

# **International Society of Zoological Sciences**

## **Minutes of the International Society of Zoological Sciences Executive Committee Meeting**

**Held in the Meeting Room A, 5th Floor of the Best Western OL  
Stadium Hotel in Beijing, China**

**1400–1730 on 28 June 2013**

**Attending:** John Buckeridge, Nathalie Fomproix, Yoshitaka Nagahama, Jürgen Heinze, Jean-Marc Jallon, Sarita Maree, Abraham Haim, Zhibin Zhang, Chunxu Han, Wenhua Xiong, Wei Zhang, Terry Boyd-Zhang

**Apologies:** Marvalee Wake, Rosa Polymeni, Nils Chr. Stenseth, Michael Schmitt, Francis Dov Por

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### **Issues for discussion:**

#### **1. Statutes:**

**Article #7.3: Coordination with ICZN** - Dr. Fomproix informed that ICZN (International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature) is likely to restructure or even terminate. This is primarily due to insufficient resources to maintain their General Secretary and Secretariat. Taxonomy, or worldwide systematics, is an extremely important foundation for all biological research, but yet is not always able to attract funding.

Dr. Jallon noted that the ISZS statutes say that the society could work with them; ISZS should approach them about the possibility of working together.

A collaboration between ISZN and OPTIMA (Organization for Phyto-Taxonomic Investigation of the Mediterranean Area) or the International Committee for Bionomenclature within IUBS Bio-code Program was suggested.

It is important to maintain databases and emphasize the need for taxonomy in zoology underpinning sound interpretation of any biological research. Also, databases and taxonomical codes must be regularly updated for the system to work and perhaps ISZS could discuss hosting the code.

It is important to avoid miscommunication and build up trust with them. Other reliable links to Diversitas or IUGG, for example, are also important.

**Action:** Dr. Fomproix will contact David Patterson, a current IUBS EC member and Secretary of the Bio-code Programme, who participated in the 31st GA and Conference in Suzhou in 2012, about how to best interact with ICZN and what strategy to propose for the envisaged collaboration.

**Article #9: The GA Vote** – ISZS must encourage members to vote. If members cannot vote, then the importance of the GA might be diminished. It was agreed that only paid-up members are eligible to vote, and that voting should take place electronically before the GA. This needs a sound preparation (See below)

**Article #10.2: Membership Fees** – Institutional Membership has been set at 500€ per 4 years for, as agreed at the GA. There is a question about whether individuals should pay if their society has paid. Issues raised include:

- Those who live in a country that does not have a national society would be disadvantaged e.g. countries in North Africa (i.e. Ethiopia, Sudan).
- ISZS could help them create national societies. Zoologists in these regions should pay an individual rate until they have a national society.
- After national societies are established, individuals could cease paying membership fees of 40€ per four year period.
- What benefit should an Institutional Member get? Suggestion: A society that has paid fees might get 10 votes.

It appears that the individual is more important for the Society in the long-term than the Institutional Members. If the future of the Society lies with the individual, they can either pay 40€ or enjoy a free membership with no voting rights.

- The possibility of some developing countries (or full-time students) paying 25€ was considered. However, the ISZS must be careful not to create a second-class membership; people feel more responsible as members if they pay a fee.
- Dr. Maree mentioned that ZSSA membership is about US\$32 every two year, and members can see direct benefits. Dr. Heinze pointed out that all Institutional Members should pay the same fee, regardless of their membership base. In which case, members of a small society could pay individual rates instead.

Members get a discount for *Integrative Zoology* (which is ordered from Wiley) but subscription is not included in the membership fee. Members can also request their library to subscribe to INZ. Some countries provide tax breaks for membership fees paid. It was suggested that ISZS members might receive a discount on the ICZ fees, making a paid membership more beneficial.

**Action:** ISZS should focus on individual members, instead of institutional members.  
**Action:** An online vote should be held one month before the GA and only for people who have paid their membership fee.

**Article #13: EC Committee** – The word “elect” is missing in the new version. There needs to be a clear mechanism for the election process which, although mentioned in #12.4, also needs to be noted in #13.

