

IATRC Objectives, Organization, and Operations

(Also referred to as “The Bluebook” due to the bright blue cover on the original first edition.)

PREFACE

The International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium (IATRC or Consortium) is a unique international association of agricultural trade researchers and policy practitioners. Over the past 44 years, the Consortium has established itself as one of the premier institutions for advancing the frontiers of knowledge on agricultural trade and trade policy that has informed both policy formulation and public debate.

This is the December 2024 version (Edition IX), prepared by the 2024 Executive Committee and includes updated contact and financial administration information. This document outlines the objectives, organization, operations, and origins of the IATRC. It updates the corresponding versions issued from June 1985 (original Edition I) through December 2015 (Edition VIII) by incorporating decisions taken at meetings of the general membership and the Executive Committee since that time. Separate occasional documents and the IATRC website present historical and upcoming plans for the IATRC meetings:

<http://www.iatrc.aaec.vt.edu>.

2024 IATRC Executive Committee

Amanda Countryman, Colorado State University, U.S. Universities Representative, IATRC Chair

Felix Baquedano, USDA/ERS Representative, IATRC Vice-Chair

Shawn Arita or Sharon Sydow, USDA/OCE Representative

Bernard Cantin, AAFC Representative

Steve Neff, USDA/FAS Representative

Sandro Steinbach, North Dakota State University, U.S. Universities Representative

Sylvanus Afesgorbor, University of Guelph, Non-U.S. Universities and Other Institutions Representative

Jason Grant, Virginia Tech, Administrative Institution Representative

Irene Gallagher Jones, AAFC, IATRC Secretary

Administrative Director

Jennifer Shelton, Virginia Tech

Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	OBJECTIVES	3
3.	IATRC MEETINGS	3
	3.1 General Meetings	4
	3.2 Symposia	5
	3.3 Outreach	7
4.	PUBLICATIONS	7
	4.1 Proceedings Issues	7
	4.2 Commissioned Papers	7
	4.3 Other Publications	8
	4.4 Website	8
5.	MEMBERSHIP	9
	5.1 Membership Criteria	9
	5.2 Application Procedure	9
	5.3 Inactive Members	9
6.	GOVERNANCE	10
	6.1 Executive Committee	10
	6.2 Program Sub-Committee	12
	6.3 Secretariat	13
7.	FINANCES	13
A.	APPENDIX – Guidelines for Theme Day Organizers	14

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium (IATRC or Consortium) is a unique, informal, international consortium of people interested in agricultural trade research. Begun around 1980 by six west coast United States agricultural economists, the organization now has approximately 261 members in 28 countries. This document gives members a common understanding of IATRC programs, rules, procedures and history and provides funding agencies and others with a clear picture of the nature of the organization.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Consortium are to:

- promote and stimulate improvement in the quality and relevance of international agricultural trade research and policy analysis;
- encourage collaborative research among members of the Consortium;
- facilitate interaction among researchers and analysts in several countries, in universities and in government engaged in and/or interested in trade research; and
- improve the general understanding of international trade and trade policy issues among the public.

The primary audience for the work of the Consortium is trade policy researchers and analysts, and the users of trade research.

3. IATRC MEETINGS

The strength of the Consortium lies in the capabilities of its members to conduct research and/or to use research results in policy analysis and advice. One of the major purposes of Consortium meetings is to enhance the quality and relevance of the research output of Consortium members. Meetings are designed to enhance the research output of the membership by providing for:

- the exchange of ideas on current and emerging trade policy issues;
- the constructive review of research at all stages ranging from planning to completion;
- the interchange of ideas among academic, government and business researchers, and between researchers and individuals involved in the formulation and implementation of policy;
- the exposure to, and critique of, advances in theory, analytic techniques, and models; and
- a setting that encourages formation of informal research networks and collaboration.

To meet these objectives, the Consortium holds an annual General Meeting of the membership and facilitates other opportunities for research and collaboration through additional activities.

