

***International Geographical Union***  
**Minutes of the IGU Executive Committee Meeting**

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup>, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
University of the Balearic Islands, Mallorca, Spain

**1. Welcome and apologies**

The Executive Committee (EC) meeting was chaired by IGU President Nathalie Lemarchand (NL) who welcomed Ruben Lois-González (RL-G), as First Vice-President, Past-President Michael Meadows (MM), Secretary-General Barbaros Gönençgil, (BG), Vice-Presidents Maria Paradiso (MP), Marek Wieckowski (MW), Bernardo Mançano Fernandes (BMF) and Assistant Secretary-General Pankaj Kumar (PK). Vice-President and Treasurer Holly Barcus (HB), and Vice-Presidents Phil McManus (PM) attended online for sessions where possible. Vice-Presidents Fu Bojie (FB) and Anindita Datta (AD) sent apologies. The meeting commenced at 15h00 local time. NL thanked everyone for their attendance and especially RL-G for local arrangements with colleagues at the University of the Balearic Islands.

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**3. Minutes of recent IGU EC meetings**

Previously circulated minutes of the EC meetings held association with the Dublin International Geographical Congress on were tabled and, following minor amendments, approved for translation into French. Both versions are to be posted on the IGU website Action: NL, PK. The minutes of the Dublin General Assembly were tabled and approved and can now be shared with the IGU National Committees, although formal approval will only take place at the next General Assembly. Action: BG.

**4. Organization**

**4.01 IGU Finances**

**4.01a IGU Treasurer**

PM agreed to take over the position as IGU Treasurer from the beginning of 2025, pending resolution of some administrative issues. Macalester College has very kindly agreed to continue to operate the account on behalf of IGU, although this is not a permanent solution and in future a more sustainable system is needed.

**4.01b Financial report and budget**

HB presented her latest financial report. She noted that the Statutes indicate five main areas of priority that should align in general with expenditure. Income is derived entirely from membership. Discussion ensued as to the proportion of IGU revenue that is expended on Executive Committee (EC) meetings. In most instances, the bulk, or even all, of the local accommodation and subsistence costs are met by local hosts of EC meetings. RL-G noted the importance of in-person meetings, supported by MM, who commented that, consistently over multiple years, EC costs incurred in face-to-face meetings have been modest proportional to total IGU expenditure. NL noted highlighted the need to ensure that EC costs be kept to a minimum to ensure financial sustainability and that online meetings do play a very useful role, especially when dealing with a limited number of particular agenda items. RL-G suggested that the current system of biannual meetings seems to work well but that this may warrant reconsideration in the future depending on how the balance between income and expenditure evolves. BG highlighted the possibility of raising additional income through increasing national membership, or through garnering more income from our Congresses, Regional Conferences and Thematic Conferences as is the practice in some other unions. There was further discussion regarding the status of the IGU Promotion & Solidarity Fund, currently held in a bank account in Japan under the curatorship of former IGU President Himiyama and the need to consider consolidating this with other IGU bank accounts. Following discussion, it was agreed that the income from the Dublin Congress in compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding should be deposited into the IGU operating account at Macalester on this occasion. NL raised the idea of appointing a 'task officer' to assist with particular IGU issues, in this case related to the Treasury. It

was agreed that this, and other strategic financial issues should be taken up by the EC Finance sub-committee. HB tabled a new document for EC members to use in claiming travel expenses. Action: HB to convene online meeting of Finance sub-committee.

#### **4.02 Annual fees**

HB reported that, with only a few exceptions, national committee dues have been received for 2024 and that revenue for this year will be substantially as anticipated, with income of approximately US\$125,000. Action: HB to send further reminders to those National Committee with 2024 fees still outstanding.

#### **4.03 EC meeting schedule**

Communication with the local organizing committee (LOC) of the IGU Thematic Conference in Cairo indicates that they can host the EC in the days immediately prior to the start of the conference. The following schedule therefore applies: arrivals 9th April 2025, EC meeting 10th and 11th April, conference opening ceremony 12th April, departures 15th April at the conclusion of the closing ceremony. MW indicated the possibility of an EC meeting be held in Lublin, Poland, around 10th to 14th September 2025 in association with the national conference of Polish geographers. Dates still need to be finalized. Action: MW agreed to prepare a draft programme in consultation with Polish colleagues and share this as soon as available. PK reported that interest has been expressed by the Muslim University of Aligarh, India, to host an EC meeting in the first part of 2026. It was agreed to consider this further at the next EC meeting.

