

Minutes of the Seventh Meeting of the InterMARGINS Steering Committee

9th April 2003

Room Gallieni 4, Acropolis Conference Centre, Nice, France

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The meeting was opened by the Chairman Prof. Bob Whitmarsh at 1635.
- 1.2 Those present, representing 11 countries, were Warner Brueckmann, Eric Deville, Jan Inge Faleide, Eulalia Gracia, Bilal Haq, Jean-Pierre Henriet, Stuart Henrys, Xianglong Jin, Garry Karner, Sylvie Leroy, Jiabiao Li, Mingbi Li, Jean Mascle, Onno Oncken, Luis Pinheiro, Brian O'Reilly, Ludwig Stroink, Olaf Svenningsen and Tony Watts. Apologies for absence were received from Fred Davey, Paul Egerton, Dietmar Muller, Wonn Soh, Rupert Sutherland and Phil Symonds.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The Chairman introduced the Agenda and mentioned that the major item of business was to approve the new Constitution. He explained that due to the relatively short time available for the meeting he had rearranged the Agenda to allow for items that would require the most discussion to be taken first. This meant that unfortunately National Reports would have to wait until last. The Agenda was accepted.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th December, 2002, in San Francisco during the Fall AGU Meeting, were circulated and accepted.

4. Matters arising

The principal matters arising, not covered by later items in the Agenda, were actions on the Chairman as follows,

- 4.1 Information about which proposals had been funded by the European Science Foundation (ESF) was still awaited but Prof. Watts reported that he hoped it would appear on the ESF web site by the end of the month.

- 4.2 The Chairman reported that he had not been able to compile information about the current state of margins-related proposals to the International Ocean Drilling Project (IODP) for lack of time (he had been at sea during January and February) and resources. He planned to employ an assistant in the InterMARGINS Office as soon as possible.
- 4.3 Similarly the setting up of 'country' pages on the InterMARGINS web site had been delayed but was planned in the near future.
- 4.4 The Chairman had not yet contacted the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission regarding ways to assist scientists from less developed countries.
- 4.5 The Chairman reported that the InterMARGINS sponsored student prize of 400 euros for the best poster/talk in the Session on 'Continental Margin Dynamics: conjugate margins and mantle exhumation during rifting' had been awarded to Philip Ball from the University of London, UK for his poster entitled 'Constraints on continental break-up within the Great Australian Bight from gravity and magnetic data analyses'. The poster by Helen Lau, Dalhousie University, Canada was also highly commended. In reply to a question from Dr Karner the Chairman responded that the prize had been awarded from a field of 12 student posters on the basis of the criteria adopted by the Tectonophysics Section at the EUG/EGS/AGU meeting. These emphasised aspects of presentation and content.

5. Membership status

The Chairman invited those present from China, Germany and Norway to explain the current situation regarding InterMARGINS membership of those countries.

- 5.1 Professor Jin stated that the People's Republic of China would like to join, initially as an Associate Member. The Chinese scientific community welcomed the establishment of InterMARGINS. China had a national project on the Continental Margins of the West Pacific which was headed by Dr Jiabiao Li. Prof. Jin proposed that a Workshop for about 50 people be held in China on West Pacific margins in the Autumn 2003 or perhaps in association with another planned international meeting in China in Autumn 2004. China could offer support for this workshop which was proposed to be in Hangzhou. Chinese scientists had new results to present and would like to promote international collaboration. The Chairman

responded that he was delighted to welcome China as a member of InterMARGINS. He would contact Dr Ming Bi Li about how InterMARGINS might assist the workshop, e.g. by suggesting the names of potential speakers, after the meeting.

5.2 Dr Stroink reported that discussions were still going on in Germany about whether to join InterMARGINS as a Principal or an Associate member. Membership was discussed at the last meeting of the GEOTECHNOLOGIEN Program Steering Committee where it was asked what were the goals of InterMARGINS. Although the Committee supports international collaboration it refused, so far, to pay from the GEOTECHNOLOGIEN budget. The program is a broad programme with 13 priority objectives among which research on Continental Margins is only one. The Committee supports InterMARGINS in principle but decided to seek other financial resources. Prof. Oncken added that Germany wanted to see a clearer definition of the benefits of joining InterMARGINS and of the scientific rationale of the Programme.