3.1 General Meetings

A list of current and previous General Meetings is posted on the IATRC website:

General Meetings of the membership are held annually, usually in December. While General Meetings are designed to benefit the membership, and to conduct the business of the Consortium, non-members are welcome to participate subject to the availability of accommodation. General Meetings are three days in duration and the program consists of several types of activities to meet the multiple objectives of the Consortium, depending on the needs and desires of the membership and current trade issues. Normally, the program consists of the following:

A. Theme Day: a full day devoted to a single topic selected in advance by the Executive Committee, considering the recommendations of the Program Sub-Committee, and approved by the membership. The theme may be a policy issue, an area of research, or a research method. The program normally consists of the presentation and discussion of three or more substantive papers of publishable quality. To encourage the preparation of original papers, the Executive Committee may authorize payment of honoraria to individuals who are not members of the IATRC, and payment of travel expenses (including meeting registration fees) for members and non-members of the IATRC (other than employees of IATRC core funding agencies).

Theme Day Co-Chairs and Executive Committee Liaison

The Theme Day is organized by Co-Chairs appointed by the Executive Committee. Guidelines for the Co-chairs are shown in the Appendix and include: (1) selecting topics for papers relevant to the theme, (2) soliciting papers, (3) coordinating with authors to ensure relevance, quality, and the completion of papers prior to the meeting, (4) conducting the Theme Day program, and (5) editing abstracts (or papers if deemed publishable as a proceedings) for a suitable publishing outlet, such as website publication, desktop publication or publication by a commercial press. Theme Day program Co-Chairs coordinate with the Executive Committee Liaison/General Meeting Organizer. IATRC Commissioned Papers or Trade Issues Papers may serve as the basis for the Theme Day Program.

Executive Committee Liaison and General Meeting Organizer (Appendix)

The Executive Committee Liaison provides oversight on the theme day budget matters, on consistency of the proposed Theme Day papers with the designated theme, and on desirable linkages between the Theme Day program and the remainder of the general program. The Executive Committee Liaison/General Meeting Organizer also organizes the remaining two days of the meeting (non-theme day program), which normally includes the following elements:

B. Individual Research Paper Presentations

Papers can be completed, work in progress or research planning. These sessions include individual papers and provide an opportunity to report on research results or work in

progress, present research plans for critique, and discuss research priorities.

C. Organized Multi-Paper/Panel Discussion Sessions

These sessions, usually organized by one or two individuals, consist of one or more panel members or several paper presentations, followed by open discussion/working format. These sessions may be scheduled as plenary or concurrent.

D. Dissertation Reports & Graduate Student Support

- IATRC members may nominate one of their PhD advisees, with a recently completed dissertation, to present the research results.
- IATRC members may nominate one their PhD students working on international trade.
- Support will be conditional on available funding each year.

E. Free Form Sessions

Time for Members to conduct individual or group discussions in an informal, unstructured setting about mutual research activities, interests, plans, problems, etc.

F. Business Meeting of IATRC Members

The Business Meeting will include planning future activities of the IATRC.

G. Invited Address

Address given by a government policymaker or industry official. Often these talks will take the form of a luncheon or dinner address. The Executive Committee may authorize payment of an honorarium and/or travel expenses for an individual who is not a member of the IATRC.

H. Support for LDC Trade Research Economists

To support better meeting attendance by professionals from LDC's, the IATRC may provide up to \$2,500 plus a registration fee waiver for two participants from LDC's subject to availability of funding. Either IATRC Members or Self Nominations are encouraged. The economists receiving the funding support are expected to present a paper at the annual General Meeting.

3.2 Symposia

Symposia, typically a Summer Symposium, are usually short programs held in conjunction with professional meetings (e.g. AAEA, IAAE, EAAE) of other academic, governmental, and multilateral research institutions from around the globe.

Symposia are included in the Consortium's annual program plan at the discretion of the Executive Committee in consultation with the Program Sub- Committee. A list of current and previous Symposia is posted on the IATRC website. They differ from the annual General Meetings in that they:

- are sponsored by the Consortium through funding support or promotion and facilitation; and

- may be co-sponsored by external groups through funds, hosting facilities, or other forms of support by external groups subject to the executive committee's discretion.

The Executive Committee may designate a Symposium Executive Committee Liaison to the Symposium Organizer(s).

