

Guidelines for nominating IUFRO Division Co-coordinators

Background:

As an organization, IUFRO encompasses an international network of more than 15,000 scientists from over 125 countries that are engaged in wide-ranging forest-related research. The demographics of these 15,000 forest scientists from all over the globe represent considerable diversity¹. Historically, however, this diversity has been reflected in a biased manner in the composition of the officeholders that serve as coordinators and deputies of Divisions, Research Groups, Working Parties and Task Forces. IUFRO recognizes that in order to improve equity and inclusion within the organization, it is critical that the diversity of IUFRO membership be reflected better in the individuals that serve in IUFRO's officeholder positions.

Enhancing participation by diverse demographic groups, particularly at the Division level, is vital to fostering a more inclusive organization that better reflects the global nature of its membership. Increased diversity within decision-making bodies such as the voting Board of IUFRO is believed to lead to improved equity and inclusion, greater innovation and sounder decision-making².

In an effort to enhance diversity within the voting Board, the decision was taken at the 2021 IUFRO Board meeting that, commencing from the next board period (beginning 2024), Divisions will be coordinated by two individuals in dual coordinator roles, i.e. co-coordinators. Nominations will be particularly sought from candidates who (a) identify with one or more underrepresented demographic groups on the voting Board³, and/or (b) outline a plan for enhancing equity, diversity and inclusion within the Division for which they are being nominated.

Division Nomination process:

The nomination of Division coordinators follows a democratic process, and has been always in particular the responsibility of Divisions. Divisions identify, using democratic principles, a match of two qualified persons that are willing to serve as Division co-coordinators. The individuals selected to the dual co-coordinatorship roles should represent a balance of diversity considerations as outlined in the footnotes. As one example, the two candidates may balance representation from the Global South and Global North. A nomination package will be prepared for each co-coordinator team to submit to the IUFRO Nominating committee.

¹ For the purposes of this document, we use the term "diversity" to denote the demographic mix of the global community represented by the IUFRO membership. Diversity comprises, but is not limited to: life experiences; geographic location; cultural background, gender and the full range of gender identities and sexual orientation, including women and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirited and other communities; members of racialized and/or ethnic groups; persons with visible or invisible disabilities; Indigenous peoples; age; and research disciplines.

(<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1085>; https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/InterAgency-Interorganismes/EDI-EDI/Action-Plan_Plan-dAction_eng.asp; <https://tilford.k-state.edu/resources/educational-benefits-of-diversity/whatisdiverse.html>)

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleystahl/2021/12/17/3-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace/?sh=6c44c4b922ed>

³ In this document, we use the term "underrepresented group" to refer to any demographic group that is not presently represented at parity in the composition of the voting Board, which includes Division Coordinators. For context, in 2022, males of European ancestry working and living in the Global North constituted the majority of members of the IUFRO voting Board, and also held the majority of the nine Division Coordinator positions.

Each package shall include the following:

1. A letter of nomination for the dual co-coordinator candidates from at least one individual who is (a) a member of IUFRO and (b) active in the Division. The nomination letter should include a statement as to how the dual co-coordinator candidates will enhance equity, diversity and inclusion for the Division, and should also outline previous involvement of both co-coordinator candidates in Division activities, and in their scientific field(s).
2. A joint statement from the dual co-coordinator candidates outlining (a) actions that they have taken in IUFRO or other organizations to increase participation by underrepresented groups, and (b) their vision for enhancing equity, diversity and inclusion within their Division.
3. An identity statement from each of the dual co-coordinator candidates and/or a joint statement from the two candidates of the dual co-coordinator team. The intention of requesting identity statement(s) from candidates is to assist the Division and the Board in determining the extent to which each dual co-coordinator candidate team under consideration will enhance participation of underrepresented groups in Division leadership roles and on the IUFRO voting Board. Please refer to the footnotes for examples of demographic identities that could be considered in the statement(s).