5.3 Dr Faleide reported that a recent meeting of the Norwegian Research Council had been very positive about joining InterMARGINS. The subscription had to appear as a line-item in the Research Council budget. To this end he would apply in mid-June and should receive confirmation by the autumn of 2003 that Norway would join as a Principal Member in 2004. The Chairman thanked Dr Faleide and said that Norway would be a very welcome member of the InterMARGINS community.

6. Adoption of the new Constitution

The Committee considered a tabled draft of the new Constitution, paragraph by paragraph. A number of changes were made. The principal change was to abolish the concept of separate Founding Members and Principal Members. Although at present Principal Members pay subscriptions at two different rates in the longer term this difference would be abolished. The Chairman undertook to circulate a final draft of the Constitution to all member countries for final approval.

7. Programme Plan

The Chairman opened the discussion on the Programme Plan which was required by the new Constitution. He listed some General Objectives but stressed the need for Specific Objectives too with definite deadlines. Some General Objectives were to create

country-by-country web pages, issue a Newsletter twice a year, encourage and financially enable, where necessary, collaboration between coastal states and scientists working on the margins of such states, to set up Working Groups, to sponsor Conference Sessions and associated conference costs, to co-ordinate with IODP. A Specific Objective might be to arrange workshop meetings or special sessions at the 2003 Fall AGU or 2004 Spring EGS meetings.

Dr Karner drew parallels between InterRIDGE activities and what InterMARGINS might achieve. For example, InterRIDGE had sponsored workshops and conference speakers. He also pointed out that US MARGINS had arranged successful meetings that were either relatively informal workshops or more formal Theoretical Institutes with a Summer School-like format that led to a published report.

Dr Karner reported that he had received an email from Dr Wonn Soh regarding collaboration within the InterMARGINS programme. Dr Soh wanted to see workshops or even cruise participation sponsored by InterMARGINS.

The Chairman thanked members for their contributions and concluded the discussion by asking those present to send him ideas for InterMARGINS workshops, theoretical institutes or other activities by 15 May 2003.

The Chairman then outlined a Financial Plan for 2003 and 2004. If no more members joined InterMARGINS, which now seemed unlikely, then subscription income was likely to balance the baseline expenditure of the Office and allow a modest sum of around USD7500 for Sponsorship, whereas if, more optimistically, InterMARGINS gained two new Principal Members and two new Associate members, then an extra USD30,000 would become available for InterMARGINS activities.

8. InterMARGINS Office report

The Chairman gave a brief report of activities in the InterMARGINS Office since December 2003. Because he had been at sea for almost all of January and February activity had been at a low level. However it was now becoming apparent that an Assistant was needed in the InterMARGINS Office as the demands on the Office began to ramp up and he had begun to make the necessary arrangements. He made a plea for a greater flow of information from member countries, and others, into the Office so that, for example, the web site could be more complete and kept as up-to-date as possible.

9. Financial statement

The Chairman reported a balance of 38,500 pounds sterling (about USD 60,000) at the end of March 2003.

10. Date of the next meeting

It was agreed to hold the Eighth Meeting of the Steering Committee during the Fall AGU in San Francisco in December 2003.

11. National reports

The Chairman regretted that as time had almost run out it was not possible to receive presentations of National Reports from all those present. It was hoped that, in future, Steering Committee meetings at EGS Nice could be held in a different venue where more time was available. He apologised for the shortage of time and asked that any national reports should be sent to him by the end of May 2003 for inclusion in the next InterMARGINS Newsletter. Nevertheless he invited anyone with an urgent announcement to briefly present it.

11.1 Dr Mascle reported that a second phase of GDR Marges had begun in France. GDR Marges was now chaired by himself with the assistance of Dr. Eric Deville and Dr. Sylvie Leroy. The reconstructed GDR Marges contained more scientific topics. Recently there had been 41 proposals in answer to a call for proposals and finance would be allocated in May or June but already GDR Marges had undergone drastic cuts of 25% to its funding.

11.2 Dr Karner reported the excellent news that at last some US MARGINS proposals in the northern Red Sea had been funded.

12. Closure of the meeting

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 1830.