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English only

**Seventeenth Session of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms**

Paris, 18–20 March 2025

Item 4.4.8 of the Provisional Agenda

**REPORT OF THE IPHAB TASK TEAM ON HAB COMMUNICATION**

During the XVI Session of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms/IPHAB-XVI (Rome, 27–29 March 2023)

**Decision IPHAB-XVI.9 (pp. 22–23),** with reference to the HAB Programme Plan, objective 6.1.1 ([IOC/IPHAB-IX.3](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000187040.locale=fr), Annex VII), established a

**Task Team on HAB Communication** with the following terms of reference (i–ix), alongside the corresponding intersessional activity carried out from April 2023 to March 2025:

1. Act as the editorial board for HAN.

The full list of members of the new Task Team, composed by IPHAB representatives in addition to the former Regional Board, now appears on the back cover of each issue of Harmful Algal News.

1. Be alert to HAB events around the world that could serve as news items for HAN.
2. Contact relevant experts in their fields and invite them to prepare feature articles.
3. Solicit FAO and IOC secretariats for programme news for each issue.

Activities related to these three ToR have been routinely implemented before each issue.

1. Regional editors are expected to actively follow up on HAB events, such as those appearing in the media, within their respective regions and identify appropriate experts to write articles for HAN—or alternatively, write themthemselves based on compiled information and references.

This task needs to be reactivated to address the weak participation of many new Editorial Board members. Two online meetings (in October and January) were held, inviting all Editorial Board members to share their interests and provide new ideas.

So far, the Task Team on Taxonomy has contributed an engaging feature article (HAN 77, December 2024), and a contribution from the TT on Ciguatera is in preparation for HAN 79. Communication with the GlobalHAB Scientific Steering Committee has been re-established, thanks for the support of the ICES-IOC WGHABD Chair, after a gap caused by leadership changes. A new dissemination pathway was established with IOCARIBE through the IOCARIBE-ANCA Chair. Key support has come from several highly cooperative members of the former Regional Board, particularly from Italy, New Zealand, the USA, Colombia and Chile.

1. Coordinate reporting on ICHA Conferences (Highlights) and other biannual activities occurring during the International Conferences.

The **Highlights of the 20th ICHA** Conference (Hiroshima, October 2023) were written by two experts appointed by the Executive Council of the International Society for the Study of Harmful Algae (ISSHA). The edited Highlights, published in **HAN 75** (April 2024), are available on the IOC and ISSHA websites. ISSHA President and HAN Board member D. Van der Waal is well aware of the submission deadlines for future HAN issues and is committed to ensuring that conference highlights remain attractive, especially for HAN readers unable to attend in person. Consequently, the Highlights of the 21st ICHA (Punta Arenas, October 2025) should appear in the last HAN issue of 2025 (**HAN 82**) or the first issue of 2026 (**HAN 83)**.

HAN Editors are in contact with the local organizers (Chair: L. Guzmán) and have expressed their support for any requests regarding the publication of ICHA proceedings (2-page contributions) in HAN.

1. Identify new ways (e.g., communities, list servers, social media) to announce and disseminate HAN at global, regional, and national level and provide such information to the IOC and FAO secretariats.

Every new HAN issue is announced through the ISSHA membership list, IPHAB delegates, and other lists by the HAB Programme Coordinator (H. Enevoldsen). Subscribers receive a direct link to each new issue via email through the UNESCO Ocean Expert Portal.

A mailing list, established in mid-2024, is now routinely used as the primary communication tool with the Editorial Board to schedule online meetings and remind members of submission deadlines.

**There should be closer links between IOC, IAEA, and FAO pages dedicated to HAB issues, projects, and activities. Their representatives are encouraged to submit HAB-related news items to Harmful Algae News.**

1. Advise the IOC and FAO secretariats on the scientific contents of their websites.

To date, activities related to this task have been limited to supporting the IOC Associate Programme Specialist (Sun Yun) in updating HAN-related information and improving its visibility on the IOC website.

1. As HAN Editors-in-chief, the Task Team Co-chairs will:
2. Receive articles, announcements, and meeting reports, acknowledging receipt upon submission.Determine whether submissions are suitable for HAN , assess their quality, and guide authors on HAN formatting requirements (e.g., improving image quality or reducing the number of figures).
3. Prepare the table of contents, organize material by topic, and provide the layout service provider with a numbered list of files.
4. Review the draft layout, annotating figure placements to fill empty spaces.
5. Proofread the final draft and prepare the table of abbreviated titles for the front page and the full table of contents for DOI assignment.

All the above activities were carried out as expected. New issues 72–73–74 (2023), 75–76–77 (2004), 78 (2025) have been produced. New improvements include:

* Individual DOI assignments for HAN contribution, including new events or HAB-related reviews.
* A fixed annual calendar with submission deadlines for four HAN issues per year.
* Enhanced author and reader support via the IOC website, including an expanded Guide for Authors, clearer contribution guidelines and searchable PDFs of past issues and tables of contents..
* Improved communication with Editorial Board members through online meetings and better issue announcements via the Ocean Expert portal.

**“Decides** that the Task Team will comprise B. Reguera (Spain) co-Chair, E. Bresnan (UK), co-Chair, the Chair of the GlobalHAB Scientific Steering Committee, the chairs of each IPHAB Task Team, Chairs of the IOC Regional HAB groups (IOCARIBE/ANCA, FANSA, HANA, IOC/WESTPAC-HAB, ICES-IOC WGHABD, and ICES-IOC-IMO WGBOSV, a representative of the ISSHA Council, and the IOC and FAO secretariat. The Task Team may be expanded as required to fulfill the terms of reference;”

There have been new additions to the above list: IPHAB Chair (Philipp Hess) and Vice-Chair (Maggie Broadwater), PICES (Mark Wells) and IAEA (Carlos Alonso) representatives, and **Kenneth Mertens** (France), who is the **new Co-Editor-in-Chief of Harmful Algae News** since July 2024.

**Pending activities during the upcoming IPHAB session**

* Modify the Task Team member list: Beatriz Reguera (Spain) and Kenneth Mertens (France) to become Co-Chairs of the Task Team. A new member of the Regional Board must be nominated to replace Pat Tester (USA)
* Task Team and Regional Working Group Chairs must commit to providing HAN editors with tentative dates for their upcoming contributions to the newsletter in the forthcoming months/year.
* Strengthen collaboration with IAEA and FAO to ensure their HAB-related cooperation projects and training activities are disseminated via HAN.