

**Protocol
of
the Sixth Meeting
of the
Committee in the framework of Agreement on Technical-Scientific Cooperation in
Arctic and North Research
between
the Federal Agency for Science and Innovations of the Ministry of Education and
Science of the Russian Federation
and
The Research Council of Norway**

Research Council of Norway
12 - 13 November 2008
Oslo, Norway

The Sixth meeting of the Committee on research co-operation in the Arctic and North in the Framework of Agreement between the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Russian Federation (now Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation) and the Research Council of Norway was held at the Research Council of Norway on November 12-13, 2008.

Participants:

RUSSIAN FEDERATION DELEGATION:

1. **Director Ivan Frolov**, State Research Center of the RF – Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI) of Roshydromet, St. Petersburg, *Head of Delegation*
2. **Deputy Director Vladimir Safargaleev**, The Polar Geophysical Institute of Kola Science Center of Russian Academy of Sciences (PGI), Murmansk-Apatity
3. **Head of the Department Sergey Pryamikov**, State Research Center of the RF – Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI) of Roshydromet, St. Petersburg
4. **Olga Kolesnikova**, Russian Embassy in Norway

NORWEGIAN DELEGATION:

1. **Professor Harald Loeng**, The Norwegian National Committee on Polar Research, Bergen, *Head of Delegation*
2. **Research Director Kim Holmén**, Norwegian Polar Institute (NPI), Tromsø
3. **Director Kirsten Broch Mathiesen**, Research Council of Norway, Oslo
4. **Project Director Karin Refsnes**, Research Council of Norway, Oslo

1. Welcome and introduction of delegations

Director Kirsten Broch Mathiesen welcomed the Russian delegation to the Research Council of Norway.

Professor Harald Loeng opened the meeting, and welcomed the delegates. He introduced the Norwegian delegates.

Professor Ivan Frolov introduced the Russian delegates.

2. Adoption of the agenda

It was agreed that agenda item 4 in the proposed agenda should be discussed before agenda item 3. With this change the agenda was adopted.

3. Discussion on follow-up of the agreement

a) results of the workshop in April 2007

There was a general discussion about the “Table of suggested topics for a work programme under the next agreement period”. It was agreed that the meteorology part should be completed by NPI and with support of AARI before the end of November 2008.

It was agreed that this document should serve as a basis for future cooperation within this agreement.

b) biology-paper (proposal by Norwegian research institutions)

The biology part of the “Table of suggested topics for a work programme under the next agreement period” was prepared by Norwegian Polar Institute, Institute of Marine Research and Akvaplan-NIVA prior to the meeting. The Russian delegation was in general positive to this biology-document. However, since the circulation of the document had not allowed for thorough discussions, it was decided that the document was to be considered a working document that would be refined for adoption at the next meeting under the agreement. The Russian delegation will be provided with names on relevant contact persons in the above mentioned Norwegian institutions in order to achieve this.

c) way forward

Several possibilities of follow up of the agreement were discussed. It was agreed that both parties were positive to support workshops, meetings and travel costs in order to promote development of joint research projects. The success of the POLRES projects (discussed further under item 4 below) was in particular noted as a constructive and cost efficient mechanism for developing the prospective research.

During the 2009 – 2012 the following thematic areas will be the most important in the Arctic regions with special emphasis on the Svalbard archipelago:

- Climate change
- Oceanography
- Sea ice
- Ecology

- Meteorology
- Upper atmosphere

Both parties agreed to financially support a workshop on “Climate change and sea ice” during 2009 in Russia. This workshop will be held under the auspices of the Fram-lab co-operation between NPI and AARI during spring 2009.

The Russian delegation raised the issue of maintaining the IPY-sub office in St. Petersburg as an element of preserving the legacy of IPY. It was decided that NPI and AARI should approach the other partners of the office to evaluate what the appropriate actions for the IPY-office could be. It was noted that the IPY-sub office has served an important and constructive role during IPY.

4. Discussion of current joint Russian-Norwegian research projects, results and potential

A list of Norwegian Russian projects in the Research Council of Norway (RCN) had been prepared and was handed out. It was agreed to focus on the IPY projects and the Norwegian-Russian projects on Svalbard (The “POLRES” projects supported by RCN).

