



Newsletter No. 16

August 2016

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1. Changes of the Steering Committee

Following discussions at the Regional Conference in Moscow it was proposed by the chair and a majority of SC members at the time to close the Commission on account of continuously decreasing activity levels, low attendance rates of meetings, difficulties to maintain output of joint publications due increasingly diverging research interest, shrinking core membership due to the retirement of core founding members etc. However, after receiving a very encouraging response from the IGU Executive Committee these plans were abandoned and structural changes effected including the election of a new chair via email voting after the term of prof. Cassardo had expired. Prof. Winde was unanimously elected as chair and his election approved by the IGU Secretary-General, prof. Michael Meadows, in December 2015.

The new chair compiled the quadrennial report for IGU covering the activities of the Commission from 2012 to 2015 (will be put on the website) and coordinated the preparation of Commission sessions for the upcoming 33rd IGC in Beijing in August 2016.

He was actively supported by proffs. Natalia Frolova and Chansheng He, both of which were proposed by the chair to be appointed as Vize Chairs.

At the Business Meeting held on 23.August 2016 at the 33rd IGC in Beijing (China) members followed this proposal and unanimously approved the following new composition of the Steering Committee:

Chair: Frank Winde (South Africa)

Vize Chairs: Natalia Frolova (Russian Federation); Chansheng He (USA)

Secretary: Olga Scarpati (Argentina, Honorary member)

Prof. em. Tony Jones (Wales, UK, Honorary member)

Dr. Ivan Canjevac (Croatia) was confirmed as webmaster of the Commission.

Two more positions at the SC are currently vacant and need to be filled. As SC membership is a distinctive function within the Commission members felt that candidates should regularly attend meetings and have a track record of actively participating in the Commission's activities. Based on this suitable candidates are to be identified and approached by the newly constituted SC. Details pertaining to the structure and composition, voting rights, as well as portfolios of individual SC members are discussed in section 3.

2. Feedback on the 33rd IGC in Beijing (22-26 Aug 2016)

2.1 Business Meeting

Somewhat unusual, this time the business meeting was scheduled to take place before any of the Commission's conference sessions were held. Despite this fact and the rather early timing of the meeting (8:00 at the 2nd day of the conference) the meeting was well attended and even drew a number of non-members who used this opportunity to join our Commission (included in Tab. 1).

Tab. 1: Scientists who joined the Commission since the last meeting in Moscow and are now on the mailing list

Name	Email address	Country	Date joined
Daniel Karthe	daniel.karthe@ufz.de	Germany	20.08.2015
Maria Kireewa	kireeva_mb@mail.ru	Russia	20.08.2015
Martin C. Lukas	martin.lukas@uni-bremen.de	Germany	28.05.2016
Javier Arce	javier.arce@upr.edu	Puerto Rico	23.04.2016
Jianfang Li	jianfangli@hkbu.edu.hk	Hong Kong	23.04.2016
Heejun Chang	changh@pdx.edu	Oregon, USA	23.04.2016
Liliana Zaharia	zaharialli@hotmail.com	Romania	23.04.2016
Pavel Groisman	pasha.groisman@att.net	USA/ Russia	23.04.2016
Lanku Zhang	lhzhang@lzu.edu.cn	China	23.04.2016
Junfeng Xiang	xifpanda@163.com	China	23.04.2016
Kaishan Song	songks@iga.ac.cn	China	23.04.2016
Hong Yang	hongyanghy@gmail.com	China	23.04.2016
Endon Garmae	garend1@yandex.ru	Russia	23.04.2016
Bair Tsydorov	bz61@mail.ru	Russia	23.04.2016
Yongqin David Chen	yvavidchen@cuhk.edu.hk	Honkong	23.04.2016
Junguo Liu	liujg@sustc.edu.cn	China	23.04.2016

Prof. Winde gave a short presentation (attached) outlining the agenda of the meeting which included the approval of the changes to the SC, suggestions on how to improve the output, efficiency, public visibility and attractiveness of the Commission and a proposal for the 2017 Commission meeting. Details on the latter two points are provided below.

