

Minutes

INTERACT III

Station Managers' Forum IV

Hybrid meeting

24 November 2021



Kilpisjärvi Biological Station, Finland



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Minutes

All videos from this meeting are available online:

Wednesday - Station Managers Forum:

https://youtu.be/47ea8j_qCXg

Thursday - Technical workshop part 1:

Morning: <https://youtu.be/GzGgqd5eKjk>

Intro to station tour: https://youtu.be/W4Ck55EFs_E

Afternoon: <https://youtu.be/78oDt8S4nZs>

Friday - Technical workshop part 2:

<https://youtu.be/uafYmjnBqC4>

Presentations are available at: <https://eu-interact.org/resources/presentations-interact-iii/>

Welcome

Morten Rasch welcomed all participants to the meeting. Due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, this year's Station Managers' Forum was held as a hybrid meeting, allowing participants to join online. The meeting was well attended by 28 participants at the meeting and 23 online participants representing 46 stations from 13 countries.

Activities since last meeting

By Morten Rasch

Book publications

Several new INTERACT books have been published and are now available on the INTERACT website - <https://eu-interact.org/publication/>:

- 'Images of Arctic Science' - 800 pictures from 100 photographers was submitted to the photo competition and a big thanks goes out to all who participated. The coffee table book will be handed out during the book launch Wednesday evening.
- 'INTERACT Fieldwork Communication and Navigation Guidebook' – cooperation with APECS (Association of Polar Early Career Scientists) and presented by Josefine Lenz.
- 'INTERACT Reducing the Environmental Impacts of Arctic Fieldwork' – guidebook for scientists on how to reduce environmental impact of arctic fieldwork.

Upcoming products:

- 'INTERACT Reducing the Environmental Impact of Arctic Research Stations' - ready for layout.
- 'INTERACT Reducing the CO2 Emission from Arctic Science' - APECS author group established and first draft received.



International workshop

In March 2021, a workshop was organized by FARO, ARICE, APECS, EPB and INTERACT about International Access to Research Infrastructure in the Arctic - <https://faro-arctic.org/news/nyhed/artikel/workshop-during-assw-2021>. A workshop report will soon be made available and the group is working on a journal publication.

A follow-up workshop is planned for the ASSW in Tromsø in March 2022.

Arctic Permit Systems and regulation

By *Svenja Holste, APECS*

Presentation of an 'Arctic Permit Systems' feature for the INTERACT homepage (process, contents and future efforts), which everyone is encouraged to visit - <https://eu-interact.org/accessing-the-arctic/arctic-fieldwork-permits-and-regulations/>.

The website provides country specific links to information for the following topics:

- Cross border travel (persons, equipment, samples, and chemicals).
- Access to specific areas.
- Permits to conduct fieldwork and collect samples.
- Field instrumentation.
- Safety equipment.
- Regional/local permits.

Country information is available for USA, Canada, The Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden.

The overall idea with the website is to make INTERACT the place to seek information concerning permits of relevance to fieldwork in the Arctic.

The inspiration to make an INTERACT overview of permit systems and barriers came from the Arctic Council's Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation that should facilitate and improve scientific research cooperation among the eight Arctic States. The agreement was ratified by all parties and entered into force in May 2018. Among the key words for the agreement is access - access to areas, infrastructure and data.

The website will be maintained and if there is any comments to the information, please contact the SMF. A thorough review of the content will be made each year.

An INTERACT survey concerning efficiency of the Arctic science agreement is scheduled later in the program and any problems reported about cross-border travel will then later be reported to Arctic Council.

INTERACT GIS developments

By *Elmer Topp-Jørgensen*

Umeå and SMF lead the development of the system, and Elmer showed a preview of what they have been working on for the past months.



