressed great appreciation for this fund, on behalf of all Ukrainian vegetation scientists.
- **Publications budget** is higher than initially projected because the annual fees for VCS had not been included in the initial projection.
- **Miscellaneous:** Wiser proposed to increase the budget for legal advice because of the issue of cancelling the IAVS registration in the Netherlands.
- **Madrid Symposium –** a subsidy for hosting the meeting in a hybrid format has been added. An estimation of travel expenses for John Hunter (organizer of the 2023 IAVS Symposium in Australia) to attend the symposium in Madrid has also been added to the budget.
- **A loss of approximately 50,000€ is expected at year end.** Compared to the level of profit made by the society in the last 2 years, this loss does not seem unreasonable.

Questions and comments:

**[WG]** If the Chair of a Working Group cannot attend the annual symposium, is it possible for another representative of the steering committee to represent the group and benefit from the travel support?

Wiser clarified that it was possible to support any member of the Steering Committee of a Working Group.

A discussion followed about the issue raised by Dengler about the 500€ allocated to Working Groups which are not reported to the next year and are noncumulative if not spent.

Wiser highlighted the increasing number of new WGs and, therefore, more requests for special grants and funds to be expected. Wiser supported the idea of retaining flexibility on the allocation of the funds to the WGs. Wiser also clarified that the fund allocation is not automatic, and the Council ultimately decides on how these funds are spent. Pillar suggested that it may be fair to save money by WG for the next year, but it should not be automatic, and needs to be justified. Bruelheide agrees with Pillar, we cannot have a separate account from the main account, we cannot accumulate money there since we would have to pay tax for unspent money. Török proposed to increase the automatic WGs allocation to 750€ per working group. Minchin was strongly against automatic payments to WGs since even inactive WG could claim the money from the past years. Pillar suggests this needs to be done case by case, not automatically. Wiser suggests that GB is fully aware which WGs are active, and which are not and is able to flexibly support those active ones. If
the grants should be automatic, then the budget per group would be lower, since the overall budget would have to be spread evenly among all groups (the only fair way). Chytrý said that EVS some years spent the 500 EUR, and some did not so EVS did not apply for that; does not see the need to have savings on the account. Wiser suggested that the general feeling is that the system should stay as it is for now but invited members of the Council interested in changing the way the funds are currently attributed to working groups to make a formal proposal for next year’s Council meeting.

[Publications] Minchin clarified that the plan is to support VCS until mid-2023 by which time the Article Processing Charges (APC) system will be introduced and the journal should break even. In the short term, IAVS pays the APCs for most of the articles. Peter clarified that the agreement with Pensoft is different from the one with Wiley. If we want to get profit from Pensoft, we will need to set the APC much higher than the current value. The current base fee of 1100 EUR allows us to break even; if we want to make a profit, we need to set APC higher than that. Bruelheide mentions that the increased payment from Wiley may be largely because of the difference in exchange rate (GBP became a bit stronger).

Vote to accept the 2022 budget: 26 votes in favor + (the proxies) 12 = 38 votes, approved.

d. Financial projection for 2023 – discussion and approval (Wiser)
[Attachment 03 IAVS 2023 Financial projection]

- Wiley-Blackwell – same amount kept as for this year.
- Membership dues similar to pre-COVID years.
- Honoraria: no change.
- Taxes: no prediction of surplus in 2022, hence no anticipation of tax payment in 2023
  There will be fees for filling.
- DOIs: no change.
- Business office: slightly higher due to inflation.
- Awards and grants:
  - It is expected to have a von Humboldt winner next year and the award will cover the cost of attendance/travel.
  - For the Young Scientist Award, travel grants were kept high as for 2022. A special support fund for Ukrainian vegetation scientists has been added.
- Financial support for WGs: left at the same amount. The value presented is a projection. There are more WGs now than in the past. Regarding the travel support for WG Chairs, the money was allocated to two Chairs. The amount should be increased to 3,000€.
- Publications: continuing the subsidy that was proposed at the Council meeting in 2021 of 12,000 EUR to cover the APCs – with the intention of 2023 being the last year for the APCs subsidy. As it will probably be only half of the year, the amount should be decreased to half (Dengler explains that this is already half sum – the estimated need is 24,000 EUR for the entire year due to the increased number of manuscripts). Also, some authors are paying their APCs because they are supported by their institutions – and this percentage of supported authors is going up. Wiser will double check the sum again (ACTION).
Symposium: refers to the travel expenses for the next organizer if we have an in-person symposium. An amount of 30,000€ was set for a virtual Symposium. Still, an in-person Symposium is expected. This decision was based on the last meeting, where members consider the option of alternating a virtual symposium with an in-person symposium. If we run a virtual Symposium in future, a heavy subsidy will be needed from IAVS.

