

**Minutes from meeting of
Svalbard Science Forum,
29 May 2006 (14:30-16:00) tele conference**

Participants:

Svalbard Science Forum members:

Kirsten Broch Mathisen, The Research Council of Norway, (RCN) (chair)
Oddvar Midtkandal, Kings Bay AS (KB)
Kim Holmén, Norwegian Polar Institute (NPI)
Gunnar Sand, The University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS)
Franck Delbart, Ny-Ålesund Science Managers Committee (NySMAC)

Observer

Ian Gjertz, The Governor of Svalbard (SMS)

Secretariat:

Fridtjof Mehlum, RCN
Monica Sund, Svalbard Science Forum (SSF)

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without any further comments. Kirsten welcomed the new participants; Gunnar Sand, the new Director of UNIS, and Frank Delbart from NySMAC.

2. Adoption of the minutes from the meeting 31 March 2005

The minutes were adopted.

3. Status of the web portal and further plans for the databases (FM/KH)

The status of the new SSF web portal was distributed as an attachment before the meeting. During the first two weeks 621 unique visitors has visited the web site, downloading 2 874 pages and within this time 64 visitors returned. The feed-back has so far been positive.

A time schedule was set for part one of the database (project, meta, and statistics) and KH informed that NPI will have a beta-version ready within 15 November 2006 and a flawless package with all three modules will be operative from 15 December 2006. RCN and NPI are still discussing formalities regarding financing of the database developing project proposed by NPI. Hopefully, a contract can be signed in the near future.

4. Arktisstipend, change of deadline for applications (Nov – Dec ?)

The aim of the Arctic scholarship is to use the allocated funds to enable not established researchers and students to carry out research in Svalbard. Many researchers have expressed that it would be more suitable to know earlier whether they get funding or not. Thus, a suggestion of announcing the scholarship in autumn with a deadline of November 15 and a allocation in January was decided as a test for the next season.

5. Ny-Ålesund Science Plan – new draft

KH gave a brief presentation on the new draft plan. The members welcomed the new draft, and appreciated the improvements from the previous version. The members commented that the plan is still not satisfactory on scientific focus and has a main focus on different types of tools for a good coordination of the research activities. It was realized that it would take considerable time to discuss with the different research stations to further develop the chapter regarding future scientific priorities in Ny-Ålesund, and therefore it was agreed to finalize this document as a version 1 as soon as possible. This version should include a description on how we should proceed in order to improve the abovementioned items.. It was agreed that additional comments by the SSF members should be sent to KH within one week. A revised version will be sent to SSF/the Research Council. This will be submitted to the Interministerial Committee on polar affairs for comments before adoption by SSF early fall.

6. Workshop autumn 2006?

Arrangement of a workshop during autumn 2006 was discussed. The earlier suggestion to have a workshop related to the marine lab is regarded as one year too early. The workload has been heavy on the research coordinator this spring due to revitalizing a position being down for a year, work on the new database and generally that the spring is time for fieldwork. Thus it could be difficult to find space within the scheduled working time. However, KM suggested that gathering a group working on the IPY might not be too time consuming as the NPI IPY coordinator Jon Børre Ørbæk could take the main parts of the work with such a workshop topic. Possible themes are a) observatory networks and their role in IPY, b) Ny-Ålesund – role in IPY. KM will outline the workshop and the Board members were encouraged to react within a week. A decision will be made by the Board per e-mail within June.

7. Status ARCFAC V – Transnational infrastructure access in Ny-Ålesund

KH gave a brief presentation on the task. The EU mobility programme contract is signed and the work must begin within two months. NPI is working on the announcements and call for proposals. Because of the delay in signing the contract, few projects are anticipated to be funded for the 2006 field season.

8. The role of SSF in IPY

The IPY was discussed in a seminar at UNIS on May 16. Both at UNIS and NPI, a person has been dedicated for coordination of IPY activities. SSF proposed to establish a small group for coordinating IPY in Svalbard with representation from UNIS, NPI and SSF.

9. Any other business

Until the next Board meeting, urgent matters may be discussed and decided upon via e-mail.

10. Date for next meeting

The next meeting will be in October, and the exact date will be decided by e-mail.