Symposium Executive Committee Liaison

- represents the Executive Committee in working with the organizers;
- exercises budget control for IATRC funding and authorizes relevant disbursements in consultation with the Executive Committee; and
- supports the symposium organizers as needed to develop a program and publication plan.

IATRC funding may be used to encourage the preparation of original papers, for example by providing payment of honoraria to individuals who are not members of the IATRC, or by covering part of the travel expenses (including meeting registration fees) for members and non-members of the IATRC (other than employees of IATRC core funding agencies).

Topics for Symposia are chosen to be both timely and of longer-term interest. The papers comprising the program should be original, contribute to an extension of the frontiers of knowledge about the program topic, be of publishable quality, and complement one another. The topic for a Symposium may be a policy issue, a theoretical framework, or a methodological technique.

3.3 Outreach

Outreach activities are included in the Consortium's annual program plan at the discretion of the Executive Committee. The outreach activities are aimed at furthering broader professional interest and involvement in agricultural trade research and contributing to informed debate of current trade policy issues. These may include but not limited to webinars, mentorship/fellowship programs, special issues for academic journals, and other outreach activities.

Interested program organizers develop an agenda and coordinate with the Executive Committee for approval as an IATRC activity. IATRC may support the activities through funding or facilitation/promotion. IATRC may partner up with external partners or sponsors for funding support of such activities.

4. PUBLICATIONS

A list of current and previous Publications is posted on the IATRC website.

Three types of IATRC publications are established: (1) Proceedings Issues or Policy Briefs of Theme Days and Symposia (either in full or in abstract form), (2) Trade Issue Papers and Commissioned Papers, and (3) the Working Paper Series. The Consortium may also be associated with publications of other institutions in which Consortium members or the IATRC itself are closely involved.

4.1 Proceedings Issues and Policy Briefs

The IATRC publishes the proceedings of its meetings in a format appropriate to their objectives. These could include a book, journal or policy brief. It is the responsibility of the Organizers to edit and prepare the proceedings or policy brief and to arrange for their publication.

4.2 Commissioned Papers

The IATRC Executive Committee will occasionally contract for the preparation of Commissioned Papers, the purpose of which is to produce applied research that aims to inform policy making. The output will include: (1) a paper suitable for publication on the IATRC website; (2) presentation of the paper at an IATRC annual meeting; and (3) briefings for policy advisors or other public groups as appropriate.

Procedures and guidelines for commissioning and carrying out these studies include:

- The Executive Committee selects topics for Commissioned Papers and solicits proposals through a Call for Proposals distributed to IATRC members.
- Suggestions for suitable topics may be submitted by any member of the Consortium.
- Proposals will be solicited from individuals or teams of researchers, at least one of whom is a member of the IATRC. Proposals should include (1) a statement of qualifications, (2) work plan, and (3) budget.
- The Executive Committee or its agents will select the winning proposals; Executive Committee members with proposals under consideration are not eligible to participate in the selection process.

- The IATRC will fund the preparation of the Commissioned Paper. The smaller part of the IATRC funding of the paper may take the form of an honorarium. Funds may be applied towards the cost of one author traveling to an IATRC Meeting to present the paper.
- Drafts of the paper will be reviewed by two IATRC members selected by the Executive Committee, who will make recommendations regarding publication.

4.3 Other Publications

Working Papers

At least one author of a Working Paper must be a member of the IATRC. IATRC members should submit an electronic copy of the prospective Working Paper, in English, to the current Chair of the Consortium. The Chair will evaluate the paper, and if he/she agrees that it is acceptable, will authorize the administrative center of the IATRC to add the standard "IATRC Working Paper" front cover, post it on the IATRC website, forward it to AgEcon Search, and distribute a notice of its availability to Consortium members.

Acceptability requires that (1) the subject matter be agricultural trade or trade policy related; (2) the first page follow exactly the format laid out for IATRC working papers; (3) all tables and figures be incorporated in the text; and (4) the paper include a one-page executive summary.