2.2 Sessions and presentations

The Commission held a total of 11 x sessions on 4 different thematic areas of which 8 sessions ran parallel to each other making it impossible for members to attend all sessions of the Commission. In most sessions one or more presenters did not arrive resulting in an unusual high percentage of no shows as the following statistics illustrate:

- *Water pollution and health* (4 sessions; 20 papers, 8 no shows of which 4 were from India, 3 from China and 1 from Russia)
- *Water availability between floods and droughts* (4 sessions; 20 papers, 8 no shows)
- *Water resources in Eurasia in the 21st century* (2 sessions; 10 papers, 3 no shows)
- *Water and energy* (1 session, 6x papers, 1 x no show: China)

A possible reason for this increase in the number of absent speakers is perhaps the inclusion of all accepted abstracts in the programme even before registration fees were paid by submitting authors. In future, only abstracts of authors with paid registration fees should be included in the programme to avoid absenteeism. It was noticed that most absentees originate from India followed by China.

2.3 Field trip and travel grant

Following an established tradition of our Commission proffs. Jia and He successfully organised a local field trip on a water-related theme. A group of 18 people visited the Beijing head quarters of the South-North Water Transfer Scheme which is crucial for ensuring future water supply to the capital.

We are glad to report that prof. Liliana. Zaharia from Romania successfully obtained an all-cover grant from IGU to attend the IGC with the active support of proffs. He and Winde.

2.4 Meeting of Chairs with IGU Executive Committee

The ExCo confirmed that all commissions except three have been approved for continuation. It has been reiterated that appointments to the SC are limited to a maximum of 12 years while Chairs should be replaced after 8 years.

Again, geographical representativity of members on the SC was stressed especially encouraging appointment of members from developing countries as well as women and young scientists. In response prof. Winde pointed out that lack of funding makes it difficult for scientists from less developed countries to regularly attend meetings, which is however regarded by many as essential to qualify as SC-member. The problem was acknowledged and support via funding of travel costs by IGU was indicated.

The Past President of IGU, prof. Wladimir Klosov enquired from chairs whether the frequency of IGU Regional Conference should perhaps be raised again from currently biannually to annually. On

behalf of the Commission prof. Winde expressed a clear preference for the 2-year interval as this allows to have smaller Commission meetings between the larger IGU conferences. Organised by local members these Commission meetings are not only more cost-efficient than the larger IGU events (and thus allow more members to participate), but also offer more time for in-depth discussions of papers and projects among the Commission members. Of particular importance are also the local field trips on water-related issues which developed into an attractive feature of these smaller meetings. As this view was supported by several other Chairs the biannual rhythm of IGU Regional Conferences will remain in place.

3 Proposed changes of *modus operandi* of Commission

3.1 Steering Committee: composition and member portfolios

Currently there is no clear IGU guideline on the exact number of SC members of a Commission and how they are to be appointed. In the past appointments to the SC were made by the Chair in consultation with existing SC members. In the past the SC consisted of the Chair, the Vize chair, the Secretary and a non-specified number of other SC members. Since 2012, a dedicated webmaster position also exists which is not an official part of the SC.

With regard to the composition and portfolios of the SC the following is proposed:

- a) Instead of only one, two Vize chairs may be appointed (as approved at the last Business meeting)
- b) The SC is limited to a total of five members ensuring an odd number to avoid voting impasses. New appointments to the SC are decided by majority vote. Geographical, gender and age representativity are to be considered.
- c) Members who served for longer than 8 years on the SC (a total 12 years for SC-members who served as chairs) can be retained as Honorary members in an advisory (non-voting) capacity.
- d) Each of the five executive SC-members (i.e. including the Chair) is the single main responsible person for one of the following five categories of Commission work (with certain overlaps between portfolios being possible): Membership/ recruitment; Meetings, Publications/ other outputs, Collaboration, Website/ public visibility.