Questions and comments:

[Support for Ukrainian Scientists]
Wiser asked the Council for suggestions on how to administer the funds. A Committee should be created for coordinating the call for applications and evaluating the proposals submitted. Wiser also highlighted the importance of having Kuzemko, a Ukrainian scientist, on this committee. Lepš suggested to increase the grant to 10,000€ if this should be research money. Török suggested to keep the whole sum and to keep open how to split it into individual sums. Lepš suggested the proposal call needs to clearly state the maximum amount of money to be awarded for individual grants. Wiser suggested to prepare a simple call for proposals – like those already launched by the Young Scientists.

Jiménez-Alfaro commented that the amount was too low and that 10,000€ should only be given to one proposal. Zelený stated that a Scientific Committee, independent from IAVS, who would evaluate and review the proposals, would be needed in the case of large amounts like this. Jiménez-Alfaro suggested that it would be good to have a standard research budget also for non-Ukrainian researchers. Herben suggested to establish a committee to decide the procedure of the whole workflow. Wiser suggested to Kuzemko it would be useful if Kuzemko can give suggestions about how much money should be per one grant. Wiser clarified that any interested member of the Council can make a proposal for the next meeting for a more general IAVS research grant fund for researchers also from other countries with financial obstacles.

Dengler highlighted the EDGG donation system, stating that similar rules could be applied to the special fund for Ukrainian support. Dengler also stressed the difficulties and obstacles that Ukrainian scientists are currently facing.

Vote to accept the 10,000 EUR for support to Ukrainian vegetation scientists in the 2022 financial projection: 26 votes in favor + (the proxies) 12 = 38 votes, approved. (AGENDA ITEM 2. C)

[WG] Dengler suggested to increase the amount to 20,000€ since there are regional sections emerging or recently created. Pillar was asking how the 500 EUR amount is requested by WG; Wiser explained that WG needs to send the GB a letter of request for explaining how they want to spend the money.

Wiser summarized the agreed changes:

- Increasing the funds for WGs to 20,000€
- Increasing the Ukrainian research support to 10,000€
Changing the budget for the Symposium according to the type of format (virtual, presentational, or hybrid)

Vote to approve the 2023 financial projection with the changes: 26 votes in favor + (the proxies) 12 = 38 votes, approved.

e. Appointment of auditors (Wiser)

- Robert Peet and Florian Jansen have expressed their wish of resigning.
- Wiser explained the role of the auditor – namely, to review the financial spreadsheets and ensure all is in order.
- It is preferred to have two Auditors.
- Council members were invited to volunteer for the position.
- Jiménez-Alfaro volunteered to be an auditor together with Florian Jansen.

3. Dissolution of registration in the Netherlands

All information about the matter was shared in the last newsletters ‘News to Council’. To keep the registration of IAVS in the Netherlands, it is compulsory to have a Dutch resident as the contact person with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce. Currently, this role is filled by Nina Schmidt who has become inactive in IAVS and would prefer to step down from this role.

Diekmann contacted our accountant in the Netherlands to discuss the possibility of the dissolution of the association who informed that in case a dissolution is carried out, it is mandatory to distribute all the assets of the association among its members. However, this contradicts the Statutes of the Society stating that the assets of the Society, in the case of a dissolution, would be transferred to a not-for-profit organization with similar purpose (e.g. established by the IAVS). Legal advice is required on the matter.

