

Interim 2025

Event report

28th February - 2nd March

Online

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Background

The Interim Meeting is an annual (usually hybrid) event where IFSA Officials convene to evaluate their performance during the first half of the term and discuss issues and solutions to enhance the association's operations. This year, the meeting was held online from the 28th of February to the 2nd of March 2025 due to complications in the organization of a hybrid event.



Throughout the meeting, sessions were conducted on essential topics aimed at developing the officials' capacities and understanding of IFSA's operational processes. Despite the virtual format, participants engaged in interactive activities designed to foster networking and camaraderie among officials.

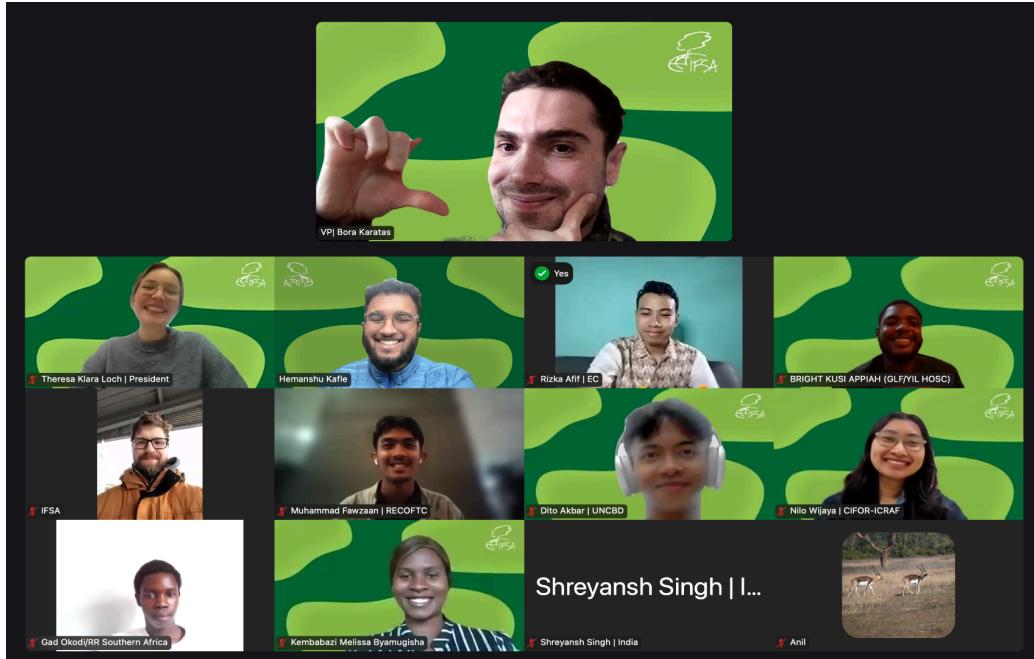
Main Outcomes

Getting to know IFSA

IFSA Strategy

The meeting began with a workshop on the IFSA Strategy 2022–2026, a four-year plan detailing the association's goals and the necessary actions to achieve them. This strategy serves as the cornerstone of our work and advocacy efforts, with regular monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of its indicators providing officials with insights into the effectiveness of

our initiatives and identifying areas for improvement.



However, officials have encountered challenges in fully comprehending the strategy and its application to their initiatives. To address this, it was agreed that frequent meetings should be organized to educate officials about this framework and to regularly monitor the indicators. Additionally, there is an urgent need to enhance the current M&E procedures to ensure consistent annual assessments. At this year's General Assembly meeting, the Board will conduct a session to re-evaluate the IFSA Strategy and improve the framework's relevance.

IFSA-SAN

The IFSA Supporter and Alumni Network (IFSA-SAN) shared an insightful overview of its mission and ongoing contributions during the session. Rooted in a strong commitment to IFSA's growth, IFSA-SAN plays a vital role in offering strategic feedback, administrative guidance, and occasional financial support. The presentation emphasized the importance of early collaboration—particularly highlighting a 3–4 week lead time for reviewing IFSA documents, such as funding proposals or external department outputs. Additionally, IFSA-SAN expressed its enthusiasm for deeper engagement, outlining plans to strengthen alumni involvement, improve internal coordination, and support IFSA-led initiatives more effectively. The collaboration between IFSA and IFSA-SAN continues to be a key driver and especially helpful for guiding IFSA in critical questions.

Code of Conduct

During the Interim Meeting, we underscored the importance of IFSA's Code of Conduct (CoC) in fostering an inclusive and respectful environment. In alignment with the IFSA Strategy 2022-2026, we resolved to actively promote the CoC and raise awareness among all members ahead of the upcoming General Assembly (GA). This initiative aims to ensure that the principles of openness, fairness, and cultural understanding are deeply embedded within our community.