The ISZS needs a process for the **EC elections**. It was proposed that ISZS use the IUBS system as a model, where there is a formal nominations process for EC candidates, including Officers. (Note however that there is a permanent IUBS Secretariat).

Dr. Buckeridge proposed that in light of the location of the Secretariat, and the ongoing support of the Chinese Government, that there should always be a Chinese EC member or Vice-President. He proposed that the AC (as an “impartial body”) undertake the role of Nominations Committee for ISZS. The process would thus be:

- Nominations would be called for prior to the GA;
- Nominations will include a 2-3 page CV of applicants and a statement of what they wish to achieve in their term of office.
- Applications would be reviewed by the Nominations Committee. If the application is incorrect, the submission will be rejected.
- The Nominations Committee will draw up a short list of nominees, ensuring an appropriate geographical and discipline spread. This is forwarded to EC for endorsement and circulation to membership prior to the GA.

Dr. Haim noted the need for an uneven number of people on the EC. Nominations should first be sent to the Secretariat for circulation.

Dr. Buckeridge noted that there is no need to change the statutes. The election process can be put in as a by-law. The election could be done before the GA and announced at the GA. Turnaround time for the election is 3 months.

1. Nominations are called for by AC 3 months prior to the GA.
2. Nominations close 2 months prior to the GA, at which point selected nominees are asked to prepare a CV (no more than 2-3 pages).
3. The nominee’s application form, with a signed statement, are submitted to the EC via the ISZS General-Secretary 1 month prior to the GA.
4. Nominees must be endorsed by an EC/AC member.
5. The EC then has 1 week to prepare and approve the short list.
6. If an election is needed, the General Secretary sends the short list to the paid individual members for an online vote. They must return their vote within 1 week.
7. Results are released and the next Executive Council is introduced at the GA. [Note: it would be prudent to advise successful applicants to ensure they attend the GA].
8. The new EC elects Officers.

**Article #14: Former EC Members** – Change “will become” to “will be invited.”  
Change “advice” to “advises”.

**Article #16: Long-service Award** – A new Long-term Service Award will be instituted at the GA to acknowledge outstanding contributions of EC members to the discipline of zoology and the Society e.g. a gold medal. Dr. Buckeridge noted that the Statutes should not use the word “fellowship” for both categories; there must be a difference between an award for long-term service to ISZS and one for a deserving young scientist.

**Article #17: Treasury and fund resources** – The situation with the ISZS treasury must be very clear in the Statutes and the use of membership fees must be transparent. Dr. Buckeridge noted that the Chinese authorities provide most of the financial support for ISZS. Dr. Zhang stated that as a result, IOZ currently acts as treasurer for ISZS. The Society undergoes regular government audits and ISZS must abide by the rules of government management. Membership fees could be placed in another separate account. The use of membership fees must be transparent. Dr. Jallon suggested that the Statutes should say that the Treasurer is within the “Secretariat”. It was recommended that funds coming from the Chinese side for running the Secretariat and journal will be managed by the Chinese side as required by the China Association of Science and Technology and the law of China, while the membership fee will be managed by the Treasurer in a separate account and their detailed usage will be reported to EC regularly.

**Agreed.**

**2. Appointment of Advisory Committee (AC) members:** The role of the AC is primarily as observers at the EC. They may present ideas requiring a vote but would be asked to leave the room during a contentious vote.

Apart from the role of Nominations Committee for ISZS, AC members will encourage EC members to show commitment and to demonstrate active participation. If an EC member cannot attend a meeting, they should send an e-mail with their ideas prior to the scheduled meeting. If they miss more than two consecutive meetings, without good reason, the EC is expected to ask them to tender their resignation.

It is understood that it may be difficult for people to attend every meeting, so ISZS should consider Skype meetings or telephone conferencing and voting on topics of concerns via email. Members must reply with whether they agree or not. Skype has the benefit of video but it is not the same as sitting around a table and discussing zoological issues. The EC/AC should plan to meet at least twice every four years.

Dr. Jallon nominated Dr. Buckeridge as Chair of the AC. Dr. Buckeridge accepted the nomination.

