



1 OPENING AND REPORTING SESSION

1.1 WELCOME AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The Chairman, Professor Vladimir Kotlyakov, welcomed the members and thanked the IASC Secretariat for the preparations and for hosting this meeting.

A special welcome was extended to new members (Ito, Japan, and Cooper, USA). It was noted with regret that the UK was no longer represented in the Group.

1.2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Some additional papers on bilateral activities and for the Information Section, were distributed. With these additions, the agenda was adopted.

1.3 MINUTES OF THE 2000 ISIRA MEETING

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

1.4 THE TASKS

In order to remind members of the main tasks, the following text was included in the annotated agenda:

“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 (see below: ISIRA Advisory Group).

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.”

The Group noted this information.

2 MAIN ISSUES

2.1 CHANGES IN RUSSIAN POLICY

Previous rules regarding reporting on contact with foreigners had been reintroduced. After 1996, there had been some restrictions on exchange of data. With regard to the latter, data has to be approved by the agency to which an institute belongs, or by the Academy for academy institutes.

2.2 ONGOING PROJECTS

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

2.2.1 LOIRA: LAND-OCEAN INTERACTIONS IN THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

The Group was informed about actions taken by the IASC Executive Committee, namely that:

- The LOIRA Science and Implementation plan to be made available after some language improvements
- Strengthening the LOIRA Project Group by adding three non-Russian members (Dr Fütterer, nominated by the European Science Foundation, and Dr Pacyna nominated by the LOICZ International Office). RAISE (USA) had not yet responded to our invitation.

The LOIRA plans for 2001 were:

- Collection of scientific data in the (earlier) LOIRA pilot project expedition to the Barents and Kara Seas
- Organising an international methodological workshop.

Professor Kotlyakov had been in touch with Academician Lisitzin (project leader), and reported:

- a new major volume (about 1000 pages) on oceanology and processes in the Pechora Sea will be published in November this year.
- the project will be extended to the White Sea focussing on river discharge and processes
- A major LOIRA workshop will be held 24 – 29 October (supported by IASC) as a part of an international conference on marine geology

During the discussion, it was noted that LOIRA and RAISE (the Russian-American bilateral programme) had some possible overlapping. Dr Cooper promised to consider the invitation to join the LOIRA Group.

Action: Cooper

2.2.2 PROBLEMS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

A few years ago, this project idea was suggested to the ISIRA Group, and later adopted by the IASC Executive.

In September 1999, IASC sponsored a workshop (organised by RAIPON, GOSCOMSEVER and RAS) covering 3 themes.

- Natural Resources and Use of Land
- Living Conditions
- Alcoholism

The main intention of this workshop was to identify priority issues as seen by the indigenous peoples themselves.

The recommendations were used by both GOSCOMSEVER and RAIPON, as well as constituting a basis for identifying potential research projects.

In May 2000, a second workshop focussing on research needed achieved two objectives:

1. An exchange of information on relevant ongoing research, and
2. A few draft sub-projects, namely:
 - “Reindeer husbandry: Law and Life”
 - “Legal base in increasing of social efficiency of the interaction between traditional and industrial resource users”
 - “Evaluation of traditional diets in relation to nutrition and health in northern Russian indigenous communities”

The first project mentioned was later transferred to another IASC project: “Human Role in Caribou/Reindeer Systems”, thereby becoming more international.

At the IASC Council Meeting in April 2001, we were informed that this project was not acceptable to the Russian Ministry of Economy, and the following recommendations were made:

- the project should become **circumarctic** focussing on comparative studies in selected regions.
As a consequence, the title should be changed to, e.g., “Comparative Studies of Arctic Indigenous People” (indication title only)
- the group to be widened reflecting the change in geographical focus
- project contents to be developed in close contact with Arctic indigenous peoples’ organisation.
- the group is encouraged to meet and report back to the Executive Committee not later than **15 October**.

Discussions with the Russian project leader (Dr Andreeva) had led to the following conclusions:

- The project ideas reported above will take into account the recommendations from the IASC Council, i.e. making them circumpolar as far as possible.
- A new **circumpolar** initiative to be developed in cooperation with indigenous peoples' organisations (and under new leadership).

Comments:

- Prof. Saarnisto reported that related projects are supported by the Nordic Arctic Research Programme (NARP). Further information is available at their web site: <http://thule.oulu.fi/narp> under the section on "Living conditions of the inhabitants of the Arctic".
- Dr Hedberg mentioned that the project about "Post-Soviet Political and Socio-economic Transformation among the Indigenous Peoples of Northern Russia: Current Administrative Policies, Legal Rights, and Applied Strategies" is also related to this issue (see item 3.3 for details on this project).
It was also noted that this project was fully funded, and that it had been proposed to the Arctic Council.

