



REPORT

1. OPENING AND REPORTING SESSION

1.1 WELCOME AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The Chairman, Academician Vladimir Kotlyakov, welcomed the members to Moscow and to the Presidium Building of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Regrets had been received from Peter Johnson, Canada and Hajime Ito, Japan. However, the Canadian report was included in the agenda papers and the Japanese preliminary report was distributed at the meeting.

1.2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

An additional paper on a multinational project was distributed (added to Item 2.3) and a new issue was raised and added as Item 2.6.6. With these additions, the agenda was adopted.

1.3 MINUTES OF THE 2002 ISIRA MEETING

No comments to the amended draft had been received by the Secretariat. The Minutes were adopted.

1.4 MEMBERS OF THE ISIRA GROUP

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An updated list of members is enclosed as **Appendix I**. It was noted that Winfried Dallmann had replaced Stig Falk-Petersen as the Norwegian member. Kotlyakov had a new e-mail address (direct@igras.geonet.ru). Evgenij Soldatkin (representing Boris Morgunov) can be reached at:
e-mail: soldatkin@mail.ru
Phone: (7) 095 291 6116

The list of members is also available on the ISIRA web site at:

<http://www.iasc.no/isira>

1.5 THE TASKS

As the group only meet once a year, members were reminded of the tasks. They are included in this report, as others receiving or reading it should also be informed.

“ISIRA is organised as an international group advising the IASC Executive Committee to develop and promote international cooperation in the Russian Arctic.

Members are from countries having bilateral projects in the Russian Arctic, and from the Russian side: One representative from the Academy, the major polar research agency (AARI), and a key person from the federal bureaucracy.

The tasks of the Group are:

- *Serve as a consultative forum for major research stakeholders, and consider possibilities for:
 - Identifying common research interests
 - Integrating and coordinating scientific efforts
 - Advising on linkages, organisation, and recommended ways of field access.*
- *Advise on major project ideas received by IASC with regard to determining which project ideas/proposals are to be considered by the Executive Committee, including links to be created, how the project idea could be organised, and suggested next steps.*
- *Encourage and promote smaller cooperative projects, especially for younger scientists.*
- *Provide a forum where Russian scientists have a possibility to introduce and test new project ideas.*
- *Inform about major planned bilateral or multinational research programmes in the Russian Arctic.”*

Members were encouraged to propose new activities as well as improvements. Ideas and suggestions are reported under items below (ISIRA website, IPY, Any Other Business, etc.).

2 MAIN ISSUES

2.1 ONGOING PROJECTS

The projects under this heading were initiated in the ISIRA Group, therefore members are briefly informed about their development.

However, only one project remains (LOIRA) that has the Russian Arctic as its focus. The other projects have either been completed or developed into circumarctic projects.

2.1.1 LOIRA: LAND-OCEAN INTERACTIONS IN THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

LOIRA is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary project, devoted to investigations of the exchange processes of matter and energy in the coastal zone of the Russian Arctic.

In short, it is an adaptation of the scientific ideas behind the international LOICZ and the European ELOISE. The LOIRA Implementation Plan (2000) is available from the IASC Secretariat.

Previously, the geographical focus had been on the Pechora Sea, and a considerable amount of research output has been achieved from this area, which has been published in scientific reports, articles and monographs. The most recent publication is:

Romankevich, E A; A P Lisitzin and M E Vinogradov (eds):

The Pechora Sea: Integrated Research (Hydrophysics, Hydrology, Optics, Biology, Chemistry, Ecology, Social, Economic problems).
Moscow 2003, 486 p. ISBN 5-8037-0077-0 (in Russian).

∧. A copy of the Table of Contents (in English) is enclosed as **Appendix II**.

The field activities have moved to the coastal zone of the White Sea. Each year several expeditions are carried out in this area, including the rivers draining into the White Sea.

Details are available from the IASC website (visit our Project Catalogue and click on LOIRA). You may also note that the LOIRA Group is taking part in PARTNERS (PAN-Arctic River Transport of Nutrients, Organic Matter and Suspended Sediments), a project with scientists from Canada, Germany, Russia and the USA.

The annual LOIRA workshop is supported by IASC.

The ISIRA Group noted that comprehensive fieldwork is being carried out in this project, as well as the production of a steady flow of scientific output.