Recent developments and plans ahead includes restructuring of the system with focus on:

- Improved GIS platform with thematic background maps (e.g. permafrost extent, vegetation, soil types, tree line, etc.).
- Station catalogue information integrated in system.
- Option to link to stations own websites and application systems.
- Filtering/search function to identify stations with specific facilities, natural features, existing monitoring, etc. Possible to combine many parameters.

Please contact Elmer if you have any thematic background maps that are relevant to display or if you have any specific wishes or ideas to share. It was suggested to include a layer on population density.

Other questions: Does the system allow mapping of species occurrences?

Currently this is not an option, but the system includes metadata option for projects at the station, so you can link to this type of projects, but map data need to be hosted elsewhere.

When logging in as station manager, there is a new and more logic structure for entering information (under different headlines) and it is possible to include logos (station/institution) and social media platforms under the station profile.

Stations that have their own application system can upload project metadata to the system – making them searchable for scientists using INTERACT GIS. The INTERACT GIS management organization will look into possibilities of harvesting project metadata from existing repositories, to minimize workload for station managers.

The SMF team will make sure that existing information is transferred to the new version (as much as possible) before it is launched.

When launched all station managers must log into INTERACT GIS and check that the information already in the system is correct and add information for new or missing fields. The SMF team will send out an e-mail with instructions when the new system is launched.

INTERACT GIS Management Organization

By Elmer Topp-Jørgensen

INTERACT GIS is now ready to establish the INTERACT GIS Management Organization and would like to have 3-4 stations to join.

Volunteers now included:

- Tanja Lindholm from Kilpisjärvi.
- Annika Kristoffersson from Abisko.
- Scott Johnson from CHARS.
- Nina Filippova from Mukhrino.
- Chris Andrews from Cairngorms.



Besides that Morten Rasch (SMF), Elmer-Topp Jørgensen (SMF), Britta Löfvenberg (Umeå IT) and a SITES representative (National network of stations in Sweden contributing to the development of the system) will participate in the management organization.

Communication Seminar

By Martin Breum

Martin gave a presentation on how to work with media from an Arctic research station perspective, including how to make a media plan, incl. clear aim of plan and identification of key message to convey.

Martin also presented five ways to attract media attention:

1. News / current events.
2. Identification / real people.
3. Impact / why is it important?
4. Conflict / controversy.
5. Sensational / fascination / adventure.

The session included two-on-two elements where station managers brainstormed on key messages and suggested station specific news story headlines.

See the presentation online. All are welcome to contact Martin via mb@martinbreum.dk

Covid-19, research stations and meetings

By Morten Rasch

A plenum discussion on how stations have and will cope with Covid-19, including sharing of experiences, lessons learned and ideas for coping with future outbreaks. Points raised included:

- Following authority guidelines: Identify authority contacts that can provide advice in case there are changes in the Covid-19 situation – define when authorities should be contacted.
- Less disturbance and new opportunities: Covid-19 also resulted in less disturbance as there were no tourists, and new opportunities as it was easier to get close to the animals.
- Stations can assist in data collection: In house staff could support science under guidance from scientists (both internal and external) – given that resources are available. Positive coping experience, similar to 'Remote Access', but amount of projects often needs to be reduced. On site staff need the right competences which requires simple methodologies and good manuals.
- Staff consequences: Some stations experienced that when no guests could arrive there was less money and hence loss of staff. Other stations used lock down to focus on applications leading to contrary experiences with increased demand for new staff.

Q: Are we in INTERACT prepared for a pandemic – should we change from more TA to RA?

- Yes, if the field work is relatively simple. Sometimes remote instructions are too complicated. Maybe other external projects or expeditions on site could be willing to help sometimes – depending on the requests from external scientists and the resources available.

- RA applications often underestimate the time needed in the field and for transportation. It is, however, possible to report back to applicants and INTERACT/Hannele if the man hours in RA applications looks unrealistic low. A dialogue can then try to identify a more realistic time for the specific tasks included in the study.