**Action:** Ask the past EC members and Yan Xie to endorse the recommendations of EC to invite them to become the members of the New AC.

**Action:** Ask New AC members to consider any further nominations for AC Chair. The ISZS Secretariat will arrange an electronic election.

**Agreed.**

**3. Promotion of *Integrative Zoology* (INZ):** Dr. Zhang made a resolution to modify the journal to ensure that it is unique, has a clear focus and sharp profile. Dr. Buckeridge proposed adding palaeobiology to the journal statement regarding disciplines to be included.

INZ must have good reviewers and must increase citations. For example, the editorial office could send out information about papers of interest coming out in INZ to the EC and the Editorial Board, etc. Dr. Heinze reminded the EC that publishing important reviews on current topics is very good for the impact and visibility of a journal. The editorial office should select people to write good review papers, or a Review Paper Selection Committee could be formed to do this. Dr. Haim and Dr. Maree were asked to consider this heading up task and Dr. Maree suggested that Dr. Haim chairs committee and she volunteered to take up the task to assist him.

Dr. Buckeridge noted that the minutes should thank Dr. Carol Bacchus-Wermke for attending meetings at the 5<sup>th</sup> ISIZ and offering her insights into ways to improve INZ and individual citations. The editorial office should also contact Dr. Bacchus-Wermke about tips on how to write good editorials.

**Action:** Dr. Buckeridge, Wei and Dr Terry Boyd-Zhang will draft the “Aims and Scope” phrase for INZ, clarifying the integrative nature of the journal and adding palaeobiology.

**Action:** Terry will thank Dr. Carol Bacchus-Wermke for attending meetings at the 5<sup>th</sup> ISIZ and for offering her insights into ways to improve INZ.

**Action:** Terry will contact Dr. Bacchus-Wermke about tips on how to write good editorials.

**Action:** The editorial office should assist Dr. Haim and Dr. Maree to form a Review Paper Selection Committee and to select people to write good review papers. Invitation list of people and topics should be decided with formal approval from the Editor-in-Chief.

**Action:** Dr. Haim and Dr. Maree are to establish a Review Paper Selection Committee.

**Action:** Wenhua will work to ensure the quality of papers published in INZ is according to the integrative guidelines identified in the “Aims and Scope”, which will make INZ unique in the field of zoological journals.

**Agreed.**

**4. Website:** All ISZS members should be asked to link to the ISZS (and Wiley Online INZ) webpages, since ISZS has a link to their pages. Relevant information, important to members, should be added, such as: postgraduate positions, jobs, conference announcements, workshops, etc. and student research/job opportunities.

Mailing lists are viewed with caution because many members already receive topic-specific lists, meaning that sending bulk emails is not so useful. Dr. Zhang noted that ISZS has 220,000 clicks on the website last year.

**Action:** Wenhua will work with the website designer to improve the ISZS website.

**Action:** Once the website is finalized, Terry will keep it updated.

**Agreed.**

**5. Research Program Development:** Interactions of the BCGC programme with another program, such as the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), Future Earth Programme or Horizon 2020 was discussed. Dr. Fomproix felt that communicating with them might be appropriate for BCGC. Dr. Zhang suggested talking with ICSU China.

Dr. Haim suggested the possibility of starting a new programme, such as Light Pollution was also considered. The possibilities of interaction with the “Urban Health” programme of ICSU will be investigated especially at the conference that will be organized in Paris in September.

**Action:** Dr. Fomproix will investigate the possibilities for a BCGC collaboration with Future Earth.

**Action:** Dr. Zhang will investigate the possibilities for BCGC collaboration with ICSU China (Future Earth).

**Agreed.**

**6. 22<sup>nd</sup> ICZ in Japan:** The registration fee for the 22<sup>nd</sup> ICZ in Japan has not been fixed yet and there were some concerns that the cost should not be prohibitive for student attendance. It was suggested that the fee be set at approximately 400€, invite excellent plenary lectures and design an attractive programme, so that people will be willing to pay. It was suggested that Japanese students could be free, if they present their research. Otherwise, students could pay a minimal fee of about 40€.

