

Minutes of 11th InterMARGINS Steering Committee, Vienna

SM4 room, Austria Center Vienna

14:00-16:00 26th April 2005

1. Welcome

The Chairman thanked all those present. He mentioned the role of InterMargins in promoting international margins research.

2. Self Introduction

Those present were:

Wonn Soh (Japan; Chair)

Tim Minshull (UK)

Julie Morris (USA)

Bilal Haq (USA)

Xianglong Jin (China)

Mingbi Li (China)

Alexandr Rodnikov (Russia)

Ludmilo Zabarinskaya (Russia)

Narumi Takahashi (Japan)

3. Agenda

The agenda that the chairman proposed was adopted.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting that the chairman proposed were agreed.

5. Membership status

The Chairman reviewed the membership status of various countries and asked for confirmation of the status of potential candidates. Principal member countries are Britain, U.S. and Japan. A member country is Norway and an associate member country is China. One of the next potential candidate countries is Portugal. The chairman reported that Germany is also a strong potential candidate, perhaps with a subscription through the Leibnitz Institute, BGR or GFZ Potsdam, particularly in the light of German activities following the Sumatran tsunami. The Russian delegates reported that there was no further progress regarding their potential membership. Chairman hopes that InterMARGINS community will keep in touch with Russia about its membership in the future.

6. InterMARGINS Office Report (January – March 2005).

By Bob Whitmarsh (SOES/SOC, Southampton, UK) 15 April 2005

6.1 Web site. The web site continued to go from strength to strength and to attract an increasing number of hits. For example, an average of 214 visits a day was registered during February 2005. During the same period a summary of information on ships and equipment for barter and exchange was finished. This was the last major section of the web site to be completed. In March some time was spent tidying up the web site and ensuring that a standard format was used throughout.

6.2 Asian Tsunami. Following the tsunami of 26 December 2004 a new section of the web site was set up with the intention of providing information exchange for related margins research (as opposed to tsunami warning systems and prediction). Two significant cruises were mounted at a very short notice and news from these cruises was placed at regular intervals on the web site. It is hoped that this activity will be maintained, at least until the end of 2005. It is known that several other cruises to the epicenter area have been proposed in France and Germany.

6.3 International Year of the Planet Earth (IYPE). The final text for the Oceans brochure has been reviewed and accepted. The editor requested photos to accompany the text and a number were submitted in late March. The publication date of the brochure is unknown.

6.4 Relationship with SCOR. Following the last Steering Committee meeting in December 2004 the chair was instructed to re-contact the Executive Director of SCOR with a request that InterMARGINS be affiliated to that organisation. This was done on 24 January. Ed Urban, the Executive Director, replied that he would need to have a short 2-5 page proposal by June 1, preferably, or at the latest by the end of June. The chair agreed to do this on 26 January.

6.5 Move of the Office to Japan. There has been a flow of emails to Wonn Soh (Chairman Designate), Narumi Takahashi (General Secretary) and Eiichi Kikawa (Executive Advisor) about the handover of the InterMARGINS Office. Some unexpected delays occurred because Dr Soh went to sea to be Principal Scientist on a cruise that surveyed part of the epicenter zone of the 26 December 2004 earthquake off Sumatra. David Geddes, the Southampton-based webmaster, has now reached the end of his contract (31 March 2005) and the site is now 'frozen'. Discussions are ongoing with the new InterMARGINS Office

about the transfer of the web site. A CD copy of the web site has been received by the Japanese Office. The InterMARGINS account at Southampton is being wound up and it is hoped to initiate the transfer of the majority of funds by the end of April if not before. A small sum will be kept back temporarily to cover the cost of paying for hosting the InterMARGINS web site until responsibility has been transferred to the new organisation. The final balance will be in the region of GBP43,000.

