



ISIRA Advisory Group Meeting
St Petersburg, Russia
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DRAFT

REPORT

PARTICIPANTS:

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Sergey Priamikov, Russia
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1. OPENING AND REPORTING SESSION

1.1 WELCOME AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The Chairman, Professor Vladimir Kotlyakov, welcomed the members and thanked Dr Sergey Priamikov and AARI for hosting this meeting. Dr Ivan Frolov, Director of AARI, also welcomed the ISIRA Advisory Group. Members were invited to visit the “Akademik Fedorov”, the institute’s main vessel that had just arrived.

1.2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Some additional papers for the Information section were distributed and added to the Agenda, see items 3.3 and 3.4.

It was further agreed to add “Potential New Members” under item 2.5. Any Other Business.

1.3 MINUTES OF THE 1999 ISIRA MEETING

Some amendments had been proposed to the original draft. The amended report had been circulated in late 1999 and it was also enclosed with the agenda.

The Group adopted the Minutes.

2. MAIN ISSUES

2.1 ON-GOING IASC PROJECT IDEAS

The following projects/project ideas have previously been discussed in the ISIRA Group, and a brief up-date is given below.

2.1.1 LOIRA – LAND-OCEAN INTERACTIONS IN THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

The comments made by the ISIRA Group last year had been transmitted to the LOIRA Steering Committee.

Further, the IASC Executive Committee had agreed that:

- The draft **Science and Implementation Plan** should be edited further and the language improved.
This had been done, and a copy of the improved plan was enclosed with the meeting papers.
- **The Project Group** should be strengthened by adding three non-Russian members.
The Present Project leadership had agreed, and the status was as follows:

- ❑ The LOICZ International Office had appointed Dr J Pacyna, Norway
- ❑ The European Union DG XII had suggested the European Science Foundation (ESF) should make the nomination. ESF had been invited to do so, but had not yet responded (although they had been reminded).
- ❑ The third invitee was the US Polar Research Board, whose nomination was expected to be made at their Autumn meeting.

In addition to finalising the Science and Implementation Plan, the Project Group reported that scientific data from previous LOIRA pilot projects was being worked on and about 31 articles were expected to be published early next year. However, most of these pilot projects were outside the Pechora area.

The Project Leader, Academician Alexander Lisitzin, was invited to this part of the meeting, and he gave a more detailed account of a number of sub-projects. He also reminded the ISIRA Group that a methodological workshop had been planned for early December with financial support from IASC.

As Dr Elena N Andreeva had been invited for a presentation under 2.1.2, and as she was in charge of the socio-economic focus of LOIRA, she was also invited to comment on LOIRA.

She reported on socio-economic studies that had been carried out with a focus on the Pechora region. These studies were concerned with impacts of future oil exploitation, impacts of the Northern Sea Routs, etc. She expressed some disappointment about low response from foreign scientists, and also that LOIRA consisted of a number of non-integrated sub-projects.

The ISIRA Group recommends a stronger focusing of the project activities, including some integrative efforts.

Dr Andreeva (and others) wishing for a stronger foreign interest were advised to promote LOIRA directly to foreign scientific colleagues, and also at workshops.

The IASC Secretariat would be willing to carry out some promotion work based on specific requests from the LOIRA Group.

Action: Rogne

2.1.2 PROBLEMS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

Dr Elena N. Andreeva proposed this area to the ISIRA Group 3 years ago. She was invited to report on progress made.

According to the IASC rules **users**, represented by representatives of indigenous peoples as well as GOSCOMSEVER, had identified 3 priority themes and also problem descriptions for each of these themes. This was achieved at a workshop held in September 1999, and the recommendations from that workshop were enclosed with the ISIRA Group minutes of last year.

Scientists had also attended this workshop.

A smaller workshop, or follow-up meeting, had been held in May 2000. This workshop had been held back-to-back with a meeting of indigenous peoples of the Russian North.

This workshop had been organised around the 3 themes:

- National Resources and the Use of Land (legal rights and land use).
- Living Condition, and
- Alcoholism.

The IASC Executive Committee had noted last years' successful workshop, and had recommended that the follow-up meeting should:

- Identify critical science questions (within the three themes based on recommendations from last years' workshop).
- Draft specific project(s).

.\ The May workshop had started this process, and a draft report from this workshop was available and is also enclosed with this report.

Dr Andreeva summarised the contents of the enclosed report.

The following comments were made.

Dr Piers Vitebsky of the Scott Polar Research Institute, UK, could be a potential collaborator, and Dr Andreeva should consider contacting him. A Swedish initiated draft project had aims close to those reported. That project proposal was presently being considered for funding. Contact details were given.

In addition, Dr Andreeva was informed that an Arctic Living Conditions Project had received funding from the Nordic Arctic Research Programme. This project could be a partner for filling the missing part of the Russian Arctic.

Action: Rogne

2.1.3 TUNDRA-TAIGA INITIATIVE

.\ This project had originated from the ISIRA Group. After preparatory work in 1999, a first workshop had been held in April 2000 in Abisko, Sweden. Both Rees and Rogne had attended this workshop and they reported, in addition to the enclosed summary report.

The participants comprised a fairly large Russian group, and also most of the leading international treeline scientists.

The scientific output from the workshop will be published in **Ambio** (a science journal).

The participants very strongly recommended a follow-up meeting and they suggested some terms of reference and proposed members for a Steering Committee.

The ISIRA Group recommends a follow-up meeting to be held, and that the IASC Executive Committee considers the suggested terms of reference and formally appoints the Steering Committee.

Action: Rogne

2.1.4 OTHER PROJECTS

As usual there have been proposals and requests for information etc., mainly from Russian scientists seeking research partners at individual level.