### **5. Operations**

#### **5.01 Allocation of the EC's responsibility for liaison with the IGU commissions and member countries**

BG tabled spreadsheets indicating liaison responsibilities for Commissions and members countries for the period 2024 to 2026. The list was updated to take into consideration the new EC members. Appendices I and II. The lists will need to be shared with the IGU Commission and National Committee chairs. Action: BG.

#### **5.02 Suspended IGU Commissions and proposals for name change**

##### **5.02a IGU Commission on Islands**

Under the leadership of a new chair, Professor Anika Cuka, and steering committee, this Commission has been revived. The key role played by MP was noted with appreciation and the Commission was approved for continuation.

##### **5.02b IGU Commission on Geomorphology and Society**, jointly with the International Geomorphological Association.

Professor Yashuhiro Suzuki has led an initiative to revive the IGU Commission on Geomorphology and Society, (jointly with the International Geomorphological Association, IAG) with a revised steering committee. The Commission was approved for continuation. Action: MM to ensure that the IAG has contact details.

##### **5.02c IGU Commission on Environmental Evolution**

Attempts to contact the chair of this Commission have not been successful. As the EC liaison, MW was requested to investigate the possibility of reviving this Commission within the year. Action: MW.

##### **5.02d Commission name change: Geography of Information, Innovation and Technology**

A proposal has been received to change the name to the IGU Commission on Geography of Digital Society and Connected World.

##### **5.02e Commission name change: Geography of Future Earth: Coupled Human Earth Systems for Sustainability**

A proposal has been received to change the name to IGU Commission on Geography and Sustainability (IGU-GeoSus). This was approved. General discussion followed. MP provided a brief update regarding the new chair and steering committee of the IGU Commission on the Mediterranean Basin. NL noted that some Commissions choose to include 'honorary' members in their steering committees, although this is not formalized in the Statutes. It was decided to revisit the matter of honorary membership of IGU Commission steering committees

once the 2024 Commission annual reports for 2024 have been received. Action: BG to request IGU Commission chairs to submit their annual reports by end-January 2025.

### **5.03 IGU Commission activity reports and IGU Commission Excellence Award 2024**

#### **5.03a Draft Template for evaluation of IGU Commission annual reports**

BG tabled the draft template designed to assist in the evaluation of IGU Commission annual reports.

#### **5.03b Establishment of the 2024 Evaluation Committee**

NL has to step aside as chair of this sub-committee and it was agreed that RL-G should take over this responsibility, supported by other EC members: MP, MW, HB and MM.

### **5.04 IGU Ethics guidelines**

The latest iteration now has a summary (compiled via AI) and remains 'open' for further changes. This version was approved for publication on the IGU website provided that it is accessible via a separate tab. Action: PK. It was agreed to initiate a subcommittee to advise on Ethics and related issues of academic freedom as they arise. Membership of the subcommittee will be finalized at the next EC meeting.

### **5.05 IGU Website, social media, e-Newsletter and email distribution lists**

PK is now responsible for all these items. The IGU website has been updated, although of course this remains an ongoing task. The link to subscribe to the IGU e-Newsletter needs to be updated. Under the coordination of PK, there is a new social media team operating in Delhi. NL suggested that IGU consider closing the IGU account with 'X' and using Blue Sky as an alternative; this was supported. There are some problems related to permissions regarding both the LinkedIn and Instagram accounts that need to be resolved. Action: PK, MM. The latest e-Newsletter has been circulated in a new format and the EC congratulated PK for his excellent design and editorial work on this. However, purchase of specialised software to produce this is needed, although the cost is modest and this was approved. It was also agreed to remunerate PK's two social media assistants at an appropriate rate. PK tabled a detailed report on the measures needed to ensure the revival of the IGU community distribution email list. Together with a team of graduate students, a list of more than 12000 email addresses has been compiled. Several options were presented regarding the selection of a bulk email service. It was agreed to confirm the 'Panache' option at the threshold of 500,000 emails annually and the cost of this was approved. Action: PK.

