

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 of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Unfortunately, some members had been unable to attend the meeting (regrets from Canada, Finland, Japan and Sweden and Sergey Priamikov).

1.2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

1.3 MINUTES OF THE 2001 ISIRA MEETING

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

1.4 THE TASKS

In order to remind members about the main tasks, the following text was circulated 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

Appendix I: 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 ARCTIC POLICY

Earlier this year, the **Council on the Far North and Arctic problems under the Government of the Russian Federation** was established in accordance with the Governmental Decree No. 281 of the 29 April 2002. The Council is an advisory body to the Government and is chaired by the Prime Minister. The main function of the Council is to prepare recommendations on key issues including:

- national policy for the Far North and the Arctic
- national strategy for development of the Far North and Arctic regions
- state regulation of economic, social, scientific and ecological activity and international cooperation
- state support to social and economic development of the Far North and Arctic regions including fuel and food supply
- state support to the transport system development in the Far North and Arctic regions
- improvement of conditions for sustainable social and economic development of indigenous peoples in the Far North and Arctic regions
- international legal problems of the Far North and the Arctic
- efficient realisation of federal laws and decisions made by the President and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Far North and Arctic problems.

Any output from this Council is not yet known, but will certainly be a body to watch with regard to policy changes.

In addition; Russia has:

- **The Council on Arctic and Antarctic Affairs**, which is an advisory governmental body with representatives from various agencies, and
- **Scientific Council for Arctic and Antarctic Research**, a coordinative council under the Academy, and with observers from some ministries. This council is chaired by Academician Kotlyakov.

Access to the Russian Arctic

Several members reported problems with obtaining permission to do ship-based research in the Russian Arctic, although proper applications consistent with the regulations had been submitted. Access to places like Norilsk had also become impossible.

Action:

It was agreed to add this issue to the agenda for the meeting next year, seek any clarifications possible, and invite key persons to the meeting.

2.2 ONGOING PROJECTS

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

2.2.1 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. IASC has supported the development of a Science Plan (modelled on the international LOICZ Science Plan and ELOISE), and the LOIRA Implementation Plan (2000). The LOIRA Implementation Plan (also containing most of the Science Plan) is available from the IASC Secretariat.

Initially the geographical focus was the Pechora Sea, but this has now changed to the coastal zone of the White Sea.

Numerous expeditions have been carried out, and a significant number of scientific publications have been produced.

The LOIRA Steering Committee consists of leading Russian scientists, supplemented by 3 non-Russians appointed by IASC following the nominations of LOICZ, European Science Foundation and RAISE (USA).

Funding by Russian sources, INTAS, bilateral and IASC (planning and workshops).

The LOIRA Project Group has reported the following activities in 2002:

1. In the sub-project “**The White Sea System**” as a part of the LOIRA Project the following expeditions were carried out
 - a) April, 10 days, Station Kartesh on the shore of the **Kandalaksha Bay**, White Sea – sampling of ice, snow water, sedimentary traps under ice.
 - b) June-July, 10 days, the cruise of R/V “Ivan Petrov” **to the central part of the White Sea** – complex of researches (geology, biology, chemistry, ecology and others)
 - c) September, 20 days, the cruise of R/V “**Ecolog**” – complex of research (geology, biology, chemistry, ecology and others)
 - d) permanent **sampling of aerosols** on the shore of the Kandalaksha Bay on base of the biological station of Moscow State University
2. The international INTAS project “**Arctic coastal dynamics of Eurasia: classification, modern state and prediction of its development based on GIS technology**” with participation of scientists from Russia, Germany and Norway under umbrella of the LOIRA and ACD projects is in action.
3. The 5th International **LOIRA Workshop** will take place in Moscow, 12 – 15 November this year with IASC financial support. Participation of 60 – 70 scientists from Russia and scientists from Germany, Norway, Poland, USA are expected.
4. No LOIRA website. Information about LOIRA is on the IASC website.

Some of the research output from LOIRA has been published in:

Lisitzin, A P et al: *Experience of System Oceanologic Studies in the Arctic* Moscow, 2001, 644 p., ISBN: 5-89176 – 160 – 2 (text in Russian).

Annual output is found in the workshop abstract publication.

2.2.2 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

As reported last year, the project “Problems of Indigenous Peoples in the Russian Arctic” was terminated last year, as we were informed that this project was no longer acceptable to the Russian Ministry of Economy.

The solution to this problem was as follows:

Of the 4 sub-projects focussing on the Russian Arctic: One was transferred to the Caribou/Reindeer project (IASC), one was completed during the summer of 2001, and the two last were merged into one (“Health and Nutrition”) and made circumarctic (with a significant Russian component).

The “Health and Nutrition” initiative then held an IASC-supported workshop 18 – 20 April 2002 under the title: “Nutrition and health of the northern indigenous peoples: Interactions with ethnicity, social status and environment”.

.\ A full report has been received, and we enclose a 1-page summary of the outcome as **Appendix II**.

The chair of this new group is Prof. Andrew I Kozlov, Moscow.

The ISIRA Group concluded that:

This project has achieved valuable outputs both through workshops and sub-projects.

Although the new initiative on “Health and Nutrition” will have a significant part of its research activities in the Russian Arctic, it is circumarctic in nature and as such will no longer be reported in the ISIRA Group.

2.2.3 NEW INITIATIVES

Of all earlier projects, only LOIRA is presently ongoing and still focussing on the Russian Arctic.