Furthermore, we agreed to facilitate the selection of the CoC Committee during the GA. This independent committee will be responsible for upholding the CoC's guidelines, handling reported cases with confidentiality, and maintaining a discrimination-free space within IFSA. By establishing this committee, we endorse our commitment to professionalism and the well-being of our members.

Moving forward, we will implement a comprehensive communication plan to highlight the significance of the CoC and encourage active participation in the selection process of the CoC Committee. This approach reflects our dedication to creating a safe and empowering environment for all members of the IFSA community.

IFSS 2025

The Organizing Committee (OC) for IFSS 2025 in Indonesia, which includes four Local Committees—IPB, UGM, UNHAS, and ULM—provided updates on their progress and preparations at the Interim Meeting in Yogyakarta. The symposium will be held in three main locations: Bogor (16–20 August), Yogyakarta (21–25 August), and South Sulawesi (26–29 August). The OC discussed budget needs, registration status, and partnership initiatives, revealing that €9,060 was raised during Phase 1 registration, although initial participation was low due to expensive travel costs. With a budget goal of €45,500, the OC has contacted over 80 potential partners, securing agreements with four so far.

Officials and the OC held constructive talks about logistical planning, focusing on transport routes, visa assistance for international delegates, and eco-friendly travel choices. The OC also pointed out internal coordination issues, which were tackled during an in-person Interim workshop aimed at aligning team efforts. A feedback session enabled officials to propose enhancements for the efficiency of the registration system and communication with participants. The Board reiterated its support, urging consistent updates and collaboration, especially concerning funding opportunities and partnership with the Carbon & Sustainability Commission.

Developing capacities

Internal Guidelines

The idea of creating Internal Guidelines was introduced to help IFSA collect and structure its positions on key recurring topics. Instead of re-discussing the same questions every term, the aim is to have one shared document that captures common understandings and long-term decisions. This should make it easier for future Boards and officials to build on what's already been discussed and avoid losing knowledge during changeovers.

The idea was very well received at the Interim, and several valuable discussions took place around both the content and the purpose of such guidelines. They are not meant to replace existing documents like the Rules of Procedure, but to support them—offering a space where more flexible or detailed positions can be documented. The guidelines are also meant to reflect and strengthen IFSA's core values, such as sustainability, openness, and accessibility, and help ensure that these values are carried forward by future Boards.

Some of the topics already included in the current draft are:

- What It Means to Be Non-Political – helping to define how IFSA stays non-political while still being engaged.
- Sustainable Traveling – encouraging more climate-conscious choices for official travel.
- Recommendations & References – outlining how and when IFSA officials can give endorsements or support letters.

There was also input on other topics that could be added in the future, such as Internships, Funding Principles, and the Use of AI. These are all areas where shared guidance can help IFSA stay aligned across terms.

The Internal Guidelines will remain a living document—future Boards are encouraged to continue expanding it as new needs or questions arise. The current Board will keep working on this project and aims to publish the first version before the end of the term.

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Finances

The term 24/25 started with a budget of **50,004.91€** and until the date of the Interim **7,975.19€** were spent which resulted in a total of **42,029.72€**. The final number is an estimate because during the time of the report the bank fee was not deducted yet and estimated by the treasurer.

Budget Overview

The Interim Budget report was oriented on the budget set by the previous treasurer. Please note that some amounts were assigned to different budget categories shortly after the Interim (the amount spent did not change).

Expenses:

1) General Administration

The Budget General Administration started with a budget of 2000€ and until the date of the Interim an estimate of 50.38€ was deducted covering the monthly bank fee. As mentioned above, this number is an estimate because the last bank fee was not deducted yet and the amount can vary slightly per month.

2) Subscriptions and Website

A total of 660.22€ was spent on Subscriptions and Websites. The total Budget was 2600€ which leaves 1939.78€ for the rest of the term. Because a better deal was made for the Hootsuite subscription, there is the possibility to allocate this to additional subscription if needed.

3) Meetings

- a) Interim: There was a Budget of 4000€ allocated for this Interim. This money wasn't spent due to the Interim being held online. The Board will decide whether to allocate the money differently this term or save it for next term's Interim.
- b) IFSS: The IFSS OC25 requested 2000€ out of the possible 3000€ loan for the IFSS. As stated in a contract, the loan is there to help the OC with early expenses during the planning but has to be paid back in full before the IFSS.
- c) Regional Meetings: Each seven IFSA regions had a Budget of 1000€ allocated to support the organisation of the yearly regional meeting. During the time of the IFSS none of the amount was spent yet. Additionally, the money for SARM 23/24 was requested, which amounted to 1531€ including the transfer fee.
- d) Board & Department Meetings: A Budget of 2000€ was allocated to support Board members or RRs for travelling to meetings. During the time of the Interim none of this Budget was spent.