Action: Rogn

2.2.3 TUNDRA-TAIGA INITIATIVE

The overall aim of this initiative is. "Understanding the dynamics of the tundra-taiga interface in the circumpolar Arctic and their consequences" or more specifically:

- to study past and present changes in the taiga/tundra boundary, including mechanisms driving the changes, and to predict future changes at a range of geographical scales
- to assess the implications of current and predicted future changes for:
 - land use
 - biodiversity and conservation, and
 - ecosystem function and feedbacks to the climate system
- to facilitate interactions and to stimulate collaboration between different disciplines studying tree line processes, in Russia and elsewhere.

In 2000 they organised a successful workshop, which attracted many of the prominent scientists in the field, and the outcome will be published in a special issue of *AMBIO*.

A Steering Committee was also established.

In 2001, they will begin implementing key targets identified by the Committee, such as establishing a circumpolar monitoring network, collating baseline spatial data and the latitudinal location of the treeline etc.

This group has also initiated a dialogue with the Timberline Forest Initiative.

This project idea was originally suggested to the ISIRA Group as the Russian Arctic was of special interest for studying the move of the tundra-taiga borderline. During the last year, this project has developed as an international, circumarctic project – and it is suggested that it should not be reported on in the ISIRA Group in future (those interested can monitor further development in the IASC Project Catalogue).

The ISIRA Group noted that this project has now developed into a circumarctic project, and hence will not be reported to the group in future.

2.3 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

International cooperation in the Russian Arctic is mainly based on bilateral cooperation, except for a few multilateral programmes. Both types were reported on here, whereas they will be separated on the ISIRA web site.

Information on ongoing and planned projects is one of the core activities of the Group, and a number of scientists are looking for this information.

.\ Please see **Appendix I** for an edited version of these contributions and **Appendix II** for Multinational Projects.

Action: Rogne

2.4 ISIRA WEB SITE

The ISIRA web site is intended to record all relevant information on bilateral and major multilateral research activities in the Russian Arctic, as well as related information.

The ISIRA Group agreed to divide project information into two major groups:

- .\
- multilateral projects and
 - bilateral projects

Until now, all projects have been grouped according to the countries reporting on a project, although scientists from several countries may be involved.

.\ Further, the inclusion of more Russian web sites relevant to the Arctic, would be desirable. Please see **Appendix III** for an up-dated list.

To visit the ISIRA web site, please start at the IASC web site:
<http://www.iasc.no>
 and thereafter click on ISIRA.

Action: Secretariat

2.5 RUSSIAN ARCTIC RESEARCH STATIONS

Discussions are ongoing in the Forum of Arctic Research Operators (FARO, see more information about this Forum by visiting the IASC web site, and click on FARO) for establishing a Circumarctic Environmental Observatories Network (CEON).

In addition to 5 stations in North America, the western European Arctic will be covered by ENVINET (Zackenberglund in Greenland, Ny-Ålesund on Svalbard, Norway; Abisko in northern Sweden, and Sodankylä in northern Finland).

Discussions are ongoing bilaterally about possible support to a selection of such stations. However, there is a need to converge the various interests on a set of stations.

The ISIRA Group was invited to advise on possible candidate stations based on a discussion paper by Odd Rogne (this paper is up-dated with the information given at the meeting, and is attached to this report as **Appendix IV**)

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The outcome of the discussion was as follows:

1. **Kola region:** **Hayes Island** (Roshydromet),
alternatively a station on the Kola peninsula
2. **Pechora/Naryan Mar:** **Amderma** (near Vaygach)
alternatively new Russian-Norwegian station in the Pechora delta
3. **Yamal:** **Belyi** (an island on the tip of the Yamal peninsula).
An old research station (1923) possibly supported by an American-Russian agreement.
4. **Taymyr:** **Severnaya Zemlya**
alternatively also Dickson
5. **Lena delta:** **Tiksi**
alternatively also Ostrov Kotelnyy (New Siberian Islands)
6. **Chukotka:** **Wrangel Island** (American-Russian discussions ongoing).
Alternatively also Pevek (SW of Wrangel Island).

Action: Rogne

2.6 RUSSIAN INFORMATION

A new Russian law regulating marine research has now been agreed. It is based on the international Law of the Sea, and is close to the previous rules.

This law is split into two parts:

- investigation of marine resources, and
- marine scientific investigations

The full text (in Russian) is available from the IASC Secretariat, and when an official English translation is ready it will be put on the ISIRA web site.

In general, the new law is close to the old rules regarding marine research.

Foreigners should apply to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through diplomatic channels not later than 6 months prior to the expedition.

A simpler procedure is in force for those having official bilateral agreements and for international organisations (like IOC).

With regard to **terrestrial research**, there are new rules (not law) similar to the law on marine research.

For both types, there are regulations regarding equipment brought into Russia.

There is a Technical Commission overseeing this issue, and if they need technical experts to check on the equipment, applicants will have to pay for this expertise.

