

What is an IAP Statement?

An IAP Statement is a document that highlights a critical issue at the interface between science and policy.

Such a Statement presents the combined consensus of the world's academies of science and/or medicine, providing independent, evidence-based advice and recommendations to policy-makers in governments, international organizations, etc, as well as to academies themselves.

An IAP Statement is developed following a specific procedure and released only when more than half of IAP member academies have endorsed its contents.

How is a topic for an IAP Statement chosen?

IAP regularly canvases its member academies for suitable topics. (A *proforma* to propose a topic is available from the Secretariat).

An IAP Statements Governance Committee reviews received *proformas* and passes the most appropriate ones to the Executive Committees of IAP for Science or IAP for Health. Those considered most important, impactful, appropriate and/or topical are selected for further development.

Often an IAP Statement can be used to 'globalise' an issue that a national academy or regional network of academies has already done significant work on.

What does an IAP Statement look like?

Typically, an IAP Statement runs to between 1,000-2,000 words. It briefly introduces the current state of knowledge before presenting its arguments followed by a series of recommendations or action points. These should be aimed at decision-makers in government, international organizations, academies, and other scientific institutions, etc.

The scientific content is backed up by key references, including those to reports and other outputs from IAP member academies.

How is an IAP Statement developed?

Typically the academy that proposes a statement topic will develop an initial draft – often based on its prior work and including, if available, the work/reports of other academies.

At the same time, the IAP Secretariat puts out a call to IAP member academies asking for nominations of experts. A working group is then established – balanced for geography and gender – that reviews the draft and provides feedback to the lead academy. The draft IAP Statement may thus undergo one or more rounds of revisions.

The process is overseen by the IAP Statements Governance Committee.

Once the members of the expert working group and the IAP Statements Governance Committee agree on the text, the final version goes to the IAP for Science and/or the IAP for Health Executive Committee for approval.

IAP Statement endorsement

Once approved by the relevant Executive Committee(s), the Statement is distributed to IAP member academies (either IAP for Science or IAP for Health members, or perhaps all) for endorsement. If more than half the members endorse the Statement, it is prepared for release.

The review process used to develop such documents, together with the process of endorsement, provide the credibility and 'weight' behind IAP Statements.

IAP Statement release

Release dates are often chosen months in advance, often linked to forthcoming international events or conferences to ensure maximum impact of the IAP Statement.

A press release is prepared by the Secretariat and shared with IAP member academies who are encouraged to adapt it to their local situation: for example by including quotes from national experts, and translating it into the local language. International and national press releases are timed to have a major impact.

In addition, IAP Statements are translated into various languages (by academy members), again insuring a wide international distribution.

Life after release

IAP encourages its member academies to build on the recommendations within the Statements, thus keeping them in the public eye nationally. At the same time, in collaboration with the lead academy and expert working group members, IAP keeps the Statement 'alive' at the international level whenever suitable opportunities arise.

Thus, IAP Statements should not be seen as one-off documents, but as resources to be used by and continually built on by IAP, its member academies and other organizations.

For a copy of the IAP Statement proforma, please contact the Secretariat: iap@twas.org

Previous IAP Statements include:

- A Call for Action to Improve the Reproducibility of Biomedical Research
- A Call for Action to Strengthen Healthcare for Hearing Loss
- Realising Global Potential in Synthetic Biology: Scientific Opportunities and Good Governance
- Antimicrobial Resistance: A Call for Action

They are available at: <http://www.interacademies.net/10878.aspx> and <http://www.iamp-online.org/statements>

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