2.1.2 NUHIP: NUTRITION AND HEALTH OF THE NORTHERN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES – THE INTERACTIONS WITH ETHNICITY, SOCIAL STATUS AND ENVIRONMENT

This project grew from an earlier ISIRA project, and is intended to become circumarctic. However, the most dynamic part has been from the Russian participants. So far they have focussed on collecting nutrition data among

indigenous peoples.

Members of the ISIRA Group are encouraged to promote this area to scientists in their own country, as comparative studies should be of interest.

More details in the IASC Project Catalogue.

Two other projects were mentioned during the discussion, which have a slightly different focus, but which NUHIP should be aware of, namely:

- Contaminants and Human Health (information available on the IASC website at: <http://www.iasc.no>, see Project Catalogue)
- SLICA (Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic).
See information at: <http://www.uit.no/ssweb/slica>

2.1.3 NEW PROJECTS

As the Russian Arctic comprises almost half of the Arctic, members were invited to an open discussion on the need for taking new initiatives.

Ideas and comments noted from the discussion are given below:

- **Bilateral projects**

There is a significant number of bilateral projects (see the ISIRA website). They have been very important for Russian Arctic research, especially during the years of transition. They also fit well into the Russian system as they are usually based on an official bilateral agreement.

This type of project should be continued, and ISIRA is an appropriate forum for informing others about these projects and considering links between bilateral projects in the same area.

- **Further development of the ISIRA website**

The ISIRA website is an important tool for any type of project in the Russian Arctic. Suggestions for improvements are reported under item 2.5.

- **Impacts of Industrial Activity**

This theme had been a concern of many Russian scientists participating in a conference organised by the Union of Russian Arctic Towns on “Environment, Health and Environmental Education”.

Comments given were:

- An important topic
- Have a potential for becoming a circumarctic issue, and should be considered as a potential theme for ICARP II (see item 2.6.2)
- A possible project under “Sustainable Development in the Arctic”, see below.

2.1.4 RUSSIAN GOVERNMENTAL PROJECTS

Evgenj Soldatkin reported on two initiatives that could become of interest to ISIRA members, namely:

- **The Sustainable Development Action Plan**

This is a Russian proposal agreed upon as an initiative in the Arctic Council,

with Russia as the lead country.

General information is available on the Arctic Council website at <http://www.arctic.council.org>

Next year Russia is taking over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council and this is likely to become an area of focus for the Arctic Council in the coming years. Research input is expected to be an important part of this initiative, which would then give access to bilateral, multilateral and circumarctic projects.

- **Development in the Russian Arctic**

The North is important to the Russian Federation in many respects, ranging from natural resources to problems experienced by northern indigenous peoples. The Ministry of Economy has announced a call for proposals from scientists in some areas such as: Climate change impacts; Environmental and industrial impacts: Rehabilitation of previous military sites: History of the Arctic: Problems of the indigenous peoples.

Information is available on their website at:

<http://www.economy.gov.ru>

.\. A summary in English is enclosed with this report as **Appendix III**.

The Ministry would select projects to be funded based on advice from scientific advisers.

The Ministry is receptive to projects which are initiated under this topic, being joined by non-Russians, as well as being developed into circumarctic projects (see also the Sustainable Development Action Plan mentioned above).

The ISIRA Group appreciated the information and encouraged its members to study the more detailed information as it becomes available and inform potentially interested scientists in their countries.

2.2. BILATERAL ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

One of the main tasks of the ISIRA Group is to:

- Serve as a consultative forum for major research stakeholders, and consider possibilities for:
- Identifying common research interests
- Integrating and coordinating scientific effort
- Advising on linkages, organisation, and recommended ways of field access.

Each member had been requested to send to the Secretariat (or to bring to the meeting) an annotated list of bilateral (and multinational projects). This information was briefly reported at the meeting. Contributions were given from: Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America. As this information comprises about 100 pages, it is not included with this report. However, the Group agreed on the following:

- The material to be used for up-dating the ISIRA website and be divided into bilateral or multilateral projects.

