



**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR SCIENCE (ICSU)
Federation of Astronomical and Geophysical
Data Analysis Services (FAGS)**

President: Nicole Capitaine
n.capitaine@obspm.fr

Secretary: Philip Woodworth
Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory
6 Brownlow Street, LIVERPOOL, L3 5DA, U.K.
Phone: +44 151 795 4800, Fax: +44 151 795 4801
Email: plw@pol.ac.uk

5 July 2008

Minutes of the FAGS Meeting (FAGS Council and Service Directors), 24 April 2008 (9:30 – 17:30) held at the Observatoire de Paris, France

Agenda:

1. Opening and welcome and approval of agenda
2. Approval of minutes of last meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Minutes of the FAGS General Meeting at the IUGG, Perugia, July 2007
5. Summary of the SCID report and FAGS/WDC meetings this week
6. Service, Union and Association comments on the SCID report
7. Tour de table of reports from Services summarising recent work
8. Any other business and plans for future meetings

Participation list:

Nicole Capitaine, IAU, President
Philip Woodworth, Secretary
Niels Andersen, Past Secretary

Dirk Behrend, IVS
Sylvain Bonvalot, BGI
David Boteler, ISES
Ronald Van der Linden, SIDC
Michel Menvielle, ISGI
Ruth Neilan, IGS and IUGG
Bernd Richter, IERS
Lesley Rickards, PSMSL
Michael Zemp, WGMS

Alik Ismail-Zadeh, IUGG
Phil Wilkinson, URSI
Frederic Clette, URSI
Jean Bernard Minster, WDC Panel (invited)

Apologies: Jean-Pierre Barriot (ICET), Françoise Genova (CDS), Ray Norris (IAU), Carthage Smith (ICSU)

1. Opening and welcome and approval of agenda

The President opened the meeting at 9.30. The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the previous FAGS meeting in 2007 were approved.

3. Matters arising

The President mentioned that at the FAGS Council meeting the previous day the reports of 11 Services had been reviewed and accepted. The QBSA was to be informed that it was no longer to be considered a FAGS Service. The ICET activities had been successfully moved to Tahiti.

4. Minutes of the FAGS General Meeting at the IUGG, Perugia, July 2007

These minutes were accepted.

5. Summary of the SCID report and FAGS/WDC meetings this week

The President reviewed the discussions between FAGS Council and WDC Panel with regard to the ICSU Strategic Committee on Information and Data (SCID) draft report during the past two days. FAGS and WDC had been represented in the SCID committee and the report had been written with the FAGS White Paper as input. The SCID report should lead to the establishment of a World Data System (WDS). The FAGS/WDC discussions demonstrated considerable common ground and a general welcome to the report had been extended. The President had constructed a draft set of further FAGS comments on the report, but these now had to be finalised for input to ICSU, to include comments from all FAGS Service Directors. These comments are summarised below.

Bernard Minster (chair of the WDC Panel) made a presentation of the action items decided upon by the Panel meeting held the day previously. One concerned a plan to write an official joint FAGS/WDC letter to the Unions informing them "formally" of the reforms that have been proposed in the SCID report, and will soon be implemented (if approved by ICSU). This plan was discussed and agreed. Such an action was considered as being important in order to stimulate an active involvement of Unions in this transition process. This is also important because Unions other than the ones involved with FAGS should be approached and because there are no Union representatives in the current WDC structure.

6. Service, Union and Association comments on the SCID report

Comments on the SCID report covered the following topics which were discussed at length:

- Naming of the WDS and of its component centres and services
- Accreditation methods for centres/services to join the WDS (the WDC Panel has a 3 stage scheme; FAGS has a procedure based on Union endorsement)
- The different roles of the WDS Steering Committee and the Ad Hoc Strategic Coordinating Committee

- The role of the Unions in the committees and how any Union funding should be allocated
- Why should centres/services buy into the new scheme?
- Funding of the management functions of the WDS (to be supported by ICSU for only the first 3 years)
- The danger of loss of ‘leverage potential’ if FAGS Services are to receive no funding in the new scheme
- The objection of Services to a ‘membership levy’ in the WDS
- The danger of broadening membership of the WDS to include national/regional/global versions of centres/services and possible replication of roles
- The role of a joint Transition Team to be established to address issues which the new World Data System (WDS) Steering Committee will have to pursue (with the team composed of representatives from each of FAGS Council and WDC Panel, see below)
- What is the role of CODATA in all this? (appears overblown in the draft SCID report)
- The need to do nothing to damage the existing work of the FAGS Services
- Why WDS SC membership limited to 8, and why only 0.5 FTE support needed?
- The portal proposal in the report is easier said than done. Similarly the ‘full interoperability’ objective is a fatuous aim.
- The membership of the two committees must be time-limited (no dinosaurs)
- The interactions of the WDS with Unions, UNESCO, GEO, GGOS etc. It was noted that there are a lot of umbrella programmes at the moment.

[Following this meeting, a final set of FAGS comments on the SCID report was sent by the President to ICSU in time for the ICSU/CSPR meeting the following Sunday. That meeting is to sign off on the SCID report.]

One particularly important item discussed was the composition of the joint Transition Team. The discussion started from the WDC proposal that the Team be composed of a group of 4 of each of FAGS and WDC. However, in the following discussion, it was considered by FAGS Council and Directors that a larger group may be preferable. A FAGS candidate list was proposed for membership of the Transition Team, composed of: Philip Woodworth (FAGS Secretary), Philip Wilkinson (URSI representative in the FAGS Council), Ruth Neilan (IUGG representative in the FAGS Council and IGS Central Bureau Director) and Nicole Capitaine (IAU Representative and FAGS President). In case that a larger group of 5 of each of FAGS and WDC would be acceptable to ICSU, then it was proposed that Bernd Richter (Director of the Central Bureau of the IERS, which is the largest FAGS Service) be asked to take part also. [Following the meeting, this suggestion was broadly agreed to by ICSU.]

7. Tour de table of reports from Services summarising recent work

Brief presentations were made by several Services with regard to their recent work. Their annual reports may be inspected for more information.

8. Any other business and plans for future meetings

Plans for further meetings are dependent on the ICSU recommendations for establishment of the World Data System. A next meeting will be held when plans are clearer.

Minutes constructed by Philip Woodworth