4. Revisions to Bylaws

a. Proposed Revisions to Bylaws (Wiser)

Some minor revisions were recommended to the Bylaws, namely on the wording to describe the Ethics Committee and Carbon Footprint Committee.

A rewording of the definition of the Global Sponsorship Committee was also proposed.

Comments or suggestions:
Dengler noted some inconsistencies namely on the responsibility of the website – currently assured by the Membership Committee – and the description of the Membership Committee in the bylaws. Dengler suggested that an official Committee should be created for managing the website. This will be updated in bylaws and sent to Council for approval together with other changes in bylaws.

Vote on the revised Bylaws: 26 votes in favor + (the proxies) 12 = 38 votes, approved.
In 2023 an election for Council will take place. Wiser encouraged the members to think about nominations and to consider whether they wish to continue in their positions. Dengler raised another point on the Bylaws. During the last months, two decisions were taken by the Governing Board which, according to the Bylaws and Statutes, should fall under the responsibility of the Council. Dengler argued that the decisions (i. appointment of Chief Editors and ii. Consideration of Council’s votes on the Ukrainian support) should be dissolved or that the responsibilities are modified on the Bylaws and Statutes. Wiser stated that, regarding the Chief Editors, it was an oversight by the Governing Board. The Chief Editors approached the Governing Board asking for approval of the new Chief Editor, and the GB assumed that the correct procedure is that GB approves it. The GB is now aware that the correct procedure is to solicit approval from Council members. To date, no other Council members have requested that the decision regarding the specific Chief Editor appointment should be revisited.
The second point is, according to Wiser, a complex problem. Wiser stated that any potential actions that the Council voted on, should have been screened beforehand by the Ethics Committee – and not afterwards, as was done. Nonetheless, due to the urgency regarding the Ukrainian process, the proposal was sent to the Ethics Committee and Advisory Board post hoc leading to the issue. Wiser also expressed that this was a novel situation for IAVS to act on, emotions were running high, and it is important that those in IAVS governance roles (GB and Council) learn from this situation so we can better respond when confronted with challenging issues in the future.

5. IAVS Business Office
   a. Report from MCI (Mahieux)
      [Attachment 05a Mahieux 2022 IAVS Business Report]
      [Attachment 05b Mahieux 2022 IAVS Membership statistics]

Questions and comments:
Dengler stated that a list of actions listed in the contract with MCI have not been completed to this date. Mahieux described that a set of goals had been set during the last Council meeting, including the enhancement of the website, the development of the different sections for the WGs and regional sections, and the management of the WGs mailing lists. As stated in Mahieux’s report, these goals are still priorities for the upcoming months, and she described that sometimes priorities must shift when unforeseen needs arise. Mahieux highlighted the achievements accomplished since the last Council meeting and invited Council members to read a comprehensive list of these activities.

6. Reports on Publications
   a. Publications officer (Minchin)
      [Attachment 06 Minchin Publications Committee Report 2022]
   b. Publishers reports (Clark, Wiley; Penev, Pensoft)
      [**Confidential** Attachment 07 Clark Publishers Report Wiley 2022]
Clark highlighted a set of points:

- **Regarding ‘Circulation’,** the institutional access total was 7102 for JVS and 7235 for AVS. The increase in the numbers is due to the pandemic and to the sharing of articles on social media.
- **Regarding ‘Submissions’,** in 2021 the number of submissions decreased 24.2% for JVS and 19.1% for AVS. We need to see considerable growth in submissions. This is important to secure financial sustainability. Some growth initiatives are being conducted.
  - The number per region is particularly high from China and then Brazil – more significant in the case of JVS than AVS.
- **The Editorial Board meeting** took place the previous day and there is a willingness to build an Editorial Board that represents the diverse communities. It is equally important to consider gender balance and the range of different subject areas.
- **Clark also noted the increased visibility of JVS and AVS in China.** It is important to engage with local research communities and local reviewers as well. Currently, Wiley’s teams in Shanghai and Beijing are looking for Chinese Editorial Board members who are active on their networks to help expand the visibility of the journals and their quality in this country.
- **Another step being undertaken is seeking special issue topics in emerging areas as articles in special issues tend to be more read and cited than regular articles, improving the quality and quantity of the Journal.**
- **The Publisher’s Report includes data on ‘Transfer and Referrals’,** which help authors find appropriate journals for publication of their research. JVS and AVS receive out-of-scope papers related to ecology and evolution, plant environment interactions. In addition, both journals received papers via the Transfer Desk Assistant. Scientifically sound but out of scope papers rejected from JVS and AVS can be transferred to other, more appropriate, journals.
- **In terms of the ‘scheduling of publications’,** the average number of days between receipt of final manuscript and Early View publication was higher than desired (37 for JVS and 34 for AVS). Wiley will work with IAVS to reduce this time. The current average for Wiley life sciences journals is 30 days.
- **Regarding ‘marketing activities’,** Clark explained that more social media campaigns are being carried out.
- **As policy and funding mandates increasingly favor the Open Access model over subscription models,** Wiley continues to develop Transformational Agreements (TAs). TAs provide researchers unlimited access to the full portfolio of Wiley journals and cover the costs of Article Publication Charges (APCs). As of January 2022, TAs covered the publication of 53,000 articles worldwide, across 1435 institutions.
  - In January 2022, Wiley made a TA in the Middle East with Israel, with MALMAD, the Israeli Inter University center for Digital Information Services,
which covers 24 institutions and with 104 USA institutions covering 25,000 articles.

- There are TAs in Australia and New Zealand with CAUL (Council of Australian University Librarians), with 52 institutions, and with CSIRO.
- An agreement was also signed with the Republic of Korea with the National Research Council of Science & Technology.

Zelený reminded Council that in the JVS and AVS Editorial Board meeting held the day before, it was agreed to inform IAVS members from regions where these transitional agreements are in place that they can publish in Open Access in JVS or AVS. Zelený suggested sending an email targeted to the IAVS members who are in these regions. Wiser suggested having regular updates from Wiley to all members, about which countries are signing TAs and then deciding, as Council and Governing Board, on how to communicate to the members in the most effective way. These updates can be done monthly. Wiser thanked Clark for continuing working with IAVS. The impact factors were posted and JVS has gone up to 3.4 from 2.7 and AVS remained with the same impact factor. A meeting about the contract renewal with Wiley is scheduled for September.

Minchin welcomed Penev (Pensoft).

- The Annual Report will be sent to the Chief Editors.
- The most important landmark of the year was achieved: the acceptance of the journal by Scopus.
- Further good news is the increasing number of submissions. There has also been an attempt to reduce the turnaround time for manuscripts.
- Another important accomplishment highlighted was about Web of Science coverage and impact – the journal was registered in the Web of Science database, but it is not possible to predict the response to this submission (e.g. what will be the IF once the journal obtains it).

Regarding the Publications Committee Report 2021-2022, Minchin mentioned that Orsolya Valkó has joined the Committee, allowing good geographic coverage and better gender balance. Some points were highlighted:

- JVS and AVS continue to be successful.
- There was one change in the Chief Editors – Meelis Pärtel stepped down in February 2022, after serving since 2009, and Viktoria Wagner is replacing him as a new Chief Editor.
- The Editorial Board was renamed to Editorial Review Board.
- Both journals are now only available online, printed issues stopped being produced as of 2021.
- The ‘institutional licenses’ fell by 2%, to 7098 and that is the main reason for the drop in the revenue.
- 1399 institutions have TAs, covering both subscription access and Open Access.
- Both journals increased the number of Open Access articles published (+167% for JVS and +100% for AVS).
- Both journals continue to be international in terms of authorship and readership, as per the Publishers Reports.
- The number of articles downloads increased from the 2020 levels both for JVS (+37.4%) and AVS (+42.2%) – which is greater than the average for Wiley journals in the Ecology subject area (+33.9%).
- According to Clark’s information, the current agreement sets a target for 10% growth in papers published per year – a value that was exceeded in 2021. JVS increased 67% and AVS 86% (probably short-term increase caused by pandemic).
- Nonetheless, the number of submissions declined in 2021: -24.2% for JVS and -19.1% for AVS. And Wiley’s average for journals in the Ecology subject area was down as well by 6%.
- There is a need to work to increase the number of submissions and, therefore, define strategies to achieve this.
- Regarding the ‘production time’, the average time from the receipt of a final manuscript to Early View publication decreased by 37 days for JVS (-30%) and by 34 days for AVS (-21%). The average for Wiley Life Sciences journals is 30 days. In fact, 60% of Wiley journals are down for 23 days or fewer which is the target aimed.
- Most of the income for the society comes from the revenues received from Wiley associated with the journals. IAVS is under a royalty system getting 48% of the gross income. In 2021, total net revenue to IAVS decreased by 3.1% for JVS and increased by 18.7% for AVS. Based on the data and modeling projections, the trends are clear: JVS and AVS subscriptions are steadily decreasing and the income from Open Access APCs is steadily growing for both journals. For AVS in 2021, more income came from Open Access APCs than from subscriptions. In five years, potentially the same will happen with JVS.
- The current contract with Wiley will expire in December 2023. Therefore, we need to decide by December 2022 whether to continue or not with Wiley – and vice-versa. In general, the relationship with Wiley is good – there are just a few matters related to communication that need to be fixed. Nonetheless, it is wise to look for other publishers and share expressions of interest. We also need to seek clarification from Wiley on several topics.
- Regarding the transition to Open Access, the journals will most likely adopt this system. Wiley has already expressed a desire to transition first AVS and then JVS to Open Access in the next contract period. Other publishers might have similar desires. Nonetheless, it is important to engineer a transition that does not disadvantage IAVS members. It is known from the 2020 survey, that many members are concerned about the cost of APCs (https://vegsci blog.org/2020/11/14/survey-shows-little-support-for-avs-going-oa/). There is also the need to ask Wiley explicitly about the
plans for the regional areas that are not covered by Transitional agreements currently, such as South America, Eastern Europe, etc. For such areas, adoption of an Open Access model may require IAVS to provide funding to support authors from these areas, at least in the short term.

- Clarification on issues such as discounts for IAVS members and waivers for low-income countries will be addressed.
- The IAVS Council previously agreed to support VCS financially until mid-2023, by which time it should be listed on the Web of Science and have an Impact Factor. The VCS journal was already accepted for indexing at Scopus. This year, it was aimed to increase the number of articles (the 2021 volume had 25 articles). Some authors are voluntarily paying the APC and the proportion of authors opting to pay the APC is predicted to increase in 2022. The goal is that in 2023 the journal will be self-supporting. In 2023 Council will have to decide what level will be set for the APC.

  a. AVS & JVS Chief Editors (Chytrý)
     [Attachment 08 Chytry AVS JVS Chief Editors Report 2022]
  b. VCS Chief Editors (Dengler)
     [Attachment 09 Dengler VCS Chief Editors Report 2022]
  c. Bulletin (Janišová)

Minchin reported that:

- Janišová continues to do an excellent job and is supported by Kuzemko who assists with the layout and design and Rob Allen who helps with linguistic editing.
- It would be good to receive more pictures and news.
- Janišová announced the desire to step down as Editor – she proposed having a small committee create the Bulletin, rather than the responsibility falling on a single editor. Expressions of interest to participate are welcomed and early career scientists are especially encouraged.

Janišová reported that since the last Council meeting, three issues were prepared. During the pandemic, it was more difficult to publish news in the Bulletin due to lack of news from Society, but this is hopefully changing with getting to post-Covid time.