See the ISIRA website at: <http://www.iasc.no/isira>

- Considerable material of potentially wide interest has now accumulated on this website. The discussion on ways of improving the website even further and making it widely known is reported under Item 2.5.
- Potential areas of collaboration should be considered, especially between bilateral projects in the same thematic area (if not already done).
- Some institutions were not responding when they were requested for information. Members were advised to point to the benefits of making this informational available (a motivating letter), which could also be an opportunity for promoting the website to potentially important users.

2.3 MULTILATERAL PROJECTS

Reporting on multinational projects was mainly done as a part of the reporting under 2.2.

In addition, information about ECORA (Integrated Ecosystem Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimize Habitat Fragmentation in the Russian Arctic) was distributed, which is enclosed with this report as **Appendix IV**.

2.4 ACCESS TO THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

Information on procedures for obtaining permits to carry out research in the Russian Arctic is now available on the IASC website.

Various aspects of this issue were discussed and conclusions were as follows:

- There should be an introduction to the “Access” chapter on the website. This chapter should summarise practical advice (plain language), as the text giving rules and regulations is rather “technical”.
- Some advice mentioned:
 - It is important in Russia to have a bilateral agreement (“an umbrella”) under which specific project areas are listed. Individual projects referring to such an agreement will encounter fewer problems (if any).
 - Samples (specimens) can become a problem if there are no accompanying papers when crossing the border. However, if these are mentioned in the application for field research, it is unlikely that problems will be experienced.
 - Find a knowledgeable partner. Russia may be different with regard to practical procedure and also more complicated because of federal and regional authorities. A knowledgeable partner should be aware of all procedures, e.g. having done similar investigations before.
 - The procedures are the same for large and small projects.

Action: Priamikov, Rogne

2.5 THE ISIRA WEBSITE

- The website contains a wealth of information, and is often a first guidance for many scientists being interested in research in the Russian Arctic. Members were invited to suggest improvements, not only regarding the website itself but also to inform about and promote the website.

Suggested improvements

As the number of projects has increased significantly, it is difficult to obtain an overview of projects in the same thematical area (or geographical regions). Some simple indexing would improve the usefulness significantly.

It was agreed that:

- **Winfried Dallmann draft an indexing proposal, which will be circulated to all members for comments**
- **The aim is to have an indexing system which can be implemented next year.**

Action: Dallmann, Rogne

- Data on actual use of the website, preferably by installing a counter which records both number of visitors and from which country the request is received.

Action: Rogne

- There is a need for making both ISIRA and the ISIRA website more widely known in the Russian arctic science community and in other countries. The following actions were suggested:

- **Links to the ISIRA website**
All members having a website and a scientific interest in the Russian Arctic were encouraged to add a link to the ISIRA website using the address: <http://www.iasc.no/isira>
- When collecting information on bilateral projects, **all members** are encouraged to mention the website and propose that institutions having projects in the Russian Arctic add a link to ISIRA on their website.

Action: All Members

- A note about ISIRA in "IASC Progress"
- A simple flyer for selected distribution

Action: Rogne

- Russian search engines:
It was recommended that the following search engines should be added to the website:

<http://www.rambler.ru>

<http://www.yandex.com>

Action: Rogne

2.6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2.6.1 THE INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR 2007 – 08

Vladimir Kotlyakov informed that several initiatives have been taken and Russia is involved in all of them.

- **WMO - proposal**

An IPY-proposal had been made by Russia to WMO, who had agreed to support it at their congress earlier this year. The proposal was supported by the Vice President of the Federal Duma and a State Committee for IPY had been established.

- **ICSU - initiative**

Almost parallel to the WMO-proposal, ICSU had taken an IPY initiative, and an international IPY Planning Group had been appointed. Kotlyakov is a member of this group.

A meeting of this group had been held in early August, and a second meeting was scheduled for December 2003.

This Planning Group had invited the science communities to propose themes and activities for the IPY, and a first discussion on these proposals will be held during the coming meeting.

- **St Petersburg Workshop**

Russia had invited scientists to a workshop to be held in St Petersburg in January 2004. This was a follow-up to a meeting held in Brussels in June 2003. Kotlyakov informed that their Arctic Ocean Drifting Stations (“North Pole Stations”) are now in operation again and could be used as platforms for any IPY initiative.

The ISIRA Group noted this information and strongly recommended that the WMO and ICSU initiatives be merged.