More comprehensive undertakings are:

- **Accessible Health Care for the Indigenous Peoples of the North in the Russian Federation: A Strategy for Survival.**

This proposal is headed by Dr Larissa Abryutina, who is also a RAIPON Vice President. The IASC assistance has mainly been finding funding sources, advising on partners, and writing a letter of support. (In the background information to the project, it was mentioned that the “average age expectancy of aborigines in some regions in the North is as low as 37 years”.)

- **Project “Reindeer”**

This was an applied project initiated by the Fund NIP (a Russian foundation promoting projects of benefit to indigenous peoples. Chairman of the Board: Prof. Pavel Zaidfoudim. He was previously at GOSCOMSEVER).

This project aimed at more professional slaughter houses for reindeer, improved processing as well as product development and, finally, market analysis.

Dr Zaidfoudim wished for contact with the IASC reindeer project, as well as advice on possible funding sources for the last part of this project.

Both requests have been accommodated.

2.2 BILATERAL ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

Members of the group were invited to provide short commentaries on bilateral projects known to them.

The intention was to inform each other at the meeting, and to consider possible opportunities for broader cooperation.

The suggested format was:

- Title
- What (1-2 sentences about the contents or aim of the project)
- Status (what has been done, or when something is going to take place)
- Contact person (who can give further information, alternatively a web site)

Information at the meeting was provided by Sweden, Russia, Germany, United Kingdom, Finland and Norway. Steve Forman, USA, had been encouraged to provide information in writing, but nothing had been received.

In addition, Prof. Saarnisto reported briefly about the Nordic Arctic Research Programme (he chairs the Steering Committee for this programme), and pointed to one of their projects: “Living Conditions of the Inhabitants of the Arctic”, which covers a part of the Russian Arctic.

The ISIRA Group agreed that the information given should be prepared in the suggested format, and sent to the Secretary early next week. In addition to becoming enclosures to this report, the information would be made available on the ISIRA web site.

Action: Rogne

2.3 ISIRA WEB SITE

As much relevant information as possible is being added to the web site. One important task of the Group is to provide the bilateral information mentioned under 2.2., and thereby provide an opportunity for broader cooperation and occasionally new and timely initiatives.

Last year "Access to Russian web sites" was mentioned as an area for improving the ISIRA web site. However, the problem had been to identify relevant Russian web sites that were still in operation.

A copy of all the web site chapters was included as an agenda paper.

The ISIRA Group agreed that the web sites mentioned in the German bilateral paper should be included. Further, other members would look for relevant addresses and inform the Secretariat.

Action: Members, Rogne.

2.4 RUSSIAN INFORMATION

2.4.1 RECENT GOVERNMENTAL CHANGES

In May, the Russian President closed down several federal governmental structures. One of them was GOSCOMSEVER (the State Committee for Northern Affairs). Most of their tasks have been transferred to a department in the Ministry of Economy.

However, not all personnel had kept their jobs during this transfer. Dr Boris Melnikov, who has been a member of the ISIRA Group, as well as the IASC Regional Board, was as yet uncertain about his future, and an early retirement was one of his options.

2.4.2 NEW RULES FOR MARINE RESEARCH

The new rules were not yet approved, so the old rules were still in operation.

The Group agreed that when the new rules have been agreed, a short version will be made available on the ISIRA web page.

Action: Priamikov, Rogne

Some advice was given informally, with regard to obtaining a positive answer to an application:

1. Preference is given to applications from countries who have an official, bilateral agreement (Germany, Norway, USA)
2. Use of Russian logistics will also give you a special preference.

2.4.3 ANY OTHER RUSSIAN INFORMATION

Dr Priamikov provided a copy of a proposal called “Ecoarctic – 2001” which intended to address needs expressed by the Arctic Council and their working groups.

- .\. A copy of the main part of his paper is enclosed with these minutes.
In addition, the Chair of the IASC Regional Board (who is responsible for the interface with the Arctic Council in IASC) will receive this document.

Action: Rogne

2.5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2.5.1 POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS

The Secretary reported that the **Canadian Polar Commission** intended to appoint a member, but that any name was not yet known.

It was noted that **Japan** had a certain level of research activity in the Russian Arctic, and they should be encouraged to join.

Action: Rogne

2.6 NEXT MEETING

The ISIRA Group agreed to meet **12 October 2001** at the IASC Secretariat in Oslo, Norway.

2.7 CLOSURE

Before leaving for a visit to “Akademik Federov”, Dr Sergey Priamikov was once more thanked for his excellent local arrangements.

3 INFORMATION

This part of the agenda was not intended for discussion at the meeting, as it is announcements etc., purely for information.

3.1 DATABASE ABOUT THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

The library of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, UK has a collection of 19.024 items about the Russian North covering the period 1671-2000. This extensive collection outside Russia is accessible free of charge on the Internet at:

<http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/spriruss.htm>

3.2 ANSIPRA: ARCTIC NETWORK FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

This network, which was originally a Norwegian network, has now grown into an international network. It can be a useful source of information about these indigenous peoples. Their bulletin (newsletter) is available free of charge in English or Russian.

3.3 COLLABORATION IN BASIC SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING (COBASE)

An American (NSF) funding opportunity for American-Russian scientific cooperation. Announcement with guidelines, distributed to members.

3.4 AMAP PROJECTS IN THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) is a working group of the Arctic Council. They have initiated two projects in the Russian Arctic:

3.4.1 MULTILATERAL COOPERATIVE PROJECT ON PHASE-OUT OF PCB AND MANAGEMENT OF PCB-CONTAMINATED WASTES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION and

3.4.2 PERSISTENT TOXIC SUBSTANCES (PTS), FOOD SECURITY AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE RUSSIAN NORTH

.\ More information is enclosed.