The duration of the Congress seems long, with little overlap with the Zoological Society of Japan (ZSJ). Advertising for the Congress should be increased, including throughout Southeast Asia. An ICZ International Committee should be formed to assist with preparations, and should involve people within the EC and outside.

One problem is that some excellent speakers want first-class air tickets, etc. which adds to the cost. It may be best to secure good local speakers. There is also a problem that some people attend parts of the Congress, but not all (using it as a chance to travel rather than to network). This makes catering and other arrangements difficult. This is fine, if they pay the full fee. It may be valuable to add excursions and activities, but even these may or may not be well attended.

The importance of meeting together and learning from others was emphasized, as well as considering hosting the conference slightly outside a major city, in order to create group cohesion and increase discussion among participants.

**Action:** Dr. Nagahama will work to keep ICZ costs, including registration fees and hotel prices, reasonable for participants. He will also investigate opportunities for international and Japanese scientists to undertake collaborative activities. Haim and the Organizing Committee will increase advertising, especially throughout Southeast Asia.

**Action:** Terry will assist with communications, using membership lists provided by Wenhua.

**Action:** ICZ International Committee must be formed to assist with Congress preparations. Dr. Nagahama will accept nominations from the EC, both from within EC and outside.

**Agreed.**

**7. Membership Development:** The relationship between ISZS and national societies is important but should be improved because it is still vague. ISZS should discuss with people from each country who can advise ISZS about their local situation. ISZS can do things through national members, even though Institutional Members cannot vote. The membership development focus for ISZS remains on Individual Members. ISZS should target national societies of zoology with a membership fee of 500€ per 4 years. However as yet, no institutions have paid membership fees to ISZS.

ISZS may reconsider Institutional Membership fees in the future because, for example, ISZS does not pay fees to IUBS. Dr. Fomproix explained that the voting rights of National and Scientific Members within IUBS is limited. Within ISZS, the Institutions could be given the right to nominate people for positions, be the recipient of ISZS communications and to receive access to INZ.

ISZS can assist individuals by providing them with information. This can be accomplished through their national society or by ISZS assisting them to establish such a society (even though their funding may be limited). UNESCO is interested in developing such programmes. Countries that ISZS may wish to establish more contacts with include: western Africa, the Solomon Islands, Port Hornsby and West Africa.

Dr. Wake (via email) and Dr. Heinze reminded ISZS of the possibilities of linkage with international and national societies (such as the Linnaean Society). The importance of student contacts should be used as well.

The Secretariat of Institutional Members (such as RAS and ZSSA) can be targeted, in order to increase individual members. Han stated that the ISZS Secretariat appreciates clear directives from the EC.

**Action:** Dr. Jallon will discuss collaborations in western Africa and give the information to Han (or Wenhua) for follow-up.

**Agreed.**

**8. Membership Fees Collection:** There are needs for a convenient way to pay membership fees. Bank transfer is too expensive, as is paying yearly. It would be better to pay every four years, online, at a meeting (such as the GA) or by credit card. If meeting organizers collect the membership fee, they need to transfer it to the Society's account.

Members who have paid their fees receive a reduction from Wiley for their online INZ subscription.

During the discussion, it was suggested that an EC member be elected as Treasurer. This will ensure confidence in the Society and avoid problems with a non-transparent budget. The expenditure of membership fees must be very clear.

The current 4 employees of the Secretariat are partially supported by IOZ. Han and Wenhua had to work hard to apply for funds from CAS and CAST. CAS and CAST support meetings and training sessions, and the rest of the money goes to support salaries at the Secretariat. Neither CAS nor CAST has regular money available, and we need to re-apply each year. If we fail to get money from CAS or CAST in any particular year, then ISZS will become financially unstable.

**Action:** Dr. Zhang, Han and Wenhua will investigate more convenient ways for members to pay their membership fees, including paying by credit card and every four years.

**Action:** Han needs to gain approval from the Chinese authorities for receiving membership fees and the suggested methods of payment.

**Action:** Han and Wenhua will continue to apply to CAS or CAST for funding, as well as from other sources.

**Agreed.**

**9. Replacement of Secretary-General:** Dr. Zhang proposed Chunxu Han as a replacement for Yan Xie as Secretary-General, as Yan Xie had resigned and Han has been running the Secretariat office since.