Conclusions

- Foreign scientists are advised to find an experienced Russian partner in order to clarify import/export of technical equipment, advise on appropriate applications, etc.
- Members received a copy of the Russian texts mentioned, and these texts will be posted on the ISIRA web site as soon as they are available in an English translation.

Action: Rogne, Priamikov

2.6.1 NEW RUSSIAN MEMBER OF THE ISIRA GROUP

The ISIRA Group is supposed to have a member representing the Russian federal bureaucracy, i.e. a key person familiar with all relevant rules applicable to Arctic research.

Dr Boris Melnikov was previously this member, but he is no longer in a governmental position.

The Russian members of the ISIRA Group proposed Dr Boris Morgunov as the new member.

Dr Morgunov is Deputy Head of the Department for Northern Affairs in the Ministry of Economy and Trade of the Russian Federation.

Conclusion:

Professor Kotlyakov to contact Dr Morgunov to enquire whether he is willing to serve on the ISIRA Advisory Group.

Action: Kotlyakov

2.6.2 ANY OTHER RUSSIAN INFORMATION

2.6.2.1 AMETYST

Prof. Kotlyakov briefly reported on a Russian-Austrian-Norwegian project covering topography, glaciology and remote sensing in Franz Josef Land. Project leader: Dr Andrej Glazovski at the Institute of Geography, RAS. (see more information under multilateral projects in Appendix I).

2.7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2.7.1 NEW MEMBERS

As a follow-up to last year's meeting, the Secretary had been in touch with IASC Council members for Canada, Japan and the USA.

There is a **Canadian** interest. However, Canadian funds for bilateral cooperation is of a very applied nature – see more information under item 3.1.

Dr Okitsugu Watanabe, **Japan**, agreed to serve on the Group, provided he could have an alternative (as he is now Director of NIPR). Dr Hajime Ito attended this meeting on his behalf.

USA nominated Dr Lee W Cooper, who is the new Chair of RAISE (Russian-American Initiative on Shelf-Land Environment in the Arctic).

2.7.2 SWEDISH TUNDRA EXPEDITION IN 2005: RESEARCH IN BERINGIA/KAMCHATKA

Partly as a follow-up and as an enlargement of the research carried out in the two major Swedish tundra ecology expeditions in 1994 (along the entire Eurosiberian arctic coast) and 1999 (in the Canadian arctic archipelago) preliminary preparations for a new expedition to complete the circumpolar work has started. The target area is the Beringia region, including Alaska, Chukchi and Kamchatka, and the intention is to arrange the expedition in the summer of 2005. Broad international cooperation is a condition and, at least at this early stage, the scientific programme is open for ideas from ecologists, earth scientists, oceanographers (a trans-arctic marine transect from Europe to Beringia is possible) and social scientists etc. (Contact: Professor Ulf Molau, Department of Botany, Gothenburg University, e-mail: ulf.molau@systbot.gu.se)

2.7.3 PAGES

Professor Saarnisto informed that he had been elected Chair of the PAGES-Polar Programmes, which comprises CAPE, ICAPP, PICE and QUEEN. Several of these projects have a considerable Russian Arctic component.

See also the PAGES web site at: <http://www.pages.unive.ch>

2.8 NEXT MEETING

Professor Kotlyakov invited members to an ISIRA meeting in Moscow in 2002 and the date agreed was **Friday, 11 October 2002.**

As St Petersburg has a city anniversary in 2003, a meeting in St Petersburg in 2003 was also mentioned.

2.9 CLOSURE

Professor Kotlyakov thanked the IASC Secretariat for hosting this year's ISIRA meeting, and all members for their active participation.

Dr Priamikov seconded these thanks, and also expressed appreciation for bilateral cooperation, which was highly valued during difficult times in Russian Arctic research.

3 INFORMATION

This part of the agenda is not intended for discussion at the meeting, as issues mentioned are for information only.

3.1 CANADIAN – RUSSIAN COOPERATION

The question about obtaining a Canadian representative on the ISIRA Group has not yet been successful. The reason seems to be that bilateral Canadian-Russian activities are focusing on very restricted issues.

- .\ Please find enclosed a copy of “Cooperation in Northern Russia”, which is a part of: “The Northern Dimension of Canada’s Foreign Policy”. You will note the absence of Arctic research in this paper.

3.2 CHARTER OF THE MINORITY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE NORTH, SIBERIA AND THE FAR EAST OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

- .\ This charter contains some basic thoughts on life and nature. It is universal, but we add it here as it was written by the indigenous peoples of the Russian North.

3.3 POST-SOVIET POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AMONG THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF NORTHERN RUSSIA: CURRENT ADMINISTRATION POLICIES, LEGAL RIGHTS, AND APPLIED STRATEGIES

- .\ Please find enclosed a proposal for an Arctic Council project.

3.4 OTTO SCHMIDT LABORATORY

- .\ Please find enclosed a copy of a folder for this German-Russian Laboratory at AARI in St Petersburg.