

**Research Staff Collegium**  
**30 January 2017**  
**Break room**



**Date:** Monday 30 January 11.00-12.15

**Present:** 34 participants, attendance list is enclosed. On Skype: Sibylle

**Agenda:**

1. Minutes of the last meeting and any matters arising
2. Performance Assessment: the SMT's initial review, discussion
3. Finances:
  - a. Budget 2017
  - b. Changing the way we budget
4. Governing Board
  - a. Potential items for GB agenda, 22-23 May
  - b. Candidate for Board membership: Fiona Hill (see CV on following pages)
5. AOB

**Key points:**

1. Minutes of the previous meeting approved.
2. The performance assessments were considered successful, with three possible points of improvement:
  - a. A stronger qualitative assessment on why someone "meets requirements" or "exceeds requirements";
  - b. Line-managers can take into account feedback from subordinates of the one who is being assessed to better analyse their performance as a manager;
  - c. SMT will discuss whether the category "meets requirements" needs to be broken down into multiple sub-categories.
3. On finances:
  - a. The working budget for 2017 is set to 70.7 million SEK.
  - b. The working budget for 2018 will be based on activities and preparation will start in spring 2017.
4. Governing Board:
  - a. Suggestions for the Governing Board (GB) meeting:
    - A discussion on field projects in conflict afflicted areas
    - Direct assistance on strategy, funding, and topics in round-tables
  - b. Fiona Hill was approved as a candidate for the GB by the RSC
5. Communications will start small-scale meetings with staff members on how to conduct outreach, including Twitter, blogs, contact with the traditional press, etc.

### **1. Minutes and any matters arising**

The minutes were approved without comments. The model of Aurelien's minutes, from 24 November 2017, was upheld as a good model for minutes.

### **2. Performance Assessments.**

Performance assessments were conducted in November 2016. SMT looks upon the process reasonably positively, considering this was the first time for researchers. Some points need to be clarified more so people will better understand the process.

One of the main points of discussion was the category "exceeded expectations": when do people exceed expectations, how should this be communicated, and should the category "met expectations" and "exceeded expectations" be broadened into multiple categories. This could include a category that highlights that someone exceeded expectations, but without a pay raise attached (especially in times of a limited budget). However, there was no broad consensus on this issue.

The performance assessment process will be easier in the future, when Job Descriptions (JDs) are sorted out, and clear objectives for the next year have been stated. This will create more level standards across the institute. The concluding assessment by the line manager should include qualitative comments not only on whether someone met the objectives but, if they didn't, what the reason was, to what extent other objectives were met, whether the objectives were too ambitious, etc. Part of the assessment could include what the institute can do for the staff member, including training, personal development, etc. However, that should be within reasonable expectations for an institute like SIPRI.

According to SMT, people should strive to exceed expectations. The objectives should not be too demanding, but should be worthwhile. SIPRI should not increase the workload to create an intolerable work-balance, but if someone is talented or puts in extra effort, that should be celebrated. However, performance is not only measured in quantity (of publications, for example), but also in quality, impact, outreach, etc. One can exceed requirements in different ways.

The second important element of the discussion was whether assessments should include perspectives of subordinates or peers. SMT is not in favour of 360° reviews (reviews that include the perspectives of managers, peers, and subordinates), as these might be affected by popularity, are not as suited for solitary jobs like researcher, can create anxiety, and are time-consuming and expensive to conduct. A balance is important, however; to assess someone's

managing skills, it could be good for the line manager to discuss the assessed person's performance with a subordinate. This can also be done on the initiative of the subordinate. This might be included next year, now that the first big change – doing the performance assessments systematically – has been achieved.

In the future, salary reviews and performance assessments will be further away from each other in time. Furthermore, SIPRI will introduce informal mid-term reviews to discuss the progress on the objectives.

### **3. Finances**

The working budget for 2017 was announced and the total budget is around 70.7 million in 2017. This is a bump from 2016, when it was 62 million SEK. The year 2016 ended in a deficit of around 650.000 SEK as SIPRI was required to pay off a large sum of the repayments to the EU in December, which had initially been budgeted for 2017.

The budget includes 45 million SEK in project grants, half of which was secured in December. This includes the Secure Cities Conference and programme strategic funding. The Secure Cities Conference budget this year will be 5.4 million SEK, up from 3 million in 2016.

There will be two changes in the budget process for 2017:

- The categories in the budget will be arranged according to the 3 cluster activities, as well as communications and support staff.
- The preliminary budget for 2018 will be drafted in spring 2017, instead of autumn 2017.

### **4. Governing Board**

The government has appointed Espen Barth Eide has been appointed to the Governing Board for 5 years, starting on 26 January 2017.

The RSC discussed the agenda for the Governing Board May Meeting 2017. RSC members proposed the following points as suitable for discussion:

- A discussion on direct field activities in conflict areas and how this fits into SIPRI's research strategy;
- A short check-up on the functioning and working of the institute, and whether there is anything that they should be concerned about;
- Find ways to get concrete assistance and strategic direction: which activities should be conducted, what are possible sources of funding, can we get political buy-in. This could include smaller round table discussions with the board members on specific topics.

#### 4 BOOK TITLE

Fiona Hill was approved by the RSC to be approached as a possible member of the Governing Board.

The option was suggested that an overview would be created of all the board members, their expertise, regional focus, and their time of service. This would clarify what expertise the Board is missing, and SIPRI would not have to repeat the same discussion time after time on the areas of competence of the different Board members.

#### **5. AOB**

Communications and editorial will organize “educational intimate round tables,” where staff members will be trained in communications and outreach. This will include small groups in an informal setting, to learn about Twitter, writing blogs, editorial review, contact with the press, etc.