4) Funds

a) Development Fund

A total of 7500€ was allocated to the Development Fund this term. Another 2500€ were allocated to funding agreements which were signed last term. During the time of the Interim, 882.85€ were spent. None of the agreed amount of the previous term was requested.

b) Officials and Delegation Fund

Another 4000€ were allocated to a fund for officials and delegations attending conferences in the name of IFSA. During the time of the Interim, 300€ were spent.

5) Projects

a) TreE Learning

200€ were allocated to support the ongoing TreE Learning platform. None of that money was spent during Interim.

b) Gender Projects

2500€ were allocated to projects related to Gender by the Forstfrauenkonferenz 2021. None of that money was requested until the time of the Interim.

6) Partners

a) IUFRO

There is a yearly Budget of 2500€ for supporting an IFSA member during their Internship at IUFRO. This money was already requested by the time of the Interim. With transfer fees that was 2503.99€. That leaves 651.01€ for the yearly membership fee which hasn't been requested yet during the time of the Interim.

b) FAO

A Budget of 1762.44€ was allocated specifically for supporting travel and subsistence costs from IFSA members attending FAO events. During the time of Interim, 608.55€ of that Budget was spent.

Income

During the time of the Interim an income of 561.80€ was generated, mainly through membership Fees for the term 23/24.

Starting balance	(August 2024)	Current balance	(02/25/2025)
bank account	€47,973.58	bank account	€40,474.35
paypal account	€2,031.33	paypal account	€ 1 555.37
total	€ 50 004.91	total	€42,029.72

Interdepartmental Collaborations

IFSA Dialogues

IFSA Dialogue's main objective is to facilitate a meaningful exchange between scientists, policymakers, and forestry practitioners. By fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing, each dialogue aims to:

#1 IFSA Dialogue (in commemoration of the International Day of Forest 2025)

It provides a platform for students and professionals in identifying barriers and best practices for integrating forest education and scientific research into policymaking processes. It seeks to address the **barriers hindering the effective use of scientific knowledge and develop recommendations for strengthening science-policy interfaces in the forestry sector** by creating connections between education, research, and policy. Proposed speakers: IUFRO, FAO, EFI, and Forest Europe

#2 IFSA Dialogue (in commemoration of the World Environment Day 2025)

It explores how local wisdom can be meaningfully integrated into policy and practice, creating enabling conditions for bottom-up innovation in forest governance. In particular,

the dialogue seeks to highlight and learn from best practices of forest management rooted in local traditions and knowledge systems. By doing so, it aims to **identify opportunities for the Global South to chart a more equitable and climate-resilient future—one in which forest-dependent communities are not only seen as beneficiaries but also as leaders in global climate actions.** Proposed speakers: RECOFTC, TFD, and CIFOR-ICRAF

IFSA Working Group

Aim

Establishment of an IFSA WG to support the IFSA, especially within ED in the creation of advocacy materials (including one-pagers and/or policy briefs), as well as in the strategic planning and engagement assistance with the key priorities and major agenda items of IFSA's partner organisations.

Format

Non-IFSA wheel structure, consisting of **Steering Committee and WG member**

Two WGs: Advocacy WG, Event Partner Support WG

Target

- Steering Committee for Advocacy WG:
 - IFSA President
 - IFSA External Councilor and their commissioner, if any
 - IFSA Membership Councilor and their commissioner, if any
 - IFSA Head of Capacity Development Commission
- Steering Committee for Event Partner Support WG:
 - IFSA President
 - IFSA External Councilor and their commissioner, if any
 - IFSA Membership Councilor and their commissioner, if any
 - IFSA Head of International Policy Commission
 - IFSA Head of Partners Commission
- For the **pilot phase during the IFSA term 2024/2025**, WG members will be limited to IFSA members by internal selection and open call.
- Each WG shall be composed of 5 to 10 members.

Duration

- The mandate shall be for a period of two years, with the possibility of extension. It is intended to serve as a bridge between the strategic direction of the previous and incoming Board, thereby ensuring continuity in external engagement of IFSA and preventing any disruption or misleading in ongoing processes.