The RCN funds 26 IPY research projects out of which 16 involve Russian cooperation. It was agreed that the following IPY projects, which fit well to the thematic topics of the agreement, should be actively pursued to identify potential common research activities that would be appropriate IPY-legacy activities:

- POLARCAT-Norway, Polar study using aircraft, remote sensing, surface measurements and models of climate, chemistry, aerosols and transport
- Bearhealth, Polar bear circumpolar health assessment in relation to toxicants and climate change
 - Work should be coordinated with other activities under other Norwegian-Russian agreements etc.
- THORPEX-IPY: Improved forecasting of adverse weather in the Arctic region – present and future
- NESSAR, Norwegian component of the ecosystem studies of sub-arctic and arctic regions
- LEVANS, Long term sea level variability in the Nordic Seas
- GLACIODYN, The dynamic response of arctic glaciers to global warming: a Norwegian contribution to the IPY-37
- ArcticWolves, Arctic predators as indicators of tundra ecosystem state. A Norwegian IPY proposal under the Arctic Wolves initiative ID No: 672
- BIAC, Bipolar Atlantic Thermohaline circulation
 - It is important to continue this kind of joint projects in the future because it gives possibility to measure in areas that usually are difficult to access.

It was noted that several of the other IPY projects related to impacts of climate change on ecosystems and human beings benefit from the research areas within this framework agreement but are not appropriate to directly include in the probing efforts of the delegations.

The 8 POLRES projects (started in 2006 and 2007) were discussed. The projects include the following issues (mentioned in the call for proposals in 2006):

- Networking between Norwegian and Russian research institutions at Svalbard
- Establishment of a database of Russian research projects carried out on Svalbard as a basis for new common projects
- Inter-calibration of instruments for comparative studies in Barentsburg, Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund
- Increased Russian participation in Norwegian research projects in Ny-Ålesund
- Cooperation related to UNIS and the Science Centre in Longyearbyen

The following 8 projects were funded:

- Exceptions can become the rule: genetic differentiation and migration history of a rare annual plant species on Svalbard
- Geological mapping and regional geological investigations in Nordaustlandet, NE Svalbard
- Benthic biodiversity function and toxicology of selected key Arctic organisms
- Norwegian-Russian joint analysis and inter-calibration of climate observations and sensors within the IPY cluster project ARCDIV.NET
- Norwegian and Russian upper atmosphere cooperation on Svalbard
- Norwegian and Russian collaboration on fast ice growth and decay in Kongsfjorden and Grønfjorden (Svalbard)
- Ice-ocean-atmosphere research in Svalbard using satellite and field data. Promotion of Russian and Norwegian Ph.D. cooperation
- Norwegian-Russian glaciological activity on Austfonna ice cap, Svalbard

The delegations agreed that the POLRES program has created projects of great interest to both countries with excellent exchange of knowledge and successful science in many of the thematic areas in the agreement. The Norwegian delegation mentioned that there will be a new call for proposals for Norwegian-Russian Svalbard related research in early spring 2009. The call will be for a three year period with funding of 2 – 3 mill NOK per year. This was noted with interest by the Russian delegation.

In light of the well recognised success of POLRES it was decided that RCN should explore the possibility to create similar Norwegian-Russian research program also for activities in other Arctic areas.

It was proposed from the Russian delegation that the joint AARI/NPI FRAM Arctic Climate Research Laboratory should be part of this agreement. The Norwegian side agreed to this proposal. AARI and NPI must revisit with text of the bilateral institutional agreement such that the wording is consistent with it being an integrated part of the present framework agreement.