Proposing project ideas for discussion in the ISIRA Group is still an opportunity and members of the ISIRA Group were invited to comment.

There were few proposals over the table, except for one on “contaminated food”. This need is expected to be covered by the new circumarctic project on “Nutrition and Health”, which has a Russian project leader (Dr Kozlov) and the Russian Arctic will be covered by this project.

Members of the Group were encouraged to consider new and timely initiatives, including our task to: “Provide a forum where Russian scientists have a possibility to introduce and test new project ideas”.

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.

Each member was requested to come to the meeting with an annotated list of bilateral projects. This information was briefly introduced by members followed by a discussion about opportunities for cooperation, sharing of special problems (and the solution to them), and other informal information.

Presentations of bilateral projects were made by: Canada, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

As the text in total is about 70 pages, and as this information is of wide interest, it was agreed that an edited version is to be included in the ISIRA web site:

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

In addition, the following special comments were noted:

- Consider a multinational workshop or science conference on theme(s) covered by several nations, i.e. is there a need for bringing scientists together both for information exchange and potential future cooperation? (Quaternary geology mentioned).
- **Access** problems came up in several presentations as a major problem, and an initiative to clarify or improve should be considered.
- Elgygytgyn Lake is covered by bilateral projects both from Germany and the United States.
For the web site editing, it was agreed to use the German text and add the US contact information, and to put that text into the Multinational category (as well as under national).
- Laptev Sea System: This project has come to an end.
However, follow-up project is being discussed.
- The Norwegian text is now very comprehensive and can be a useful guide for others (edited version will become available on the ISIRA web site).

2.4 MULTINATIONAL PROJECTS

As cooperation is growing, several projects are multinational, and these projects are now being listed in a special multinational category, see web site.

Information about multinational projects was provided by most members, and will be used for up-dating the web site.

A question was raised about any follow-up to QUEEN. It was confirmed that

discussions were ongoing, but no concrete plans as yet (Kotlyakov involved in ice core discussions).

2.5 ISIRA WEB SITE

The ISIRA web site is intended to record all relevant information on bilateral and multilateral research activities in the Russian Arctic, and also other relevant information.

The web site address is: <http://www.iasc.no.isira>

Members were asked to suggest any improvements, including new links that should be added.

Members were pleased with the present web site and they would forward any additional information to the Secretariat.

2.6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2.6.1 RUSSIAN FUNDING

.\ An idea about initiating a Russian (private) foundation was discussed, see **Appendix III** enclosed.

Members to consider ways of approaching Russian industrial tycoons.

2.6.2 THE NEED FOR ISIRA

As the ISIRA activities have changed over the years, members were invited to comment about the future need for ISIRA, and which activities they deemed most useful. Some of the comments:

- Important for Russia. Helps to obtain resources from ministries. Important information not otherwise available
- Very useful to know what other countries are doing, giving an opportunity for cooperation or combine interests.
- Consider initiating workshops in order to bring scientists working on the same theme into contact with each other.
- Access could be another theme for a useful workshop (or added to a thematical workshop)
Some persons to be involved in a follow-up (Grebmeier, Bergmann, Priamikov, Thiede, Zhivago) were mentioned.
- “Melting of Permafrost” was mentioned as a possible theme for a workshop.
- “Methane emission” was also recorded as a potential theme.

2.6.3 CEON (CIRCUMARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATORIES NETWORK)

Information about the CEON concept was given last year followed by a discussion about potential Russian observatories/stations that could be included. A CEON-update was given. Dr Sergey Priamikov, ARRI was recommended as CEON contact person in Russia (to be invited to any CEON meetings).

2.6.4 ANSIPRA

The Arctic Network for the Support of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Arctic is a communication network linking Russian indigenous peoples' organisations with Norwegian and other international organisations being alarmed about the future of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North.

Dr Winfried Dallmann (Coordinator of the ANSIPRA network) gave an overview of this activity.

More detailed information is available at: <http://www.npolar.no/ansipra>

.\ See also **Appendix IV**.

2.7 NEXT MEETING

It was tentatively agreed to hold the next meeting at AARI, St Petersburg on 17 October 2003.

2.8 CLOSURE

Academician Kotlyakov thanked all participants for coming to Moscow and for very positive and productive contributions.

3 INFORMATION SECTION

This part of the Report was not discussed at the meeting, as the issues are for information only.

3.1 GRANTS TO RUSSIA

Information about amendments and additions to the Tax Code of the Russian Federation regarding taxation of grants, and the procedure for avoiding tax on some grants.

- .\ This information can be useful for institutes or other organisations offering grants to Russian Arctic scientists or institutions; see **Appendix V**.

3.2 INTAS PARTNER SEARCH BOARD

INTAS is offering a service for scientists looking for scientific partners. Please find enclosed further information about this service. (In earlier years the ISIRA/IASC Secretariat offered a similar service using our network of members.)

3.3 AAAS: THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

For several years, AAAS has collected and distributed information about opportunities for East-West cooperation, initially by a simple bulletin and during recent years by e-mail.

- .\ Please find enclosed **Appendix VI** with information about how to subscribe.

3.4 RECENT AAAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- .\ Please find enclosed two messages – **Appendix VII** - (“Russian Young Leadership Fellows” and “Senior Scholar Program Competition”) as examples of information distributed by AAAS.