2.6.2 ICARP II: THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ARCTIC RESEARCH PLANNING

An Arctic research planning conference was held in 1995 (ICARP I) following a year drafting activities by 10 thematical working groups. These groups had been drafting science and preliminary implementation plans for their theme and participants at the conference were invited to review and suggest improvements to these draft plans. Almost all projects had later been implemented.

During the Arctic Science Summit Week 2003, several organisations agreed to support a similar process. IASC and 12 other organisations are now supporting this initiative.

Earlier this autumn, an ICARP II Steering Group was appointed and their initial meeting was held in October.

At this meeting, it was agreed to circulate an invitation for proposing working group themes.

The deadline for making such proposals is **15 December 2003**.

The second meeting of the Steering Group is planned for 19 – 20 January 2004, at which selection of themes and initiating the identification of working group members are likely to be on the agenda.

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- A copy of the invitation for suggesting themes is enclosed as **Appendix V**.

See also the ICARP II website at:

<http://www.dpc.dk/icarp>

2.6.3 CEON: CIRCUMARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATORIES NETWORK

The initial ideas of CEON were presented at the ISIRA 2001 Meeting, and some advice on Russian Arctic candidate stations were given. The first international CEON planning meeting was held in Stockholm in October, 2003.

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- A summary of the outcome of this meeting is enclosed as **Appendix VI**.

Dr Sergey Priamikov, who attended the Stockholm meeting, gave a survey of Russian Arctic Stations to the ISIRA members. The main points from his presentation are as follows:

- Russia had about 140 arctic stations during the last century. In 2002 “only” 48 stations were in operation.
- There are 56 weather stations
- Of the sites measuring sea-level, only 60% of them are now in operation
- Russia is open to bilateral cooperation in regard to renovating and running some of the stations. In other places there may be a need for upgrading the instrumentation.

2.6.4 WORKSHOP IDEAS

Is there a need for bringing scientists from different bilateral projects together, or could a workshop enhance any ongoing or planning cooperation?

These questions were put to the ISIRA members, in order for them to convey them to their science communities as a part of the annual request to institutions for information on bilateral or multinational projects.

Action: All members

An idea about “Impacts of Industrial Activity” was raised and Gareth Rees agreed to write a note on a potential project idea.

There is a large amount of industrial activity in the Russian Arctic, which should provide excellent opportunities for finding good research sites.

However, the theme is circumarctic and there could be opportunities for a circumarctic project comprising comparative studies.

Action: Rees

2.6.5 CIRCUMARCTIC EXPLORATION AND MAPPING IN GEOLOGY

Matti Saarnisto informed the meeting that a cooperation plan between the geological surveys of the Arctic countries had been initiated. The first meeting was held 3 – 4 July 2003 in St Petersburg; see **Appendix VII** for a summary of the meeting.

2.6.6 REQUESTS FOR BILATERAL SCIENTIFIC PARTNERS

During the first years of ISIRA, such requests were numerous but during recent years they have been very few. In all probability the reason is that such “partner services” are offered by several organisations.

It was agreed that if members received such requests and there is no good candidate in their country, they should be circulated to other members, including the IASC Secretariat, for consideration.

2.6.7 PAG: THE PACIFIC ARCTIC GROUP

The ISIRA Group was informed that a Pacific Arctic Group had been established earlier this year. Members are scientists and science managers from countries bordering the Pacific North (Russia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Canada and the USA).

More information is available on their website at:

<http://www.iac.no/PAG/pag-Mission.htm>

Any projects of interest to ISIRA emerging within this Group will be reported.

2.7 NEXT MEETING

Date: Friday 8 or 15 October 2004

Final date to be agreed during the summer of 2004.

Place: St Petersburg, Russia

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking all members for active participation and contributions.

3 INFORMATION SECTION

The intention of this section is to provide information, which may be useful to members. However, it is not intended for discussion at the meeting, unless a member wishes to do so.

3.1. ACCESS TO THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC – CORRECTIONS

- .\ Dr Morgunov has kindly provided some corrections to the earlier text on this issue on the ISIRA website, see **Appendix VIII**
The corrections were implemented on the website shortly after we received them.

3.2 JOINT US-RUSSIA BERING CHUKCHI SEA CRUISE

- Announcement of opportunity for 2004 funding.
- .\ Full announcement enclosed as **Appendix IX**.