

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HYDROLOGICAL SCIENCES

Final Report of the

IAHS Task Force on Administrative Matters (TFAM)

June 1995

1. Introduction

1.1 The Task Force on Administrative Matters (TFAM) was set up at the IAHS Bureau meeting at Karlsruhe on June 25, 1994. The following terms of reference were suggested by Dr Uri Shamir, IAHS President, and endorsed by the Bureau:

To examine the way in which the Association is managed and administered, and to make recommendations, as appropriate, with respect to the management and administration policy, procedures and structure.

The main issues involved are:

- **The responsibilities, roles and tasks of the President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary General, and how they carry them out.**
- **The role of the Vice Presidents.**
- **The administrative management of the Association, i.e. the Secretary General's activities, and the way in which he conducts his business.**
- **The financial management of the Association.**
- **The operation of the Bureau: frequency of meetings, the agenda, communication between the above three officers and the rest of the Bureau, the level of involvement and influence that the Commissions/Committees have on the way in which the Association is run, etc.**
- **The operation of the Commissions/Committees.**

1.2 The Task Force consisted of: Dr M Kuhn, Dr D E Walling and Dr G J Young (chair). In order to ensure an adequate cross section of opinion, the following individuals were consulted: members of the present IAHS Bureau, Dr U Shamir, Mr H Colenbrander, Dr M Moss, Dr K Higuchi, Dr G Golubev, Dr E Todini, Dr T O'Donnell, Dr I Johnson; Past Presidents of IAHS: Dr V Klemes, Dr M Meier, Dr J Dooge; Past Secretary General of IAHS: Dr J Rodda; All Commission and Committee Presidents and Secretaries. Input was received from many of these individuals and their opinions have been incorporated into this document.

1.3 The Task Force worked mainly by correspondence, supplemented by personal meetings. The terms of reference, above, served as the basis for discussion. In addition a short list of relevant questions and considerations were distributed by the Task Force chair in order to help structure some of the thought processes. Opinions from all those consulted were assembled during April and May 1995 and form the basis for the present document.

1.4 Before presenting the findings of the Task Force it would be helpful to outline some general considerations which greatly influenced the thinking of Task Force members:

- **The scientific objectives of IAHS are paramount; administrative considerations are secondary. Thus it would be most appropriate that the recommendations of the TFAM follow and support the recommendations of the Task Force for Scientific Programs (TFSP).**
- **IAHS must be prepared to adapt its scientific activities to reflect changing realities. Administrative structures should be sufficiently robust and flexible to accommodate changing scientific realities.**
- **Any bureau, whether at the Association or Commission / Committee level is composed of individuals who will have a variety of possible modes of operation depending to a considerable extent on the nature of the personalities involved. The preferred modes of operation of individuals can be diverse and, to accommodate these differences, guidelines rather than rules of operation might be suggested.**
- **IAHS is but one of many bodies concerned with water. IAHS must be prepared to link, as appropriate, with other bodies - within the ICSU structure, NGOs, UN agencies and other international bodies, to effectively conduct its business. The reality of competition with other bodies, in a world where financial resources are hard to come by, must be faced.**

2. The functioning of the IAHS Bureau

2.1 The composition of the Bureau and meetings of the Bureau

There is considerable concern over the size of the bureau. There are inefficiencies and expenses in holding meetings with many participants. The Bureau has grown in size as the number of Commissions and Committees has increased. Several of those consulted expressed a need for an Executive Committee of some sort. However, there were also arguments expressed against having an Executive as this might lead to alienation of those not included.

To address these concerns the following recommendations are made:

- The full Bureau (President, President Elect / Past President, Vice Presidents, Secretary General, Treasurer, Editor of the Journal, Honorary President(s) and Presidents of all Commissions and Committees) meet once every two years, at General Assemblies of the Union and the Association.
- An Executive of the Bureau (President, President Elect / Past President, Vice Presidents, Secretary General, Treasurer and Editor of the Journal) meet in intervening years.
- At Bureau and Executive meetings additional participants and observers (with the exception of individuals invited for a specific reason, eg reporting on the deliberations of a Task Force etc) would not be permitted to attend. Alternates for members unable to attend would be allowed.

Whether an Executive Committee is formed or not, the need for contact, regularly and often, between the President the Secretary General and the Treasurer is recognized.

2.2 The roles and responsibilities of individual members of the Bureau

The roles and responsibilities of the **President** are clear:

- Overall scientific direction;
- Overall responsibility for functioning of bureau, designation of administrative tasks to individuals, having undertaken appropriate consultation with bureau members.