IFSA Penpals

The IFSA Pen Pals program has been running for two terms and is designed to connect IFSA members through shared interests and personal connections. The initiative encourages

engagement and cross-cultural understanding by pairing members based on common hobbies, values, and communication styles. Each month, participants receive a challenge or activity prompt, which contributes to an ongoing friendly competition and helps keep the interactions active and meaningful.

The match-making system used in the past prioritizes key interests—emphasizing that connections formed around personal passions (such as music or art) often lead to stronger engagement than those based on more general similarities. Pairs are typically matched when they share more than half of their listed interests, ensuring a solid foundation for meaningful exchange.

In previous years, the project has experimented with themed variations. For example, the Pen Pals x Language Tandem format encouraged participants to explore and practice different languages together. While the concept was promising, challenges around participant motivation affected continuity. These lessons have informed ongoing improvements.

For the 2025 cycle, the program is set to relaunch in June as IFSA Pen Pals x Culture Partner, a collaboration between the Membership Department and the Internal Department. This version will continue to offer monthly challenges, but with a stronger emphasis on cultural exchange. Activities will explore national customs, communication styles, and other elements of cultural identity, including variations in how people speak, express themselves, or relate to one another across regions.

Ongoing support for the program will be coordinated by a person in charge (PIC), with additional help from the Board and Regional Representatives. The intention is to improve visibility and engagement through better promotion (e.g. via Discord), and to ensure the structure remains lively and accessible to all interested members.

Guidelines and forms from previous years are available for reference and can help inform ongoing improvements to the program's design and delivery.

Strategy

The key issues, recommendations, and implementation priorities identified during the Interim meeting are summarized in the table below:

Issues identified	Description	Recommendations
Need for more financial sustainability	Difficulty in navigating legal requirements, particularly tax rules in Germany, limits our ability to design sustainable fundraising strategies.	Consult regularly with legal and financial advisors; improve transparency with a public finance overview; develop structured sponsor and donor outreach. Set up fundraising task force.
Missing strategy outcomes from previous years	Outcomes from previous strategic efforts are often lost or overlooked due to limited continuity and lack of awareness.	Run regular info sessions; embed strategy and indicator monitoring into onboarding; use reminders and workshops to keep officials engaged.
Challenging department workflows	<p>Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of response from some region - Many LCs are not active - Timezone differences and different schedule <p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full-packed to-do-list - Vacant posts of multiple ED positions <p>Internal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Malfunction of Google tools, (i.e. News Factory form) - Time zone differences and sudden work schedule changes 	<p>Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contacting regional representatives intensely either from personal chat, discussion in each region, or regular discussion Membership department - Keep update and help regional representatives to reach LC's representative/univeristy's email/LC's email. - Provide a poll vote with a detailed explanation of the needs and activities to be carried out. <p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct regular External Department Meeting for responsibility sharing and peer consultation within respective PIC for ED (President, EC, EC Commissioner, Head of PAC, Head of IPC, and Heads of Sub-Commissions) - Sharing responsibilities with President and collaboration MC in encouraging IFSA members to apply for ED vacant position
Interaction among officials and members	Regional representatives have been interacting through various groups on regional social media, but LC has been less responsive	Ensure that each LC has a representative so that the track record of LC activeness can be tracked and the dissemination of information on opportunities or other things conveyed by IFSA can be evenly distributed.

Communication issues	Some officials rarely use google spaces	Provide direction on the use of google spaces and realize the sense of responsibility as officials
Insufficient capacity to manage projects and activities	Project and partner work often relies on just a few people. This leads to overload and risks losing knowledge for the next term.	Set up project-based working groups involving non-officials; diversify roles in commissions to build long-term capacity and preserve knowledge.
Partnership management with external organizations	Need reassessment on IFSA Partners spectrum and IFSA Partners agenda	Working Group creation to assist ED in producing advocacy products (one pager and/or policy brief)+planning and engaging in key major agenda of IFSA Partners

Conclusion

The 2025 IFSA Interim Meeting, held online, provided a valuable opportunity to assess our progress, address key challenges, and set the course for the remainder of the term. A major focus of this year's discussions was on enhancing activeness and communication within IFSA, as well as strengthening the connections between different departments. These aspects are essential for fostering a more cohesive and efficient organization.

Despite the challenges of a virtual format, the dedication and engagement of our participants ensured meaningful discussions and productive outcomes. Moving forward, we are committed to implementing the strategies discussed, fostering stronger collaboration among IFSA members, and reinforcing our organizational structure for long-term success.

We extend our gratitude to all participants for their contributions and look forward to seeing the positive impact of our collective efforts in the coming months.