It was suggested to allocate a session on RA and problems related to RA at the next meeting, so station managers can be better at providing RA in the future.

Q: In SMF we have arranged online thematic webinars between the physical meetings. Was this a good idea?

- Yes, these webinars should continue.

Q: Should we keep online meetings only or less physical meetings?

- Physical meetings are preferred due to the different time zones, engagement and beneficial informal discussions during coffee breaks.
- Hybrid meetings preferred as it enables remote participation for those who cannot attend, do not have funds for travelling, want to limit GHG emissions from travel or only have interest in a limited number of sessions.
- Hybrid meetings allow more people from stations to participate and give a sense of openness that allow more participants to join and feel part of the community.

Conclusion: SMF will make hybrid meetings in the future.

Reducing CO₂ from travel

By Svenja Holste

APECS have established an author group to work with “CO₂ Reduction in Arctic Science”, that will come out with recommendation on how to reduce CO₂ in a new INTERACT Pocket guide book. The background for this is the fact that academic flights account for the largest share of carbon-intensive activities, and for our individual carbon footprint, travel has the highest impact. Academic flight include conference trips and tavel to do fieldwork, which mostly takes place in more remote areas and therefore are even more challenging to reduce CO₂ emissions. The pocket guide will therefore focus on travel related to :

Fieldwork

- Travel to the Arctic
- Field site access
- Remote Sensing and Virtual Access
- Living in the Arctic
- Environmental costs of data and electronics

Scientific life

- Conferences and scientific gathering
- How to decarbonize conference travel

The pocket guide will be published in 2022.



Barriers in Arctic Science - Survey

By Svenja Holste

Svenja gave a short introduction to the Arctic Council Agreement for Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation and the survey developed jointly by APECS, EPB (European Polar Board) and SMF and participants were given 20 minutes to fill out the survey. All stations were also asked to fill out a small questionnaire on what they would like to discuss in relation to the Arctic Science Agreement during an open plenum discussion.

Topics included:

- Communications.
- Cooperation.
- Access.
- Centralization.

Almost all replies was on the communication part – i.e. info about how to promote the science agreement in the research community.

There was general frustration over the lack of knowledge about the agreement among the station managers. It was recommended that the individual countries should do more to introduce the agreement to their scientific communities and logistics operators. The National Point of Contacts should promote this through national networks.

It was suggested to also expand the survey to also include knowledge from the INTERACT TA user community, and potentially use this forum also to track developments in the knowledge of the agreement over time.

There seems not to be a formalized system for implementing the agreement and spreading information about it in many countries.

In Denmark, the list does not specify who to contact in relation to Greenland or the Faroe Islands. The agreement has, at the political level, been a great success, and it has been used on a few occasions to facilitate cross border cooperation, but the knowledge about the agreement remains low.

INTERACT will, through The European Polar Board and Forum of Arctic Research Operators, communicate the results from the survey to the Arctic Council system.

Energy and waste handling survey

By Elmer Topp-Jørgensen

Under Task 2.5 – A cleaner Arctic (related to WP8), Subtask 2.5.1 will make a survey on energy use and sources (heat and electricity), plastic types and usage, and waste handling at INTERACT stations to document current consumption and emission levels (M2.22). A survey has been developed based on input at previous Station Managers' Fora and all station managers are asked to fill out the survey before December 6. Elmer stressed that the SMF team need this information to produce deliverables, online tools and publications that is required by EU and desired by the community. A link to the survey was distributed by the INTERACT Secretariat (Katharina Beckmann) -



https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1beUlnNByW2U4Yw_RcHuNysqJpd_5TMVA2psQ6XWwpeY/edit#responses.

Tourism pocket guides

By Jan Dick

At the last physical INTERACT meeting in Sweden, station managers filled out a matrix mapping out research stations interest in and opportunities for tourism at the stations. Jan has looked into the survey and identified the potential tourist sites, i.e. stations that have accommodation and where tourists are allowed.