Details on what each portfolio comprises and which aspects could be considered in future work to improve the output and attractiveness of the Commission are listed below:

3.2 Membership/ recruitment

Proposed portfolio of: [Prof. Frank Winde](#)

Core tasks

(a) *Monitor membership*

(b) *Attract/ recruit new members*

→ aim at geographical representativity especially of countries with pronounced challenges regarding sustainable water use (e.g. arid and water-stressed countries), and countries of specific relevance to cutting-edge water research (e.g. large-scale water transfer, water-energy issues, pollution and health, water hazards ...)

→ specifically include human geographers, experts from neighbouring disciplines etc.

→ approach young scientists

(c) *Target leading water experts*

→ invite as keynote speakers, co-editors of special commission volumes etc.

→ invite to join Commission

Details and activities

The way in which the IGU task force on hydrological extreme events was originally established was mainly based on its founder, Prof. Jones, approaching several pre-identified specialists working in this field. Once successfully established, the later growth in

membership was however less selective and gradually resulted in a much wider spectrum of research expertise gathered in the Commission. This was eventually reflected in aptly changing its name to Commission for Water Sustainability as a more complex and integrative concept than the original focus on hydrological extreme events. Consequently themes discussed at the Commission became more varied and included water quality aspects (urban, industrial, agricultural and mining pollution, contaminant mobility etc.), health impacts, groundwater issues, sanitation, water-climate interactions, water-energy interdependence, virtual water, water treatment, inter-basin water transfer, water management and many more. Naturally, the mailing list of the Commission grew correspondingly. Yet the number of members sustaining active and regular participation in meetings remained stagnant and even decreased when founding members successively retired. In order to revitalise the membership and activity levels of the Commission a number of possible changes are discussed below.

(i) Consolidate mailing list

In order to gauge how many members of the mailing list are still interested in the work of the Commission and avoid the unnecessary clogging of inboxes an email will be sent out to all listed members requesting an update of provided contact details including changes in professional status and affiliation. Only those members who respond positively within a stipulated reasonable time period will be kept on the mailing list while all non-responsive members will be taken off after a final reminder was sent.

(ii) Define membership

In order to stimulate active participation in Commission activities rather than passive observation we are considering making membership conditional. So far, expression of interest to the chair verbally or via email is sufficient to become a member and be put on the mailings list. However, such approach inevitably results in many listed members being no longer interested in participation as their circumstances may have changed. Furthermore, with membership being cost free it is often perceived as having little, if any, benefits.

We believe by better defining what constitutes membership and which requirements are to be met its perceived value will increase. Possible conditions for membership could include:

- a) the submission of the filled-in research profile template mentioned above and its annual update,
- b) active participation in Commission meetings at least every second year,
- c) conference participation could be achieved either by personally attending the conference or by assisting with preparing the event through helping with the review of submissions, language editing of abstracts, identifying cutting-edge topics of sessions and of experts to be invited as keynote speakers etc.
- d) sharing of open access publications, presentations, reports and data via dedicated pools on the Commission's website as well as
- e) posting notes on water-related research calls and events the member is aware of.

Such activities on the Commissions website could be monitored and membership be officially certified by the SC to requesting members for use in applications, proposals etc.

(iii) Create member research profiles

In addition to contact details and professional status of each member it is also envisaged to add a short research profile for each member using a pre-designed template that will be sent out for completion as part of the consolidation efforts.

The proposed template should be kept as brief as possible (max. one A4 page) and preferably use a bullet point format covering the following areas:

- fields of expertise (max. 5)
- current and previous employers (last 5 institutions)
- 5 key papers/ books
- 5 key research projects

- geographical study areas (provide kml files for display in Google Earth)
- preferred areas of collaboration (to be ticked: joint research projects, pre-peer reviewer, language assistance, research visits, sabbaticals, student exchange, grant applications-/ testimonials, joint student modules, other; for each box own offers can/ should be specified).