Trade Issue Papers

The IATRC will occasionally initiate the preparation of papers on trade issues. The objectives of these papers are inter alia to provide an overview of the current thinking on selected topics relevant to agricultural trade and policy, to identify gaps in existing knowledge, and to present the results of collaborative research on trade and trade policy issues. These papers may be used to provide a review of the "state of the art" of theory and empirical analysis and to provide policy advisors and policymakers with a readable overview of implications for policy. The papers may include but are not limited to: (1) a discussion of the problem setting and the historical evolution of thinking on the topic; (2) a review of the appropriate theoretical concepts; (3) a review and appraisal of empirical models; (4) identification of gaps in our knowledge base and an outline of a research agenda to fill these gaps; and (5) evaluation of lessons learned from the research for policy advisors and decision-makers.

4.4 Website

The IATRC maintains a website offering up-to-date information on the IATRC program, publications, membership, and history. It also offers links to other relevant sites.

5. MEMBERSHIP

A list of current IATRC Members is posted on the IATRC website.

Participation in activities of the IATRC provides members with the opportunity to influence improvement in the quality and relevance of international agricultural trade, engage in collaborative research with other members, interact among researchers and analysts in several countries, in universities and in government engaged in trade research and to improve their general understanding of international trade and trade policy issues.

In addition to participating in IATRC's annual meetings and public symposia, members are encouraged to get involved by:

- Submitting ideas for theme days and symposia,
- Proposing ideas for new activities (e.g., workshops, forums, briefings, roundtables) and/or web content for IATRC, or for IATRC in partnership with other organizations,
- Publishing working papers,
- Organizing special sessions for annual meetings, or
- Serving on the IATRC Executive Committee.

5.1 Membership Criteria

Determination of eligibility for membership in the International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium is made by the Executive Committee or its appointed representatives according to these criteria:

- employment by a university, business, government agency, or other institution engaged in international agricultural trade research or analysis; and
- active involvement in international agricultural trade research, analysis, or program management.

5.2 Application Procedure

An application for membership consists of a letter of application to IATRC Chair and a resume.

Applications may be submitted at any time during the year, and approved memberships will be acknowledged at the December business meeting. New members will be sent an IATRC Membership letter welcoming them to the consortium, encouraging their active participation, and notifying them of membership policies.

Membership for individuals employed by government agencies (USDA/ERS, USDA/FAS, USDA/OCE, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and others) is established in the same manner as for non-government members.

5.3 Inactive Members

Membership is considered inactive after six years of no participation in Consortium activities. Following the lapse of the six-year period, the Consortium Secretariat may ask the inactive member whether the inactive member wishes to become member emeritus or to be removed

from membership. A member emeritus has the right to remain on the mailing list and similar lists of the Consortium. If it has not been possible to establish contact with the inactive member following the lapse of the six- year period, the Executive Committee may remove the individual from membership.

6. GOVERNANCE

A list of current and past Executive Committee Members and Program Sub-Committee members is shown in the Appendix)

6.1 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall have general responsibility for the direction and operation of the Consortium but shall seek the advice of the membership on all pertinent matters.

The Executive Committee shall consist of eight voting members of the Consortium as follows:

- one representing USDA/ERS, selected by that agency,
- one representing USDA/FAS, selected by that agency,
- one representing USDA/OCE, selected by that agency,
- one representing Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), selected by that agency,
- one representing the administrative university;
- two elected to represent the members from U.S. universities, and
- one elected to represent all other members, i.e. non-U.S. universities and other institutions.

The Executive Committee will include the following two officers:

- A Chair, who will be elected for a one-year term by the members of the Executive Committee, once constituted, from among its elected members. The Chair shall be responsible for the general affairs of the Consortium. The Chair will call meetings of the Executive Committee, the annual Business Meeting, and other meetings of the total membership as needed. He/she will be generally responsible for the financial affairs and accounts of the Consortium and will ensure the timely appointment of the government members.
- A Vice-Chair, who will be elected for a one-year term by the members of the Executive Committee, once constituted, from among its funding agency members. The Vice-Chair shall serve in absence of the Chair at all Executive Committee and annual Business Meetings and will conduct the elections of new members to the Executive Committee.

The specific duties of the Executive Committee are to:

- Develop and maintain a rolling plan for Consortium activities, to include relevant details of planned future meetings, conferences, task forces, or special studies, research projects, publications, and budgets. The planning horizon for this rolling plan is 2 - 5 years.
- Seek approval of the Plan of Activities from the Consortium membership at the annual Business Meeting.