The roles and responsibilities of the **Vice Presidents** are far less clear and this was of concern to several of those consulted.

It is recommended that the responsibilities of Vice Presidents be:

- Aiding the President in giving scientific direction;
- Undertaking specific tasks as agreed upon by the bureau. These might include, for example, responsibility for setting up or organizing a Workshop, a Symposium, a meeting, proceedings of a Symposium, or responsibility for an activity such as defining policy on an issue etc.

The roles and responsibilities of the **Secretary General**. The SG clearly has major responsibilities in facilitating the functioning of the Association and all its Commissions and Committees. The activities of the SG are very numerous including:

- Overseeing the procedures for publications and newsletters;
- Arranging meetings of all types, circulating agendas and minutes in a timely manner;
- Facilitating the many linkages necessary for the functioning of the Association including the very important linkage to National Committees, etc.

It is recommended that:

- Linkages with Commissions and Committees be largely through contact between the SG and the Secretaries of the Commissions and Committees.
- Because of increasing demands on the Secretary General (and, to a lesser extent on the Secretaries of Commissions / Committees) consideration might be given to establishing a permanent IAHS office with an administrative officer who would be charged with the day to day functioning of the Association.

Ways of streamlining administrative functions without compromising the effectiveness of the Association must be considered.

The roles and responsibilities of the **Treasurer** of the Association. The importance of the Treasurer's function is probably not fully appreciated by most IAHS members. IAHS has a relatively large annual budget (primarily because of the costs (and revenues) associated with the Red Books and the Journal). Financial administration is complicated by the fact that many bank accounts have to be maintained in different currencies and for different purposes. Tax laws within the UK and the US must be respected and in this regard the financial affairs within each Commission and Committee are legally part of the financial affairs of the Association as a whole. The Treasurer has overall responsibility for all financial matters.

The **Editor of the Journal** and the **Honorary President** have clearly defined responsibilities.

3. Commissions and Committees of IAHS

3.1 The number of Commissions and Committees: this should be according to scientific need, bearing in mind the costs involved.

3.2 The composition of bureaux: the present situation is probably satisfactory, allowing for slight differences between Commissions and Committees.

3.3 The roles and responsibilities of individual members of bureaux

These would be largely the same at the Commission and Committee level as at the level of the Association mentioned in 2 above except that the Secretaries also have responsibility for the financial affairs of their Commission / Committee. Secretaries, on instruction of their respective Bureaux, have the important and particular responsibility of establishing and maintaining contact with their national representatives.

4. Linkages

4.1 Within and between the Bureaux of the Association and its Commissions and Committees

For communication between the Association and Commissions / Committees it is clear that there should be linkages on the scientific level between Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Association and the Commissions and Committees.

Recommendation:

- The main channels for day to day communication be provided by the SG and Secretaries.

4.2 Between Bureaux and National Committees and Representatives of IAHS and its Commissions and Committees.

This is an area of particular concern. It is clear that many National Committees for IAHS and its Commissions and Committees are inadequate in many ways. Further, the linkage between the Association and its Commissions and Committees and their National counterparts is very weak, as is (in most cases) the linkage between National Committees and scientists within countries.

Recommendations:

- Special attention should be given to upgrading these linkages as it is through them that individual scientists are drawn into IAHS activities.
- Newsletters from Commissions and Committees should be encouraged.

4.3 Between IAHS and other water agencies and organizations:

It is recognized that it is extremely important that IAHS promote linkages within the ICSU structure, particularly with IAMAS and IAPSO and with UN agencies and with other water NGOs. The nature of those linkages should be determined by Bureaux according to scientific need.

5. Modes of linkage

There is general recognition that IAHS could benefit greatly by making more use of modern electronic means of communication. It is entirely possible that meetings could be fewer in number in the future, with concomitant financial savings, if electronic means of communication were more actively pursued.

Recommendations:

- Use of e-mail for linkage between individuals and between groups of individuals should be strongly encouraged.
- Use of the Internet - for example the use of bulletin boards and network services should be actively pursued.
- Use of fax facilities, becoming more accessible and affordable, should also be encouraged.

6. Publications

The importance of publications as an IAHS activity, particularly the Red Book series, the Journal and the Newsletter is recognized. Major recommendations regarding publications are to come from the Publications Task Force and the TFSM, but their importance for IAHS finances and functioning are recognized as of great administrative importance.