5. Information exchange and fields of mutual interest

a) updates on organisation and Arctic scientific priorities in Russia and Norway

Information from the Norwegian delegation:

- RCN is in the process of developing a polar strategy for 2009 – 2012. This will include Arctic incl. Svalbard and Antarctic. It will be finalised by June 2009.
- The Norwegian Government is in the process of developing a White Paper for Svalbard. This will be probably be adopted by the Parliament in June 2009.
- The RCN anticipates to have increased funding for climate research in the 2010 budget.
- Scientific workshops arranged by Svalbard Science Forum will during 2009 include one on coordinating and developing terrestrial research in Ny-Ålesund and one on Svalbard cooperation (planned to be aboard the Polish research vessel Horyzont in the early fall of 2009). Tentative plans for 2010 are towards deepened whole Svalbard research cooperation within the fields of this framework agreement.
- NPI has as of 2009 acquired a budget increase of 22 mill NOK per year allocated to building a centre for snow/ice/climate research. One assigned task for this centre is to organise large international conferences; during 2009 two conferences are planned covering polar bears and alpine glaciers respectively. The research activity of the centre will focus on issues related to:
 - Extent and state of sea ice in relation to changing climate
 - Glaciers and snow in relation to changing climate
 - Ecosystem effects of changing sea ice (including specifically effects on polar bears)

There will be both national and international cooperation.

- The Management plan for the Barents Sea was adopted by the Norwegian Parliament 2006. It involves an ecosystem based approach and requires research, monitoring and cooperation between all relevant sectors/stakeholders. It also invites for cooperation with neighbouring countries.
- The Ministry of Environment is now in the process of preparing a similar plan for the Norwegian Sea. This will be adopted by the Parliament March 2009.
- Norway is planning a new research vessel with ice-breaking abilities to replace the two vessels Lance and Jan Mayen. The vessel is planned to be operational in 2012.

Information from the Russian delegation

- Last year (2007) there were 12 marine expeditions. The opportunities for scientific cooperation is significantly enhanced and foreign scientists have taken part in several of the expeditions into previously unavailable areas.
- During 2008 a similar amount of marine expeditions have been planned.
- The defence Council is preparing an Arctic strategy document which emphasises achieving strong Russian presence in the Arctic strictly within the framework of international agreements and law.
- A new North Pole drifting research station was deployed in September 2008. This year an appropriate ice floe was easily found in contrast to 2007. Foreign scientists are

welcomed to take part in these expeditions provided that the logistics are manageable (where the main concerns are the location of the station in the Arctic Ocean and whether there are opportunities to build an appropriate airfield at the station)

- NPI expressed a great interest to take part in this project
- Russian presence in Svalbard is supported by improving research infrastructure in Barentsburg and Russian settlements. Important topics are a. o. geophysics, oceanography, hydrological monitoring. A new geophysical observatory has been opened in Barentsburg.
- Russia will build a new Antarctic vessel that will be operational by 2011.
- The agreement on scientific cooperation between University of Tromsø and PGI has been prolonged for the next five years (until 2012).
- PGI plans to expand the collaboration with the University Centre in Svalbard with common investigations on the SPEAR facility.
- An agreement between AARI and EISCAT Scientific Association concerning the operation and development of radar facilities at high latitudes was signed on October 23, 2008.

6. Update and prolongation of the agreement for a new 5 year period

The delegations noted with satisfaction that the agreement will continue automatically in accordance to the addendum dated 20 June 2002. The present 5 year period will end 2012.

7. SIAEOS (Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System)

The Norwegian delegation gave a presentation on SIAEOS. It was agreed to add to the slide “Why is Svalbard unique” the following: “Svalbard is unique to study the solar-terrestrial relations.” An updated English presentation will be imminently sent to all participants in the meeting.

The Russian delegation was positive to take part in this project.

An international meeting will be arranged 5 – 6 February 2009 in Oslo to discuss the further development of the SIAEOS project. Those who have already expressed support to the project and potential other partners will be invited by the SIAEOS project office (at RCN).

8. Organising of the next meeting

The next meeting will be organised in St. Petersburg by AARI November 11-12, 2009.

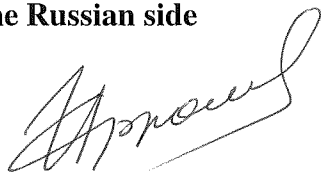
9. Any Other Business

No issues were raised under this point.

Signing the joint protocol of the proceedings and completion of the meeting

The delegations agreed that the sixth meeting of the Committee had been highly successful, and that the meeting had been conducted in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust.

For the Russian side



Ivan Frolov

For the Norwegian side



Harald Loeng

Oslo, November 13, 2008