6.6 Membership. Efforts continued to attract new members but, so far, with no positive result. On the advice of Brian O'Reilly a letter was written to a new contact in Ireland but this produced no response. Strenuous efforts were made directly and indirectly through another Spanish scientist, to contact Dr Montse Torne in the CSIC, Spain who had seemed so positive about a Spanish institution joining InterMARGINS when she attended the Steering Committee in April 2004. Again, no reply was received from Dr Torne via either route. Finally, no news was forthcoming from Warner Brueckmann in the Leibniz Institute, Kiel about his institute joining InterMARGINS.

7. Accounting Report

The chairman presented a financial report prepared by his predecessor, Prof. Bob Whitmarsh. A balance of \$82,069.80 has been handed over to the new office.

8. Activity Report

8.1 Japan:

The Chairman reported. A new working group report has recommended a new national strategy for marine geoscience:

1. Research in deep waters (>4000 m) will be encouraged
2. More exploration-based proposals will be encouraged
3. There will be a tighter linkage with IODP and other international programs.

In the next 5 years, work will be supported in the Mediterranean, far east Asian seas, including China/Vietnam/Taiwan, Sumatran/Andaman Indonesian waters, and Arctic seas and other seas with poor weather conditions. A recent cruise offshore Sumatra had participants from the US and Germany. Many submersible cruises have been conducted in Japanese and nearby waters. Chairman reported that InterMargins Japan has been invited to be a watchdog on the national shiptime steering/planning committee.

8.2 USA:

Julie Morris reported that the US Margins program received a good review from NSF. It

was suggested that the program should be re-reviewed in 3-4 years time and that a new generation of margin research should be initiated. The program has put together a Web site (www.margins.wustl.edu) with maps of each of the focus areas of the program. In a recent funding cycle, 9-10 new projects were funded. The remaining source-to-sink component in New Zealand has now been funded. Some projects have been funded in Gulf of Papua in next three years; in Central America; also an onshore-offshore project in the Gulf of California (without active source seismics); an onshore program in the Red Sea area working on existing data; a sediment input project at Nankai; an Izu-Bonin-Marianas program as a subduction factory study. A joint US-Japanese 3D seismic program in the Nankai Trough is planned as a seismogenic zone study. Most of the expensive projects providing the geophysical framework of the study areas have been funded. There will be a workshop in late 2005/early 2006 to integrate results from the Gulf of California. There will be a theoretical institute on sediments from source to sink in the summer of 2006, probably in the western US in the form of a moving field trip. The Margins steering committee emphasised the importance of data-sharing. Metadata from NSF-funded cruises must be archived within 2 months of the cruise, and data must be archived within 2 years of the cruise. There is interest in developing open database exchange with other countries through InterMargins, and Dr Morris suggested that a proposal on data exchange should be developed prior to the next InterMargins meeting. The Chairman suggested that closer links were needed also with the EuroMargins program. Dr Morris suggested that InterMargins could also put together an international margins e-mail list.

8.3 China:

Professor Jin from China reported that the current phase of China's margins programs are coming to an end.

8.4 UK:

Tim Minshull reported that the UK Ocean Margins LINK program was coming to an end, with the last major funding round completed in the fall of 2003. Five projects have finished in the last 12 months and there are eight ongoing major projects on a range of topics. A meeting is planned to review results from the program in January 2006, with invited international keynote speakers if funding is available. Three UK scientists participated in a swath mapping cruise on a naval vessel offshore Sumatra in the wake of the tsunami earthquake.

9. Future plans:

9.1 SCOR:

The Chairman reported that he had received a letter from the SCOR Executive Committee suggesting that a formal letter from InterMargins asking to affiliate to SCOR would be needed by the end of June.

9.2 International Year of Planet Earth:

The Chairman suggested that InterMargins does not propose to do any work itself under IYPE, but may endorse initiatives from other programs such as Ridge, InterRidge, US Margins, etc.