Two pocket guides will be produced. One for research stations on how to cope with tourism and one for tourists on how to behave around research stations.

Break out groups were used to provide examples on how stations are dealing with tourism, suggested best practices and benefits of working with tourists. Examples were divided into different general types: 1 Awareness raising, 2. Nudging and 3. Regulations. Groups provided input via online Google docs. The Google docs will remain available for some time after the meeting for everyone to provide input to and Jan will then look at the results and include information when developing the pocket guides.

Open House days at research stations

By Morten Rasch

Under Task 2.4 Station outreach: Educating local communities and decision makers, a Subtask 2.4.1 will (i) develop courses and community based monitoring programmes on environmental issues of local relevance for schools and/or high schools near four stations (M2.18), (ii) arrange 'Open House' thematic days for the general public at a range of INTERACT Stations with focus on Climate Change, invasive species and plastics (M2.19-20).

Milestone 2.19 'Open House' thematic days on respectively invasive species and plastic at minimum ten research stations. Due date: months 31 and 40 of INTERACT III.

Several stations volunteered to participate:

1. NiBio Svanhovd.
2. GINR.
3. Kluane Lake.
4. Finse.
5. Kevo.
6. Mukhrino.
7. FINI.
8. Arctic Station, GL.
9. Khibiny.
10. Arctic DTU.
11. Cairngorms.

Themes for the open house days will be discussed at meetings with involved stations.



Suggested timing:

In Nuuk there is a Cultural night on January 2022, which could be an idea.

Generally, the summer is too busy a period on the stations, so it was suggested to have the open house during autumn or winter. It seemed difficult to find a suitable date that suit all stations and hence it should maybe be up to the station themselves to decide. This will be discussed at future meetings by involved stations.

SMF will call for a first meeting between involved stations to develop the ideas further. After the SMF meeting, deadlines for both milestones have been postponed to September 2022.

Open floor

Kluane Lake Research Station – education initiative

By *Matthew Ayre*

The station has a desire to increase education for young people of age 14-16. In 2019, the station has worked with a high school in Calgary and 10-12 students came to visit the station. It took two years to get the permissions for the visit, as it was outside the province. The visit had a high impact on the students. The station would like to do more of this – inspire the next generation of researchers. The station partnered with teachers and will now run a program (funded) to get more students to Kluane.

Mukhrino Field Station – Cool developments

By *Evgeny Zarov and Nina Filippova*

During the last couple of years, the station has received several grants and the station has increased the number of staff from 8 to more than 40 persons. The grants should help to attract foreign researchers – a new lab is established with a lead professor from Finland. There are three Eddy covariance towers installed; two sites are located in forest and peatland, with 7 and 12 m tall eddy covariance towers, respectively. Site 3 has a 40 m tall tower. The station also has a molecular approach to study biodiversity and the management of biodiversity data. A new molecular lab is established and TA groups are welcome to come and work on this.

The station is open for collaboration!

Koltur Research Station and Nature Reserve

By *Janus Hansen*

One island in the Faroes Islands was given to the Natural History Museum of Faroes. The site has significant cultural values, but also natural values. It is an extension of the museum and the plan is to develop it into a research station.

Field work started in 2019. The grazing of sheep will be reduced to only include a part of the island. The buildings on the island are owned by the museum - some old renewed houses are used by the museum and there are some modern houses, where the island manager lives. The plan is to make exhibitions, install lab facilities and build new accommodation houses. A sampling site for long-term monitoring will also be established. The station would like to seek inspiration in the INTERACT network to help develop protocols for field work, security, sampling, data collection, avoid invasive



species, etc. Input for meteorological equipment also needed. The station hopes to see many visitors and school classes.

Closing of SMF 4

Morten Rasch closed the meeting thanking all participants for their constructive input and vibrant discussions. The SMF work package will arrange online seminars in the months to come and look forward to seeing all again soon.