Displaying this information for each member on the Commission's website will allow visitors to identify potential collaborators and help creating networks while raising their interest to become a member. Where existing websites list CVs, research interest and other relevant information of members (e.g. ResearchGate, LinkedIn, Facebook etc.) links can be provided.

(iv) Set incentives for active members

Membership will entitle scientists to use specific benefits of the Commission such as support for grant applications for IGU or other official events, access to past presentation of conferences and meetings, shared data etc. Benefits could be provided on the Commission's using an exclusive log-in area for members. Possible are the following privileges:

- a) access to **information** generated by other members (such as ppt-presentations of past Commission meetings, publications, research reports, proposals, raw data from research projects, maps of study areas, etc.)
- b) access to **services** rendered by other members (e.g. pre-peer review of manuscripts intended for submission, writing of testimonials/ letters of support, acting as co-supervisor for M/D students, sharing relevant calls for project proposals, sharing info on upcoming local/ international events, support with visa applications: letters of invitations etc.)
- c) all members are entitled to use the **logo** of the Commission for the time they are active members. On request **certificates of membership** will be issued e.g. to accompany project applications etc. provided the requirements (which are still to be discussed) are met.

3.3 Meetings

Proposed portfolio of: *Prof. Natalia Frolova*

Core tasks

(a) Prepare annual meetings

- propose format, venue and organiser of meeting
- identify themes for sessions, speakers etc.
- approach keynote speakers

(b) Assist local organising committee

- drafting of circulars, programme
- ensure field excursion on locally relevant water themes

(c) Promote attendance

- circulate calls for abstracts to members
- assist with funding applications (identify donors, drafting letters of support ...)
- explore new means of remote participation (skype, shared papers...) who cannot afford regular attendance
- promote attendance of local water experts

(d) Documenting meetings

- compile brief summary report for publication on website (stats on papers/ attendance, major outcomes, highlights)
- collect presentations from meeting for archiving on website
- collect photos of event (incl. field trip)

Details and activities

It is proposed to have at least one Commission meeting per year. In years with larger IGU

conferences (even years) the meetings are part of the IGU programme, if possible with a dedicated water-related field trip added by the local member of the country hosting the IGU event.

In the (odd) years between IGU Regional conferences/ congresses the Commission organises smaller meetings mainly for Commission members and invited guests. These meetings are usually more cost-efficient than larger events and give participants usually more time to interact with each other. They also offer the opportunity for members from developing countries who cannot afford to attend larger events to also personally attend a meeting and invite local colleagues.

Such meetings are of course only possible if members are prepared to dedicate their time and efforts to preparing and hosting such event. It is the core task of the responsible SC member to ensure that the local organisers get all possible support the Commission can provide. If no offers are forthcoming spontaneously at meeting, the SC should approach members from countries of high relevance to water-related issues to consider hosting a meeting. It is often the unique opportunities to gather first hand experiences and meet with local experts that are particularly attractive for members to attend the smaller Commission meetings.

3.4 Publications/ outputs

Proposed portfolio of: *Prof. Chansheng He*

Core tasks

(a) *Strengthening and support individual submission by members*

- pre-peer-review/ sounding board
- language editing assistance/ contacts
- data base on annual publications of each member

(b) *Publications of papers from Commission meetings*

- select suitable papers from meetings and theme for supplement volume
- identify and approach suitable (accredited) journals (compile list of suitable journals)
- consider joint books where possible
- explore synergies with other Commissions

(c) *Assist Chair with report and newsletters*

- contribute to (biannual) newsletters,
- contribute to annual Commission reports to IGU ExCo
- contribute to quadrennial reports to IGU ExCo

(d) *Promote other outputs of Commission* (also discussed at website section)

- offer opportunities to colleagues for research visits, sabbaticals, student exchange etc.
- sharing of international calls for funding
- pooling of scientific data sets uploaded by members
- archiving presentations from meetings

Details and activities

In the past, the compilation of papers presented at commission meetings in dedicated books edited by the Chair and the local organiser have been a significant outcome all participating members benefited from. Recently however, the significance of such publications is much as research managers increasingly shift the focus towards articles in peer-reviewed high-impact journals.