Acosta asked Chytrý for the reason for the increased IF for JVS. According to Chytrý, the increase also is a result of several highly cited papers on the Web of Science, including one led by Bruehlheide on sPlot. Chytrý added that other papers have a high citation rate as well. An increase in the downloads for AVS and JVS journals at Wiley’s website was verified, showing interest in the content.

Zelený stated that the increase in the JVS impact factor can be used to advertise and to draw more submissions for JVS – and maybe reverse the trend of decreasing submissions. Pillar agreed that should be advertised, especially among members of IAVS. Pillar considered it important to submit the best papers to the association journal – and to stimulate
reviewers to review for IAVS journals because they can benefit society. Wiser commented that an Editorial could be written for a future issue of the Bulletin, highlighting the reasons why publishing in IAVS’s Journals supports the society. To this point, Wiser suggested that Pillar, Chytrý and Zelený write a short Editorial for Bulletin. Zelený mentions that he likes Chytrý’s summary during the Virtual Symposium 2021 about submitting papers to JVS/AVS, made during the General Assembly. Chytrý agrees, younger scientists often do not understand the financial complexities of the publication business and the advantages of supporting society-owned publications. Fidelis mentioned how in 2016 Mike Palmer presented an explanation of the publication process to the Young Scientists (YS) working group; it would be good to present this to YS again, i.e. explain why they should not publish in predatory journals even if they have relatively high IF. Jiménez-Alfaro agrees, he suggests some small workshops or talks about publishing would be well worth to organize. Chytrý agrees that it would be great to gather a couple of Chief Editors and organize an online workshop to explain how publication works. Török said that in Hungary they do not use IF anymore, instead SCIMAGO factor which also includes numbers of citations. Also hopes that now JVS is Q1 journal, since in some countries the quartile is more important than IF (JVS is now Q2 in Ecology field, and Q1 in Forestry).

7. Committee reports
   a. Meetings Committee (Loidi)
      [Attachment 10 Loidi Meetings Committee Report 2022]
      i. Update about 2023 Symposium (Hunter)

Hunter presented the proposal to have the next meeting at Coffs Harbour, Australia:
   ● The symposium will be held 4th to 9th September 2023
   ● The organizing committee is currently looking for a conference facility and transportation options as there is no airport in Coffs Harbour.
   ● Coffs Harbour is a small city surrounded by nature and is a biodiversity hotspot with a broad range of vegetation.
   ● Pre-symposium excursions (namely the Gondwanan World Heritage Tour – from Brisbane to Coffs Harbour) & Post-symposium excursion from Coffs Harbour to Adelaide.
   ● Local Organizing Committee: John Hunter, Nick Reid, Rhiannon Smith, Eda Addicott, Sarah Luxton, and Donna Lewis.

The issue of alternating virtual and physical symposia was raised. Wiser explained two issues arising: i) if a virtual Symposium is held, an Organizing Committee must be created because it cannot be the Governing Board organizing it; ii. whether there is an expressed wish to have a virtual Symposium because Council members prefer this format or because we only have one proposal.
ii. Future symposia

Loidi pointed out that it was not decided yet the format of future meetings (whether we should alternate between virtual and in-person), but states that for the 2024 year there are no proposals. Loidi stressed that the 2024 meeting should occur in Europe and encouraged European colleagues to present proposals. Regarding the 2025 year, Loidi explained that there has been interest expressed by colleagues in Mexico City, but it is still very uncertain.

Loidi also expressed the view of many that hybrid symposiums are costly and not very interactive. A better option would be to either alternate between in person and virtual or to hold virtual conferences when no proposals have been made for an in-person symposium in that year.

Pillar felt we should aim to hold a meeting in South America in the upcoming years. Wiser encouraged members from South America to provide suggestions.

