

Bylaws of the Vegetation Classification Working Group of the International Association for Vegetation Science

[Approved by the eight founding members of the Working Group via e-mail on 10 August 2015]

Article 1. Name and status

The name of this organization shall be “Vegetation Classification Working Group”. It shall be a Working Group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS).

As a Working Group of IAVS, the Vegetation Classification Working Group shares the IAVS goals and supports its activities. The Vegetation Classification Working Group is subject to the Statutes and Bylaws of the IAVS.

Article 2. Objectives and means

The objectives of the Vegetation Classification Working Group include:

- (a) facilitating communication among plant community ecologists who develop and apply vegetation typologies for any organisational level (e.g. synusiae, communities, community complexes, formations, biomes, ...) at any level of typological resolution and for any spatial and ecological extents;
- (b) comparing and finding commonalities between approaches to vegetation classification;
- (c) discussing concepts and practices of classification approaches that summarize vegetation globally, at coarse typological resolution (e.g. formations, biomes);
- (d) discussing concepts and practices of classification approaches that summarize vegetation patterns at fine typological resolution (e.g. associations) with the aim of developing consensus standards;
- (e) discussing plot-based analytical procedures for the definition of vegetation types;
- (f) supporting national/regional vegetation classification projects, with the aims (1) to develop tools for efficient and scientifically sound nature conservation and land stewardship and (2) to deepen our knowledge of vegetation and ecosystems; and
- (g) supporting vegetation classification projects aiming at (1) the integration of classification systems already existing in different countries/regions and/or (2) the development of new classification systems with a spatial extent encompassing multiple countries or continents.

These objectives can be achieved *inter alia* by:

- (a) organising scientific workshops;
- (b) providing and maintaining the IAVS Vegetation Classification Methods Website;
- (c) providing a mailing list for exchange among the Working Group members;
- (d) providing a Working Group webpage; and
- (e) creating conceptual and methodological papers authored by multiple members of the Working Group.

Article 3. Membership

Membership in the Vegetation Classification Working Group is open to any person, and membership in the IAVS is optional. Membership in the Vegetation Classification Working Group is obtained by:

- (a) written application to the Vegetation Classification Working Group Secretary; or
- (b) specification when joining or renewing membership in IAVS.

Membership is discontinued by submission of a written statement (electronic or hardcopy) to the Working Group Secretary that the member no longer wishes to be member of the Working Group.

Members are responsible for providing the Secretary with a functioning e-mail address. Membership is discontinued when no functioning e-mail address is available to either the Working Group Secretary or the IAVS Secretary.

Article 4. Business meeting

A business meeting shall be held annually in conjunction with the annual IAVS Symposium. All members attending may vote in the business meeting. A member may assign a proxy vote for the business meeting to another member by notifying the holder of the proxy and the Working Group Secretary. Any one participant may carry up to three proxy votes.

Article 5. Steering Committee

The Working Group shall have a Steering Committee (SC) with five members elected for three years. All SC members shall be members of IAVS. Elections shall take place at least two months prior to the business meeting at which the regular three-year term of the SC is ending, or following a vacancy. At least two weeks prior to the start of an election, the election shall be announced to the members via e-mail by the Secretary or the Chair, who then shall receive nominations made by any member via e-mail or in person. Nominees need to agree to stand for the election and provide a short biosketch, which will be made available to the Working Group members prior to the elections. The SC needs to ensure that there are at least five candidates from at least three continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, South America). Elections shall take place by means of an electronic ballot over a period of two weeks. In case of a tie for the fifth position, all candidates with the same number of votes are elected. If the elected candidates are residents of fewer than three continents, those candidate(s) from other continents with the next highest number of votes are appointed to the SC until the requirement of three continents is met. Each SC member shall be elected for a period of three years, with the possibility of re-election, except in the case of a vacancy in which case the election shall be for the duration of the term. The SC shall elect a Chair and a Secretary from its members for a period of three years. All decisions on behalf of the Working Group except those explicitly assigned otherwise are made by the SC by majority vote.

Article 6. Duties of the Steering Committee members

- (a) The SC members promote the interests of the Working Group, and supervise Working Group operations and scientific activities.
- (b) The SC may call upon members of the Working Group or appoint committees to assist with the Working Group affairs.
- (c) The Chair presides at the SC meetings as well as the Working Group business meetings held during the annual IAVS Symposia and supplies the annual report to IAVS.
- (d) The Secretary keeps records of the Working Group and its members and conducts elections and ballots.

Article 7. Finances

The financial assets of the Vegetation Classification Working Group shall be held by and managed through the accounts of IAVS.

Article 8. Reports and records

The SC shall provide an annual written report of activities and plans to Working Group members and the IAVS Governing Board prior to the annual symposium of the IAVS.

The SC shall maintain minutes of SC and Working Group meetings and records of actions without meetings. Such minutes and records shall be sent to Working Group members in a timely manner, using any usual means of written communication.

Article 9. Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the members participating in an electronic ballot extending over a period of two weeks. Such an electronic ballot can be required by a majority vote of either the SC members or the participants at the annual business meeting, or by at least 10% of all Working Group members. Changes in the Bylaws are contingent on approval by the IAVS Council.