### **5.06 IGU Bulletin**

PK reported that editing of Volumes 71 and 72, covering the years 2021 and 2022, is now nearly complete, following which it will be sent for professional desktop editing.

### **5.07 IGU Journals Project**

FB tabled a report on the IGU Journals project. A great deal of work has gone into updating and extending the current list with a new categorization thanks to FB's colleague, Professor Yanxu Liu, and Professor Andrew Bodman. Once complete, the existence of the project should be widely publicized via the usual communication channels.

#### **5.07a Commercial publishing in science**

MP reported on the decision by two major publishing houses to sign partnerships with technology companies that allows them access to academic content and other data in order to train artificial-intelligence models. She noted the wider implications of such a situation and the disquiet among the academic community in general regarding this development. The matter relates to the broader issue of open science and the increasing power of particular commercial publishing houses and is on the agenda at the NL's proposed IGU strategy for the current EC mandate. Action NL. RL-G proposed that the next EC meeting should revisit existing IGU arrangements with both Springer and Edward Elgar. He also highlighted other possible roles that IGU could play in relation to academic publishing, for example, by helping to improve access to geographical publications for communities otherwise marginalized. Action: RL-G, BG to ensure the item is on the agenda for the next EC meeting.

### **5.08 IGU Handbook**

BG has been editing the handbook. He proposed that a small sub-committee work on the latest draft and that a new iteration be tabled at next EC meeting in Cairo. Action: BG, MW, AD, BMF.

### **5.09 IGU Strategy**

NL has compiled a draft document and a summary diagram indicates the key structural elements of this refer to IGU operations 'inside' and 'outside' the organization (Appendix III). To improve communication, NL suggests two online meetings annually with chairs of the National Committees and one online meeting with IGU Commission chairs and also proposes to distribute an online survey to help guide the EC as to the needs of the IGU community. Action: NL. The new strategy was adopted and now needs to replace the previous one on the website. Action: PK. RL-G emphasized the importance of extending national membership, especially in Africa and Latin America, but also with Asia, in particular Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines that have large geographical communities.

### **5.10 Central office for IGU**

NL introduced the idea of establishing a fixed IGU headquarters and raised the possibility of utilizing the Société de Géographie offices as a postal address. RL-G highlighted the considerable advantages that such a situation might bring. Establishment of IGU as a legal entity would be required if this was to lead to hosting the IGU bank account in France. Further research is needed on various aspects of this possibility and further updates will be available at the next meeting. Action: NL.

### **5.11 Membership application from Uzbekistan**

BG reported that an application for IGU full membership from Uzbekistan has been received. The EC approved the application and that this can now be put to the General Assembly via e-ballot. BG will ascertain the proposed category of membership from the national committee. Action: BG.

## **6. IGU Conferences and Congresses**

### **6.01 International Geographical Congress, Dublin 2024**

BG noted that a final report has been submitted by the chair of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). The EC noted with appreciation the level of detail. It was agreed that this report should be posted on the IGU website. Action: PK.

### **6.02 IGU Thematic Conference, 2025, Cairo, Egypt, 12th to 15th April 2025**

There has been ongoing communication with the Cairo LOC including a recent online meeting. Some concern was expressed about the limited number of abstracts received to date and it was agreed that the LOC should extend both abstract submission and registration dates. The LOC has agreed to advertise the meeting more keenly in an attempt to improve visibility and IGU will assist in this effort. These various concerns are to be conveyed to the LOC. NL has proposed a roundtable involving African colleagues and this too requires follow up. For publicity there is a need for a one-page flyer which, if made available timeously, can be distributed at the upcoming 'GORILLA' conference in Uganda. Action: NL, RL-G, MM, BG.

### **6.03 IGU Thematic Conference Colombia 2025**

There has been no further information forthcoming from the LOC, but RL-G agreed to make contact again and indicate what the LOC needs to do in terms of deadlines etc. Action: RL-G.