Zelený stated that two years ago Taiwan was proposed. Due to the current pandemic situation, it is not possible to organize any event in Taiwan. Nonetheless, Zelený shared the willingness of restarting the procedures for this meeting when it becomes possible.

b. Membership Committee (Dengler)

[Attachment 11 Dengler Membership Committee Report 2022]
Discussion of the potential change of the discount strategy for IAVS membership and fees - currently we are using the CIA database based on Real GDP per capita (https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/real-gdp-per-capita/country-comparison) - should we update to a new system or is this system satisfactory? (Zelený)

Cf. report

c. Global Sponsorship Committee (Fidelis)

[Attachment 12 Fidelis Global Sponsorship Committee Report 2022]

Cf. report

d. Awards Committee (Diekmann)

[Attachment 13a Diekmann Awards Committee Report 2022]
[Attachment 13b Diekmann IAVS Awards Committee – Tasks and Guidelines]

Cf. report
Wiser shared that Zelený and other people monitored the Facebook page of IAVS. Nonetheless, there is a lack of dedicated monitoring of the Facebook page to ensure the publication of proper content. For the moment, Zelený is the most involved. Wiser encouraged the members to help.

Wagner stated that the Website and Social Media Committee is trying to recruit a member to be responsible for this task, namely among the Young Scientists as they are often on Facebook. Zelený suggested that one of the solutions would be canceling the page – and Wagner counterargued, stating it would be an unpopular measure to take. Wagner stated that looking at the numbers on Twitter versus Facebook, the Facebook crowd is more reactive. Wiser added that there was a positive response to the posts about the conference. Wagner mentioned that an Instagram account has been active since the past month and highlighted the work of the volunteers who are managing this social media account.

Dengler said that a couple of months ago he sent proposals to Wagner and the Committee for the website and asked who is the primary contact person for ideas or comments on the website. Mahieux replied that she is that person. Wiser explained that:

- There will be another round of website revisions in the coming months and a message will be sent to the Council about this.
- If anyone finds a mistake or non-functioning feature of the website, Mahieux is the person to contact.
- If you have ideas regarding content, design, or ideas for improvements), Wagner and the Committee are contacts.

It was discussed that many of the needs stated previously (for example, call for Editors, blog manager, work on the bulletin and social media) can be filled in by the members of the Young Scientists group. All these requests could be put together and make a special communication to Young Scientists. Wiser will raise this issue during the General Assembly.

Zelený described the workshop on the Analysis of Vegetation Ecology Data (AnaVeg2022) (5 weeks, 3 hours every Saturday) with 43 participants, organized together with the Young Scientists. Zelený shared positive feedback about this event and was considering organizing it in a more standard and regular way (spring/autumn). Nonetheless, to put it into practice,
help is required. In the workshop prepared by Zelený, a fee was collected. The fees collected went to pay a portion of the salary of the Teaching Assistant who served as the facilitator with the remainder being added to the IAVS budget for the YS working group.

g. Carbon Footprint Special Committee (Wagner)
[Attachment 16 Wagner et al Carbon Footprint Special Committee Report 2022]
Cf report.

6. Reports of Working groups / Regional sections

Wiser stated that the reports are inspiring as, despite the pandemic, the WGs remained active and made efforts to interact through online conferences, courses, lecture series, and meetings at Symposium. Wiser pointed out:

- The impressive expansion of the European vegetation survey WG.
- The prominence of the Latin America and Caribbean Group in this year’s Symposium.
- The Ecoinformatics group set up a GitHub.
- The expansion of membership of the (new) Africa section.
- The Historical Ecology group prepared a book with a high percentage of authors belonging to the WG.
- The reconfiguration of the Circumboreal Vegetation Map WG.

Wiser believes the WGs will continue to increase in their importance.

a. Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) (Dengler)
[Attachment 17 Dengler EDGG Report 2022]
Cf report.

b. European Vegetation Survey (EVS) (Chytrý)
[Attachment 18 Chytry et al EVS Report 2022]
Cf report.

c. Group for Phytosociological Nomenclature (GPN) (Theurillat)
[Attachment 19 Theurillat GPN Report 2022]
Cf report.

