

THIRD ISC GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
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# Note on ISC regional structures

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*For discussion*



**International  
Science Council**

وزارة التعليم العالي  
و البحث العلمي والابتكار  
Ministry of Higher Education  
Research & Innovation



# Note on ISC regional structures

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## Introduction

The ISC regional presence is motivated by an aspiration to deepen the Council's engagement with its Members and with individual scientists across the world.

The Council currently has two established regional focal points, has reached an advanced level of scoping for a third regional focal point, and has received expressions of interest from other regions.

## Established Regional Focal Points

### Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean

The focal point is hosted by the [Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales](#) and launched in 2021. A one-year extension, until the end of 2025, was approved by the ISC Governing Board subsequent to a report from the RFP to the Governing Board in May 2024.

The ISC makes an annual contribution of 75k EUR to the operation of the focal point.

After the passing of Prof. Enrique Forero, Chair of the RFP LAC Liaison Committee since its establishment, Prof. Helena Groot took up the role of Director of the RFP. She is supported by an eleven-member Liaison Committee. The activities are managed by a single science officer, with the support of the Academy.

The RFP has a clearly articulated vision and mission, with regional scientific priorities that align with the ISC Action Plan 2022–2024.

Highlights include supporting the delivery of a successful Global Knowledge Dialogue in Latin America and the Caribbean in April 2024, the establishment of young academies in the region, interfacing with the ISC and the local science community through calls for experts, mobilizing the community to respond to regional inputs in the science and science-to-policy for spaces, and representing the ISC at a host of regional forums and scientific events.

Challenges include limited human and financial resources given the RFP's ambitions, as well as navigating a period of uncertainty after the sad passing of Prof. Forero.

### Regional Focal Point for Asia and the Pacific

The focal point is hosted by the [Australian Academy of Science](#) and was launched in 2023. It is supported by the Department of Industry, Science and Technology through a grant totalling 10 million Australian dollars over 5 years. The ISC makes an annual contribution of 75k EUR to the operation of the focal point.

The secretariat comprises a director and four staff members and operates under the advice and guidance of a nine-member Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is co-chaired by a delegate from the Executive Committee of the Australian Academy of Science (AAS) and a delegate from the Board of the ISC.

Since its establishment, the RFP Asia Pacific has developed a strategic plan, co-hosted (with Malaysia) the Global Knowledge Dialogue in Asia and the Pacific in 2023, worked to establish the Pacific Academy of Sciences as part of their Oceania flagship programme, and launched a flagship programme that aligns with the concept of the ISC Science Missions for Sustainability.

Challenges lie in defining the notion of a regional focal point for members, and how this overlaps with ISC membership in general.

## **Scoping for a regional focal point in Africa**

Starting in late 2022, the Council partnered with Future Africa, a pan-African organization based in South Africa, to explore possibilities and make recommendations to the Council about a regional presence in Africa. The scoping exercise has included a comprehensive stakeholder mapping of the science ecosystem in Africa, open consultations through both survey instruments and workshops, and targeted interviews of key experts and leaders on the continent. Preliminary results from the survey conducted in 2024 are already available and a final report will be delivered by the end of 2024.

## **Other regions**

The Council is in discussions with Oman on a possible ISC presence in the Middle East and North Africa region.

## **Conclusion and discussion**

The regional focal points offer an alternate and complementary means of engaging with Members and have boosted the footprint of the ISC over the three-year period.

In the future, the regional focal points may lead science or science-to-policy projects across the entire membership, effectively strengthening the reach and capacity of the ISC as a whole.

Seed funding for any new regional focal points will need to be raised externally.

## **References (all available as 2025 General Assembly documents)**

- ISC Activity and Achievement Report 2021–2024
- Report of the RFP Asia Pacific to the ISC GB, October 2024
- Report of the RFP-LAC to the ISC GB, April 2024, with Three-year highlights added in October 2024
- Report of the Africa scoping exercise to the ISC GB, February 2024, with Preliminary results from the Future Africa survey of ISC Members, October 2024