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English only

**Sixteenth Session of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel**

**on Harmful Algal Blooms**

Rome, 27-29 March 2023

Item 4.5 of the Provisional Agenda

**HARMFUL ALGAE NEWS EDITOR’S TASKS**

**For discussion and decision at IPHAB-XVI**

**Description of tasks and identification of problems and their solutions**

***1.1 Compilation***

* Receptor of articles/announcements/meeting reports that should be acknowledged as soon as they arrive to his/her email and:
* Have a quick glance to decide if it is suitable for HAN and acceptable as it is or needs: improved quality of images, reduced number of figures, call author’s attention to HAN format requirements, major editing needs, etc
* Be alert to HAB events around the world that, with collaboration of a member of the Regional Editorial Board (REB) and/or his contacts, could become an interesting news item for the next issue
* Contact relevant experts in their field and invite them to prepare feature articles
* Contact Chairs of GlobalHAB, IPHAB, WGHABD, Task Team, IOC Regional Groups, ISSHA President for contributions
* Coordinate reporting on ICHA Conferences (Highlights) and other biannual activities occurring during the International Conferences

PROBLEMS & ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN OR SUGGESTED (*IN BLUE ITALICS*) TO OVERCOME THEM:

1. Declining interest of the HAB community (with a few exceptions) to send contributions to HAN, in parallel with (but not as bad as) the declining number of submissions for conference proceedings. This is partly explained because researchers and students are more and more under pressure to publish in high impact factor SCI journals. ***In order that all contributors and the whole HAB community can cite HAN articles (increased visibility for authors and HAB programme) a few years ago we started to assign a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) to each issue. Now after completing tables of content for all issues, since its first one in 1992, each article can be cited in a similar way to a conference proceeding contribution. In addition, all HAN issues have been compiled in a searchable PDF to consult keywords, authors etc. Compilation of Table of Contents coming soon.***
2. In the days of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others, traditional bulletins do not attract young people as they used to, in particular if they have to wait too long to publish “news” that no longer deserve that name by the time they come out. ***One possible improvement would be to include a junior co-editor who, like a breath of fresh air, could represent the demands of the younger e-generation*.  *We could also explore with the IOC headquarters the possibility of having articles on line as soon as they are accepted (as in scientific journal editorials). Thus, HA News would be available in quasi real-time.***
3. HAN was often the first medium to communicate interesting new findings on toxins, species or outbreaks (or the authors reported it soon after a journal publication). This is no longer the case. Nowadays we get lots of short notes about regional meetings; reports of discolorations that need contact with the authors to make sure they explain the harmful effect. Other contributions are obtained after invitation/request from the editors but sometimes not even a courtesy reply is received**. (*See next item suggestions). We need some innovations to attract readers/contributors. Some years ago, we introduced the “feature articles” on hot topics written by relevant HAB experts. Lots of effort is devoted to the special issues dedicated to ICHA Conferences (Highlights). These are much appreciated and also displayed on the ISSHA website. Another possibility would be to have a section dedicated to the heritage of the HAB community, entitled “50 years ago….” and include historic presentations, debates, or speeches from the past.***
4. With a few exceptions, members of the Regional Board are very enthusiastic when they are first included, but they stop after one or two contributions. They often forget that in addition to writing about their own work, they need to promote contributions from regional colleagues. ***A new Board is suggested that would include the Chairs of all IOC HAB programme activities (Task Teams, Regional Working Groups) under the umbrella of IPHAB in addition to Chairs of WGs of other related agencies and ISSHA President* *(See Annex 1).* They *would be committed to report progress of activities within their groups without the need to be invited or reminded.***

***1.2 Edition***

* Critique (when needed) and scientific editing
* Request external reviewers help if needed
* First round of manuscript editing
* Last step: editing of English Grammar by native English-speaking co-editor

PROBLEMS & ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN OR SUGGESTED TO OVERCOME THEM:

1. Traditionally, help has been offered to authors (in particular Latin-American countries) if they had language problems. Some particular contributions may require a considerable amount of time (if the editors consider the information worthwhile) to help editing texts that are lengthy and disorganized, and often without details on methods. Eventually, contributions of very poor content or which simply repeat events already reported are rejected. ***This assistance should continue if the editor is willing to help. It has allowed the HAB community to see information (otherwise hidden in grey literature) on species/events from authors not used to dealing with English language editors/journals***
2. Images are often of poor quality, or small font size in the captions that will be unreadable when fitting them in 1 to 3 columns of A4 paper.
3. Many authors, including members of the Board, do not seem to have ever read carefully the HAN format instructions. Tidying up format details, or persuading the authors to do so, can be very time consuming**. (*See suggestions below to facilitate format editing and layout*)**

***1.3 Lay out***

* Plan the table of content, organize the compiled material by topics and provide the compositor a numbered list of files.
* Checking the mounted draft, annotating redistribution of figures, struggling to fill the empty spaces.
* Usually after version A to E, the final draft is ready and the proofs checked by the co-editor, HAB programme coordinator……and hope that not too many corrections are needed (all corrections are made by the compositor and new versions are provided)
* Prepare the table of abbreviated titles for the front page and the full table of contents to be sent for assigning a DOI

PROBLEMS & ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN OR SUGGESTED TO OVERCOME THEM

1. Input rate of contributions is very irregular, sometimes triggered by the deadline appearing on the back cover of the previous issue, or just when it is decided to close an issue (they are all usually accepted to avoid a long wait before the next issue)
2. This is the crucial step to produce new HAN issues, with 4 different persons involved, that sometimes is considerably delayed. Attempts to have firm deadlines for acceptance and publications have failed. ***Having a template for HAN contributions such as those used nowadays by some journals and by the ISSHA society for their conference proceedings would make the authors compliance with the format more feasible, the layout procedure and final proof checking MUCH easier and less time-consuming.***