- Maintain the financial accounts of the Consortium and prepare an annual budget and financial statement to be presented at the annual Business Meeting of the Consortium.
- **Determine the use of discretionary funds in consultation with funding agencies.**
- Receive membership applications and determine membership eligibility.
- Solicit the membership for volunteer members of the Program Sub-Committee and select the members of that Sub-Committee.
- Ensure, through the delegation of appropriate responsibilities, the timely organization of the General Meetings, Symposia, and other Consortium activities.

To fulfill the above duties, the Executive Committee will meet in person as needed but at least once a year at the time of the General Meeting and at other times as determined by a majority of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will also meet by conference call more frequently. At the discretion of the Chair, ad hoc invitations may be extended to Executive Committee meetings for note taking, consultation on Theme Day and Non-Theme Day preparations, and other needs of the Executive Committee. Decisions including Bluebook revisions are made by consensus of the Executive Committee.

Subject to the availability of funds, the Consortium may reimburse reasonable and allowable costs of elected members attending Executive Committee meetings and Consortium meetings held in conjunction with an Executive Committee meeting. Each funding agency will defray such costs, including registration fees, of the member it has appointed to the Executive Committee.

The mechanism for appointments and elections, and the conditions of appointments to the Executive Committee, are as follows:

- The core funding agencies of the Consortium, currently USDA/ERS, USDA/FAS, USDA/OCE, and AAFC, shall each be internally responsible for the appointment of a Consortium member (or alternate) to the Executive Committee.
- **Recognition of a funding source as a core funding agency requires significant long term financial support for the Consortium, including support for the attendance and participation of funding agency representatives in Consortium activities.**
- The two Executive Committee members representing members from U.S. universities and the one representing members from non-U.S. universities and other institutions shall all be elected in elections in which all Consortium members are eligible to vote.
- An election for at least one elected Executive Committee position shall be held every year.
- The outcome of an election shall be announced by the Executive Committee or its Vice-Chair by email to Consortium members at least one month prior to the next Business meeting of Consortium members.

Election Procedures are as follows:

- The Vice-Chair will, at least four months prior to the next Business meeting of Consortium members, by email call for email nominations from members.
- Email nominations are received by the Vice-Chair during a period of at least one month.
- The member nominating another member will have arranged the prior agreement of the nominee to serve if elected.
- Voting by email or online (website) will take place over a period of at least two weeks following the closing of nominations.
- The nominee receiving the most votes is elected.

- In the event of a tie vote, the outcome shall be determined by the flip of a coin.
- The length of term of an Executive Committee member shall be three years. An outgoing member appointed by a core funding agency may be reappointed. An outgoing elected member may be nominated for election no earlier than three years following the end of his/her term.
- A new elected member of the Executive Committee shall take over his/her duties immediately following the first Business Meeting after his/her election.
- A new elected member of the Executive Committee may participate in the Executive Committee meeting usually held shortly before the first Business Meeting after his/her election without having standing to vote in that Executive Committee meeting.
- If a non-government Executive Committee member is unable to continue his/her duties, the Chair may, at his/her discretion, appoint a substitute to act only until the subsequent annual Business Meeting. Similarly, the replacement by a core funding agency of its appointed member before his/her term has expired is possible but, in the interests of continuity and Committee effectiveness, will be used only when necessary.
- In the event an elected member of the Executive Committee is unable to participate in an Executive Committee meeting, the Chair will, in consultation with that member, select a member from the same membership group to stand in for him/her at the meeting.

The Executive Committee and the Consortium will be supported by an Executive Director from the administrative home of IATRC. The Administrative Director will keep a record of all proceedings and minutes of the Consortium, including Executive Committee, annual Business Meetings, and special meetings. The minutes of the annual Business Meeting will be distributed to the members shortly following that meeting.

6.2 Program Sub-Committee

A list of current and past Program Sub-Committee Members is posted on the IATRC website.