Vote to add Bylaw 6.4 If there are seven or less candidates meeting the requirements after the nomination period according to Bylaw 6.1, they shall be tacitly elected after being presented to the members with their biosketches. In case of less than seven candidates, the nomination period will then be extended for two weeks to fulfill the number of vacancies. If there are more candidates than vacancies, elections shall take place by means of an electronic ballot over a period of two weeks in accordance with Bylaw 6.3. If there would still be vacancies after the extension of the nomination period, complementary
Elections shall take place after a period of six months to fulfill the remaining vacancies. In that case, the nomination period will extend over one month, and the ballot will proceed according to Bylaw 6.3.: 26 votes in favor + (the proxies) 12 = 38 votes, approved.

d. Vegetation Classification Working Group (VCWG) (Franklin)
   [Attachment 20 Franklin VCWG Report 2022]
   Cf report

e. Ecoinformatics (Schmidtlein)
   [Attachment 21 Schmidtlein Ecoinformatics WG Report 2022]
   Cf report

f. North American Section (Minchin)
   [No activity - no report]

g. Young Scientists (Fisher)
   [Attachment 22a Fischer YS Report 2022]
   [Attachment 22b Career-supporting grants for ‘young’ vegetation scientists]
   Cf report

Felícia Fischer presented the proposal. After the workshop provided by Zelený, the WG expressed their wish to provide a small level of financial support for Young Scientists in a grant format (e.g. Career-supporting grants for ‘young’ vegetation scientists). The goal of the grant would be “To enhance professional and academic life” and the main idea is to use this grant for courses, excursions, attending conferences, and other activities. After the selection of the candidates, there would be required feedback on how the grant was used, through a written report, which could potentially be published in the Bulletin. The idea is to evaluate this proposal for one year and potentially increase the funds available for these grants in the future.

Fischer asked for IAVS’s assistance in establishing a committee to analyze the rules and review the applications. Wiser asked for clarification: for the first year, would the group be using the 3.000€ from the WG? Fischer confirmed that this was the intention.

Zelený added that the applicant review process must be simple and transparent to not cause a conflict of interest. Members of the Young Scientists steering committee cannot apply for this grant. Wiser suggested having an initial committee with three members, who can decide the rules and the process. A larger Scientific Committee could then be created to evaluate the grants.
Vote to the trial of the grant for 1 year: 26 votes in favor + (the proxies) 12 = 38 votes, approved.

Wiser asked if it was possible to constitute a 3-person committee. Kuzemko – who accepted - was appointed by Wiser. Wiser volunteered as well and Fischer will be the third member

h. Latin American and Caribbean Section (LACS) (Bottin)
   [Attachment 23 Bottin LACS Report 2022]
   Cf report.

i. Historical Ecology Working Group (Decocq)
   [Attachment 24 Decocq Historical Ecology WG Report 2022]

j. African Section (Guuroh)
   [Attachment 25 Guuroh African Section Report 2022]
   Cf report.

k. Proposal to establish new regional section, Asian section (Dengler, Zelený)
   i. [Attachment 26 Asian Section Bylaws Proposal]
   Cf report.

Zelený explained that approximately 30 people attended the first meeting. Dengler added that there were participants from approximately 12 countries (e.g., China, Singapore, India, Taiwan, Malaysia). Fujiwara requested to repeat the number of participants and from which countries they come and concluded that this group has a good perspective. Dengler and Zelený believe this is a valuable endeavor. However, some changes to the Bylaws will be needed, to ensure there is a geographic balance in the Steering Committee – an aspect that will be worked on in the future by the WG.

Vote for the Asian Section Bylaws Proposal: 21 votes in favor + (the proxies) 17 = 38 votes, approved.

l. Status of Circumboreal Vegetation Map WG (Wiser)
   Not discussed for lack of time.

7. Other business

Organize a special online meeting to discuss the modality of meetings.

a. Discussion on the IAVS Sustainable Event Policy (Wagner)
Wagner suggested holding a special online Council meeting to discuss strategy for future hosting of the IAVS Symposia, to have a more detailed discussion about various aspects and solicit proposals for changes in how the meetings can be hosted. Wagner suggested coming up with ideas and proposing the meeting later in the year.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:48 (we had to leave the building of the university since it was prepared to be locked).