The latter could still be achieved by the Commission in the form of dedicated supplement volumes published by established journals provided the compilation of papers presented at Commission meetings is attractive enough to potential editors. Recent experiences show however, that this is not easily achieved for a number of reasons.

One is the much broadened spectrum of water topics that makes it difficult to subsume all

contributions under an unified theme attractive enough for the more specialised high-impact journals.

Using less specialised geographical journals instead is an option successfully practised in the past. Recently, however, this option faces the challenge that some of these journals are not recognised by national authorities discounting associated papers. An example is South Africa, where only papers published in journals specifically accredited by the Department for Higher Education qualify for governmental subsidy.

Lastly, with English as undisputed language of choice of most international journals the submission of acceptable manuscripts often poses a challenge to non-native speakers which are frequently frustrated by rejections based on language insufficiencies. Sometime not even the use of cost-intensive professional help is sufficient to overcome the problem as scientific understanding and terminology may pose major challenges to non-expert interpreters.

It is therefore proposed that the Commission, where possible, assists Non-English-speaking members, e.g. by establishing contacts to language proofreaders operating at English-speaking universities, providing pre-peer reviews of manuscripts intended for submission especially from younger, less experienced colleagues by senior Commission members etc.

Where such input is provided the Commission should be formally mentioned in the acknowledgement section of the submitted paper.

In summary, instead of aiming for joint publications of papers presented at Commission meetings in books or supplement volumes of journals it is proposed to rather assist individual members with submission of manuscripts in journals of their choice.

3.5 Collaboration

Proposed portfolio of: *to be nominated*, co-responsible *Chair*

Core tasks

Coordinate and support all forms of collaboration including the following:

(a) Collaboration of members within the Commission

- promote joint projects between Commission members
- promote the sharing of funding opportunities/ project calls (see website section)
- encourage and promote sharing of data on the Commission's website
- list opportunities for student exchange, accreditation of joint teaching modules, co-supervision of students
- promote scientific visits, guest professorships, exchange and mobility programmes

(b) Collaboration with other IGU-Commissions, e.g.:

- C12 (Geographical Information Systems),
- C19 (Environment and Health),
- C23 (Karst)
- C26 (Land use and land cover change)
- C 31: Modelling Geographical Systems: fluvial and hydrological processes
- C 41: Geomorphology and Society
- other:....

(c) Collaboration with international (water-related) organisations outside IGU, e.g.:

- compile list of possible partners including (but not limited to) the following:
 - International Council of Science (ICSU)
 - International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IHAS)
 - World Health Organisation (WHO)
 - International Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO
 - UNESCO Water Chairs

- International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD)
- International Mine Water Association (IMWA)
- Flow Regimes from International Experimental and Network Data (FRIEND)
- World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)

Details and activities

Collaboration as category used in reports to IGU ExCo is currently understood a working together with other IGU Commissions which may have overlapping scientific interest. We propose to expand the scope of the term to include bilateral or multilateral activities between individual members of the Commission conducted over and above the normal interactions within the Commission as well as working together with water scientists in other international organisations in the field of water-related sciences.

Intra-Commission collaboration could include a range of different activities listed above including joint research projects (e.g. based on bi-/multilateral agreements between different member countries such as the BRICS group), student related collaboration (student exchange, co-supervision of thesis, acting as reviewer, joint student excursions, initiate mutual accreditation of teaching credits via MoUs etc.) and sharing of digital resources on the website (member owned publications/ research reports, presentations, research data sets, project information, proposal templates etc.).