9.3 Future Direction of InterMARGINS program

The Chairman outlined some ideas for future direction of InterMARGINS activities:

- 1) The strategy is based on the promotion of workshops and meetings sponsored by InterMARGINS and improvement of our web site.
- 2) For endorsement of grass-roots proposals and communications, (1) call for support of workshop and meeting to the international community and (2) call for news and information to web site and newsletters about ongoing/planning InterMARGINS-related scientific programs. Most InterMARGINS related research at the sea is in some country's national waters where international collaboration requires governmental permission. Achieving a balance between (a) local and global issues (b) active and passive margins and (c) focused and broader fields is necessary. An international call for proposals for workshops/meetings should be open, and it should be made clear how InterMargins support can be obtained. The results of a workshop/meeting should contribute to the interests of member countries. Some topics of interest to InterMARGINS are: natural gas hydrates, environmental and natural hazards work, advanced technology, and sharing of measurement techniques. The chairman proposed that proposals should be evaluated by a "proposal screening committee" consisting of two members each from the US, UK and Japan, and one each from Norway and China, with a chairman chosen from its membership. The main task of the committee is to evaluate proposals and make ranking, then recommend them to the steering committee. It is important to keep transparency to avoid "conflicts of interest". The committee should not need to meet physically but interact by e-mail. Dr Haq suggested that the committee would need to decide which issues are important. Dr Morris emphasised that rapid action was required, since meetings take a long time to set up, and that the committee should solicit proposals as well as having an open call.
- 3) The chairman mentioned that the web site is quite important and the current status is good. But, the web site should be improved further. Currently there are about 50 hits per day;

target is to increase the hit count, introduce the next cruise plan, and keep the cruise list up to date. Further items to be considered include:

- promoting/endorsing image and photo data
- series of global charts of parameters such as bathymetry, satellite gravity, age of the oceanic crust etc.
- some educational material describing continental margins
- the web site was too structured and had too many layers. It was important to provide the required information in about three clicks

4) Newsletters are printed and mailed to members countries. Web site is useful for downloading and printing the InterMARGINS newsletters. Open question is if it is still useful to publish the Newsletter on paper as had been done for the first three newsletters or digital quick response version by web site and/or by email. During this discussion, a member expressed an anxiety how the newsletter downloaded from web site can be justified. Dr Haq expressed that PDF file-downloaded from web site could be justified. The chairman mentioned that the costs for publishing newsletter could be saved if the number of the printed newsletter could be reduced due to use of web site, and that the surplus costs could be paid to support workshops.

10. Items for approval:

10.1 Office management in Japan:

To manage effectively the office, the chair has approached the Advanced Earth Science & Technology Organization (AESTO), which is an independent organisation dedicated to promotion of earth system science. They will support:

- Editing, publishing and mailing Newsletter
- Opening bank account for subscriptions
- Updating and managing web site
- Supporting workshops
- Managing circulation list of InterMARGINS

10.2 Work on Web site

\$3,845 has been spent so far on web site work for first three months and \$75 has been spent for web site fee. The AESTO budget Apr.-Dec. 2005 was presented. The break down is follows.

- Newsletter (A4, 12 pages, 1000 copies, SAL, 1000 places, twice publication):
\$10,984.11- Management of web page (7.5 hour/day x 3 days/month): \$ 11,317.29-

Web site fee: \$ 224.55- Registration fee of web domain name: \$ 53.00- Support of the office (7.5 hour/day x 20 days/month): \$ 8,383.18- TAX of 5 %: \$ 1,536.31

It would leave \$23,581 for support of workshop/meetings in this fiscal year, in addition to any balance carried forward from the previous Chairman. Budget plan including office management supported by AESTO was basically agreed. But it was unclear which countries have paid their subscription to date - it was confirmed that the US and Chinese subscriptions have not been paid for 2005 yet. Hence here should be funding for 1-2 workshops. Office will confirm the current status of the subscription.

The chair reported that the Web site will stay at the same address, and that the next newsletter will be published in July, with a deadline of May 31st.

11. Next meeting schedule:

The next meeting will be held in the second week of December at the Fall AGU meeting.

12. Acknowledgement

The chairman gave thanks to the contributions of Bob Whitmarsh and E. Kikawa.