

SIPRI SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING

31 March 2020

MINUTES

Participants

Sibylle Bauer, Stephanie Blenckner, Luc van de Goor, Maria Kaemmerle, Sigrún Rawet, Dan Smith

Helena Berger (present for item 3)

Note-taker Elena Haapaniemi

The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

1. MoM approval

- The minutes from the SMT meeting on March 24 were approved.

2. Matters arising

- NTR.

3. Corona virus

- NTR.

4. Report back

- Maria reported back on the meeting with the new financial system provider. The system implementation will be postponed until September. At the same time, Maria and the finance team continue to plan for the staff training. Worst case scenario, the training will be organised in a virtual format.
- Sigrún updated the SMT on the intensive discussions aimed at moving the Forum into the online format. The Forum team starts to see the light at the end of the tunnel when it comes to the technical solution. Sigrún and the team are working on scheduling too so as to be able to accommodate participants from various time zones and to make sure to keep the public interest. The SMT agreed to brainstorm on Forum themes at the next meeting.
- Sigrún informed the SMT that SIPRI is ready to go public on postponing the SIPRI Lecture. We are now looking at new dates, ideally May 24, 2021, when the Governing Board will meet next year. This needs to be negotiated with Madeleine Albright and her team.
- Sigrún informed the SMT that the Governing Board meeting in May will be a virtual one. The SMT agreed to discuss the Board agenda at the next meeting.
- Sibylle informed the SMT that later during the week she will participate in an online conference on autonomous weapons systems organised by the German MFA. It will be a good opportunity to see what works best in a virtual context. Sibylle will share experience and lessons learnt with colleagues.
- The SMT discussed the draft paper on Russia's military expenditure by Siemon.
- The SMT discussed feedback from the participants to the training in presentation techniques organised at SIPRI last February. Dan will follow up as needed.

- Dan updated the SMT on the idea of transforming the attic into additional office space following the visit of a fire specialist and a representative of the landlord. A prerequisite is permission from the municipality to build a fire escape.
- Dan has been invited by the MSB to participate in forward thinking on the long-term impact of Covid-19 on governance and society. This could also be linked to the Forum. Sigrún informed the SMT that Marina is working on a paper on this subject.

5. Staffing & project issues

- The SMT congratulated Helena on successfully concluding the negotiation with the Swedish Migration Authority that resulted in SIPRI being able to speed up the process of obtaining work and residence permits for new staff.
- Maria provided an update on several ongoing project applications.
- Luc informed the SMT that both RAs with the MENA program have now received two months consultancy contracts.

6. Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Anti-discrimination SIPRI Policy of 2014

- Dan reminded the SMT that Elena is working on a draft Safeguarding policy. This work should build on the existing strategies and policies. Among questions this work has thrown up are:
 - SIPRI introduced an Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Anti-discrimination policy in 2014. According to the policy, a review of it is overdue. SMT agreed to take this on in due course.
 - SMT agreed to ask Helena to look into other potential gaps and needs in our policies and procedures.

7. Timeline for rolling out the indicators for SIPRI strategy

- The document will be discussed at the Board meeting in May so it needs to be ready on 8 May in order that it can be included in the papers for the meeting. Each cluster needs to come up with its list of indicators and benchmarks for the relevant part of the strategy. The Conflict, Peace and Security cluster has already completed this exercise. The deadline for submitting the lists to the SMT for final approval is April 28. Maria reiterated that Fred and Nikos are available to provide advice and technical support to the teams.

8. Project implementation in the Covid-19 context

- The SMT reviewed the impact of Covid-19 on all SIPRI projects, one by one, according to the list drafted by Maria and Lena. The conclusion is that more than half of our work is heavily impacted by the corona virus outbreak. In some cases, this impact may even be positive, in others it is rather straightforward, while quite a few projects are – or will be in the near future – heavily and negatively affected.
- In practical terms, the immediate follow up should be twofold: the project leader should discuss financial implications and do necessary re-budgeting with the financial team, discuss with the DoS, re-assess the time frame and discuss with the funder(s).
- Sigrún encouraged all staff to remember to look for possible opportunities, along with obvious challenges, while rethinking and re-budgeting a project.
- The SMT presumes that there will be no physical meetings at least until the end of June. No one can predict how the situation will evolve in the autumn. There may be another wave of infection or, if there is no second wave, many actors will be trying to squeeze too many events in the second half of the year. We need to be aware of both scenarios in our planning.

- Steph urged all project leads to remember that the outreach team is already under great pressure. It is imperative that to keep the outreach team in the loop of all changes in projects.
- Summarizing the discussion, Dan concluded that for all projects, we need to look if there is an impact and, in the affirmative, how to adapt or how to exploit this impact.

9. AOB

- NTR.

Action Points

- Finalizing the commentary on Russia's military expenditure - Steph
- Follow up on the feedback on the training in presentation techniques – Dan
- Rethinking and re-budgeting ongoing and near-future projects – all project leads, Finance team and DoSes

Items carried forward

- Governing Board agenda
- Forum themes
- SSC, way forward – the SMT
- Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Anti-discrimination Policy
- Building