There was a move to commend the excellent work of the Secretariat in these minutes. Proposed by Dr. Buckeridge, Dr. Jallon and Dr. Haim, with all in agreement.

**Agreed.**

**10. ISZS (Young) Zoologists Award:** At the last EC meeting, finding ways to encourage "young scientists" (i.e. scientists within 5 years after their graduation) was discussed, for example, giving out awards at the Congress for the best speaker at the meeting and/or the best publication in INZ. ISZS needs to develop its own award for young scientists. This award, as well as the Award for Long-term Service,

should be decided by a committee and presented during the GA at the official Banquet.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> ISIZ, Dr. Buckeridge, Wenhua and Terry chose the 3 top speakers and awards were made in the closing ceremony. However, it will be difficult for a small group to hear all the speakers in Japan. Perhaps all the young speakers could be put on a couple of sessions. An award could also be given for the best poster(s) and the poster session should occur after a plenary session rather than being at night. ISZS wants to encourage poster sessions and not treat them as inferior to the oral presentations. For example, all participants could be given a ballot (or ballots) and vote for the best poster(s) and/or speakers.

Contribution to the journal should also be considered. For example, a young scientist might apply to have their INZ manuscript evaluated or the award would be given for the article with the most citations. The Editorial Office can make this decision, based on citations.

**Action:** The EC will think about a name for the award for the young scientists (speaking and/or writing) and circulate ideas to the other EC members.

**Agreed.**

**11. Discussion: San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment:** The EC was very concerned about current methods for assessing the value of research, for example, basing decisions on Impact Factors alone. The IF is not a measure of the quality of an individual scientist. It seems that science is not a level playing field. As grants come in, there appears to be an obligation to those who gave them.

Dr. Haim noted the problem that, when a dean reports to a nomination committee, the IF represents an “easy” way to evaluate the nominee’s work. However, specialist journals automatically tend to have a higher IF. This is the same as basing a promotion on how many papers the scientist has published. Promotion committees tend not to consider the problems with the IF, when zoological research runs over a longer-time period, or whether quantity of papers published is a reflection of quality.

Promotion committees must be informed that IF is only one mechanism for assessment, it is a tool (and perhaps not even the best one) and it is not the measure of a person. However, if tools, such as IF, which are useful for measuring progress and helpful to writing up reports, are taken out, then there is nothing to replace them. It might be beneficial to include both IF of the journal and number of citations for the articles. Promotion committees do not want to be left with no way of evaluation.

It is important that politicians and universities and other affected parties, be informed of the limitations of the tool and so take appropriate action. So, ISZS can sign the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, saying that IF should not be the only thing considered when a person is being considered for promotion.

But what will happen to the Declaration? Will it have any influence? Dr. Zhang and Dr. Buckeridge put forward the motion to sign the Declaration. Dr. Maree seconded and Dr. Zhang declared it passed.

**Action:** Dr. Buckeridge will send his article entitled "Taking the Shilling" to Han, which Han will circulate to the rest of the EC members.

**Action:** ISZS will sign the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment.

**Agreed.**

**12. Discussion: Ethics Sub-Committee:** The EC discussed the idea of forming an Ethics Sub-committee. Two or three volunteers will form the tentatively-titled "Ethics in Biology Sub-committee" (EBS) to give guidance on ethics in publications and other research topics of interest, such as authorship and research protocols. It is anticipated that the sub-committee will provide young researchers with ethical guidance in their scientific careers.

Dr. Buckeridge offered to Chair the Sub-committee. He has prepared a series of ethical case studies, two of which were presented during the recent INZ-Wiley Seminar at the 5<sup>th</sup> ISIZ. It is expected that the results of these case studies will be published on the ISZS website, in conjunction with IUBS and RMIT.

IUBS and ISZS could co-host the website of BioEthics

**Action:** If you would like to offer your expertise, or have any questions or concerns about the Sub-committee, please contact Han or Terry.

**Agreed.**

The meeting adjourned for dinner at 16:46.