Regarding collaboration with partners outside the Commission possible activities to initiate collaboration and build closer ties could include invitations to meetings, sharing of resources mentioned above, joint publications on selected topics, organisation of thematic meetings focussing on selected water aspects only etc.

3.6 Website, public visibility

Proposed portfolio of: *Ivan Canjevac*, co-responsible *chair*

Core tasks

- (a) *Administration of website*
- (b) *Regular and frequent updating of information*
- (c) *Monitor use of website (number of site visits, type of activities, downloads, comments etc.)*
- (d) *Continuously improve website (attractiveness for members/ non-members, user friendliness, interactive use etc.)*
- (e) *Explore alternative ways of increasing public visibility of the Commission (e.g. use of digital networks such as facebook, ResearchGate, LinkedIn etc.; use of the Commission's logo etc.)*

Details and activities

Given the relatively low frequency of joint Commission activities (once a year) an attractive and up-to-date website can be an important tool to keep members in touch with each other and possibly attract new members from the pool of its satisfied visitors. Special attention should be paid to be attractive for young scientists for whom an attractive web-presence is an important quality criterion and often the most important gateway to establish contact with the Commission.

Since administering and updating a website in regular short intervals is time- and resource consuming we propose that the limited funding the Commission receives from IGU is used to cover related expenses such as hosting fees and regular professional assistance. The latter is mainly required for adding capabilities to the existing website such as member's log in, managing data pools and archives etc.

Regarding possible modifications of the current website the following aspects are considered:

- define purpose and main target group of website
- conduct SWOT analysis of current website including analysis of visitor numbers

- change to advert-free hosting server and professional website administration
- adopt structure, layout and contents to defined purpose and target groups
- add member profiles (as discussed earlier, use template and link to existing websites)
- create pool of open access publications populated by members for members
- make publications searchable according to topics, authors and publication date
- compile global map depicting study areas of all members (use Google Earth, kml files)
- archive all presentations given at Commission meetings
- install site usage monitoring tools (no. and type of visitors, areas for comments, record data requests and downloads etc.)
- create pool of free-downloadable geo-referenced hydrological data (e.g. water quality data, flow data, sediments analyses etc.)
- archive reports, applications, newsletters, photos etc.
- publish relevant calls for proposals/ abstracts
- add links to websites of other IGU commission and recognised international water research bodies briefly indicating the main resources available at the linked website
- create facebook account for the Commission
- explore crowd collection of selected hydrological data

4 Next Commission meeting (2017)

The business meeting approved that the next meeting of the Commission will be held at the Baikal Hydrological Research Institute (Siberia, Russia). The Director of the Institute, Prof. Dr. Yendon Garmaev who joined the Commission in Beijing gratefully offered to host the meeting at a dedicated field research station of his institute located at the banks of the river Selenga downstream the city of Ulan-Ude. As preliminary date August 2017 was set. Prof. Garmaev will be actively supported by prof. Frolova and her team from the Lomonossov University, Moscow.

Meanwhile the chair sent a letter of support, co-signed by the IGU Secretary-General, to Prof. Garmaev indicating the endorsement of the meeting by IGU (attached). Furthermore, first suggestions regarding the structure and title of the meeting as well as the number and composition of participants have been provided to the organisers to allow for preparations to commence. In total a maximum of ca. 40 participants from the Commission and invited organisations are envisaged. Apart from sessions on issues affecting global water sustainability a field trip to Lake Baikal guided by local scientists is also planned. Circulars with more details will be send out in due time to members and put on the website of the Commission.

5 Requested feedback on proposed changes

In order to consider all possible aspects of the proposed changes and improve decision making all members are herewith kindly requested to please provide feedback on the proposed modifications outlined in this newsletter via email as soon as possible but not later than **30 September 2016**.

I thank you all in advance for taking the time to respond and thereby help to make the Commission a viable and exciting platform for scientific exchange.

Looking forward to seeing many of you in Siberia in 2017, I remain

Yours sincerely,



Frank Winde