The Executive Committee shall establish a Program Sub-Committee, drawing to the extent possible on expressions of interest by members of the Consortium. The Program Sub-Committee will ordinarily comprise three to four members serving for up to three years. The members of the Program Sub-Committee shall elect one among themselves as Chair. The Chair will liaise with the Executive Committee member and be designated as Program Sub-Committee Liaison. The Program Sub-Committee will meet with the Executive Committee for its discussion on future topics for theme day and symposia, when the Executive Committee meets at the annual General Meeting. Travel expenses for the Program Sub-Committee Chair, including up to three nights lodging, will be reimbursed by the IATRC. The Registration Fee for other members of the Program Sub-Committee will be waived.

Program Sub-Committee

The Program Sub-Committee will report to the Executive Committee at least once a year:

- recommendations on specific topics of Symposia and Theme Days at least two years ahead;
- recommendations on general topics of Symposia and Theme days for the next three-five years;
- suggestions for co-organizers or organizing committees for Consortium events; and,
- suggested topics for Commissioned Papers and other publications.

6.3 Secretariat

The Consortium may contract with an institution to provide the Administrative Services of the IATRC.

Secretariat services may include Budget and Financial Management, Grants Management, Communications Maintenance, Publication Dissemination, and Conference Planning and Meeting Management.

7. FINANCES

The current regular funding agencies of the IATRC are USDA/ERS, USDA/FAS, USDA/OCE, and AAFC. Other institutions and organizations have funded specific activities of the IATRC. Administrative Services are provided by Virginia Tech.

The use of discretionary funds shall be determined by the Executive Committee and used to fund the following type of activities: (1) to cover reasonable honoraria and travel expenses speakers at General Meetings, Symposia, Outreach Activities, and other speakers as determined by the Executive Committee; (2) preparation of Commissioned Papers; (3) the reasonable travel expenses of Executive Committee members and the Administrative Director of the Secretariat institution who are unable to meet these from other sources; (4) administrative costs of the Secretariat institution, and (5) the publication, and distribution or web posting of the Consortium, including Proceedings Issues of Theme Days and Symposia (either in full or in abstract form), Commissioned Papers, and other publications.

The Executive Committee is responsible for preparing an annual budget and a financial statement to be presented at the annual Business Meeting of the Consortium.

Appendix

Guidelines for Theme Day Co-Organizers

(revised December 2024)

Theme Day Co-organizers coordinate with the designated Executive Committee Liaison/General Meeting Organizer and Program Committee chair to submit a proposed program and budget to the Executive Committee for approval about a year in advance of the meeting.

Theme Day

Theme Day Co-Organizers responsibilities include:

- soliciting papers (normally 4 to 5) relevant to the theme plus discussants/panelists and coordinating with IATRC Administrative Director on speakers' travel arrangements;
- working with IATRC Administrative Director and the Executive Committee Liaison to post announcements about the Theme Day program on the IATRC website and notifying other professional networks;
- coordinating with authors to ensure quality and completion of papers prior to the meeting, and working with IATRC Administrative Director and the Executive Committee Liaison on posting of papers
- editing papers (if deemed publishable) for a suitable publishing outlet, such as a website publication, desktop publication or publication by a commercial press

Budget Responsibilities and Guidelines

- Theme Day Co-organizers, in consultation with IATRC Administrative Director and the Executive Committee Liaison, determine how to use the budget (normally approximately \$15,000 - \$20,000) for travel costs and honoraria for Theme Day participants. However, IATRC policies prohibit the payment of honoraria to IATRC members
- the budget is to include the registration fees of the invited speakers and discussants
- to stay within the budget, the chairs may wish to offer fixed travel stipends (e.g., \$1,000) to non-governmental Theme Day presenters/discussants (whether IATRC members or non-members) in lieu of reimbursing all travel expenses. Note that employees of ERS, FAS, OCE and Ag Canada and perhaps other governmental or inter-governmental organizations are not permitted to accept reimbursement for travel costs or honoraria
- to contain travel costs, we recommend telling speakers something like "The IATRC will pay your registration fee and reimburse you for actual travel expenses, including up to three nights at the meeting hotel; airfare via coach or other special lower fare; ground transportation and any meals not furnished during the meeting (as per federal per diem rates). We ask your help by making your airline reservations as soon as possible in order to obtain the best rates."
- speaker requests for alternative travel arrangements must be cleared in advance with IATRC Administrative Director and the Executive Committee Liaison