### **6.04 IGU Regional Conference 2026 Istanbul, Turkey, 17th to 21st August 2026**

BG provided an update on this conference, indicating suggested timelines. The conference theme is: "Exploring the Earth, Connecting Worlds". The first circular is printed, and the website has been constructed: <https://www.irc2026.org/> Deadlines for registration and abstract submission have been confirmed. A link to the conference website is to be posted as a banner on the IGU website to replace the one linked to the Dublin Congress. Action: PK.

### **6.05 International Geographical Congress, Melbourne 9th to 14th July 2028**

PM submitted a brief update on the Melbourne IGC. Contractual negotiations are still underway with a conference organizing company and the Congress website should go live soon. Members of the LOC are intending to promote the event at the 2025 AAG meeting in Detroit.

### **6.06 IGC 2032 and IGU Regional Conference 2030**

The call for proposals will be re-issued in December. Action: BG.

## **7. Cooperation and Outreach**

### **7.01 The Earth-Humanity Coalition (EHC)**

This initiative arises from the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDSSD). Three working groups have been active and there is now a website (<https://earth-humanity.org/>). The immediate intention is to highlight cases of good practice that illustrate the links between science and sustainability. There is a special session of EHC at the ISC the General Assembly in Oman devoted to this. The EHC General Assembly is scheduled online for 13th December 2024. MM, MP and NL will attend.

### **7.02 Report on Gender Equality and Women Representation in Science Organizations (SCGES)**

NL reported that the SCGES survey has been completed with the help of ISC and the report finalized and available online (there is a link in the latest IGU e-newsletter). The webinar on Women in Geography: Paths and Perspectives from around the World was successfully held on 2nd October 2024.

### **7.03 Festival International Geographie (FIG)**

The scientific head of the next FIG, 2nd to 5th October 2025 is Professor Amaël Cattaruzza. The theme is 'Power' and the invited country is Indonesia.

### **7.04 International Science Council**

MM reported that he will be chairing two break-out sessions at the ISC General Assembly in Oman, January 25<sup>th</sup> to 31st 2025. NL, MP and former IGU President Yukio Himiyama will also be in attendance ensuring a strong IGU presence. There was discussion as to which candidates will be supported by IGU in the election. BG is the voting delegate and voting must be completed by 1st December 2024. Action: BG. MM added that the next online meeting of the IGU GeoUnions is scheduled for 4th December and offers an opportunity to prepare for the ISC General Assembly.

### **7.05 International Science Council (ISC) Unions and Associations**

PM reported that he, along with other EC members, had been attending several online 'roundtable' meetings of the ISC Unions and Associations. A spreadsheet is currently being circulated to gather information as to how ISC member organizations deal with issues relating to registration and accounts. The results of the survey will be presented discussed at the forthcoming ISC General Assembly.

### **7.06 ISC GeoUnions IDSSD Distinguished Lecture Series**

The second in the re-launched series of lectures was presented on 12th November 2024 by Professor Yongguang Zhu. The event had not been as well attended as previous versions, and it was agreed that more publicity should be provided in future. The next lecture is scheduled for February 2025, with details of presenter still to be confirmed.

### **7.07 RGS-OU-IGU Voices from the Global South**

New resources have recently been added to the existing series of films. The Royal Geographical Society has agreed to host another event at their headquarters in 2025, with the biodiversity crisis as theme, again highlighting the perspective of the Global South. The detailed format has not yet been finalized.

### **7.08 Stein Rokkan Prize**

IGU had submitted a nomination for this prize but unfortunately it was not successful.

### **7.09 Geodiversity Day**

MM reported that former IGU President Yukio Himiyama had hosted an online event in association with the UNESCO Geodiversity Day, with participation from, among others MP and MM. There is a proposal to compile an edited book in the IGU Springer series related to this topic.

### **7.10 Other events**

PK reported that he had recently attended a UN-GGIM event in China, followed by the third international workshop of the IGU Modelling Geographical Systems Commission.

## **8. Other business**

There was no other business

## **9. Adjourn**

NL thanked all for their attendance and positive contributions. The meeting adjourned at 18h00 on 23rd August 2024.