

**Research Staff Collegium
Thursday, 26 October 2023**

In the kitchen

Minute taker: Xiao Liang

1) Notes of the last meeting and any matters arising

No comments on the minutes of the last RSC meeting (21 September).

2) Institute strategy: discussion in groups

- Dan made a PowerPoint presentation on the current state of thinking about the institute strategy for 2024-2029. The notes on the strategy were shared with staff members before the RSC.
- Siemon asked about the specifics of the point on improving data management. Dan clarified that it refers to providing modern technology and sufficient tools for both internal management and external presentation of the databases.
- Claire asked if there would be additional opportunities to discuss the strategy beyond the breakout sessions. Dan confirmed that discussions would continue during and after the board members' visit in a more structured way.
- The RSC was then divided into random breakout groups. To help start discussion, Dan posed four key questions about the new strategy, encouraging the RSC members to discuss other issues as well. The four questions were:
 - What is a 3–5 year vision for each of operations, outreach and each research cluster and programme?
 - What place and role do we each and all have?
 - For scientifically-grounded research conclusion to reach a policy audience, what do we need to know how to do? Do we know it?
 - What does “independent” mean? What does it require?
- Notetakers of each group will send key takeaway points to Dan.

3) Governing board meeting**a. Agenda**

- Joakim presented the agenda for the November Governing Board meeting, which had been shared with staff members prior to the meeting. The main focus of the agenda includes the institute's strategy, finances, new board members, and fundraising. There will also be a public event on unraveling the polycrisis with board members at Medelhavsmuseet.
- Noah asked about if the Board would discuss the recruitment of the next SIPRI director. Dan replied that the informal discussions are ongoing, with formal preparations expected to start with the next Governing Board meeting in May 2024.

b. Membership

- Joakim introduced the plan to appoint two new board members, one of whom would fill a long-vacant position.
- After considering several names, Professor Noha El-Mikawy of Egypt emerged as a strong candidate. She was suggested by a staff member and had also been strongly recommended by one of SIPRI's partners. There is a strong case for Professor El-Mikawy in terms of geographical balance, gender, age and expertise.
- Florian asked about the process of selecting board member candidates and if the strategic value of new members was considered. Dan explained that while the process can be ad hoc, the current process has been thorough and comprehensive. Picking a gender-balanced board comprising people from diverse regions representing different areas of expertise is not easy.
- Laura suggested that the diversity of the board would be easier to ensure if there were more members. Dan agreed that the process is constrained by the relatively small size of the board and pointed out that a larger board that is truly international would be more costly as well
- Simone asked if fundraising benefits are taken into account when nominating candidates. Dan replied that this is not the primary factor. The focus is on the strategic guidance and networks the potential member can bring, which sometimes might include fundraising networks.
- Dan underscored the value of Professor El-Mikawy's Egyptian background for the governing board and for SIPRI. The RSC is asked to consider her nomination, while keeping the door open for other possibilities.

c. Draft budget 2024

- Dan presented the budget forecast for 2024 and income & expenditures for 2023. The core grant of 28.4 MSEK will remain the same in 2024, with a likely 15 MSEK in strategic grant (down from 32 MSEK in 2022 and 20 MSEK in 2023).
- The total turnover for 2024 is estimated at 126 MSEK, with a tiny surplus of 100 thousand SEK, resulting in an overall balanced budget.
- Dan explained that the reduction in the strategic grant in 2023 was covered by spending less and expanding fundraising efforts, and emphasized that the latter must continue in 2024. Several external fundings has been secured, and many applications has been submitted; at present the funding gap in the 2024 budget is 18 MSEK, which is a manageable amount at this point.
- The effect of inflation was considered for this year's salary adjustment, which is pending board approval. This has been also factored into the 2024 budget.
- Siemon asked about the value of keeping and expanding the surplus. Dan agreed with the importance of having a surplus so as to build up the reserve to provide liquidity and address contingencies such as major funding cuts. The current size of the reserve is roughly 15 MSEK. However, for 2024, Dan believes that focusing on achieving a surplus would be the wrong priority. Even so, a surplus might

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occur due to issues like staff recruitment delay. The board will provide further guidance during the coming meeting.

- Nan asked about the possibility of investing reserves to mitigate the effect of inflation. Kristina explained the restrictions on speculating for foundations and the need for liquidity to cover funding delays, so investing the reserve is not an option.

4) RSC representative to the Cooperation Group

- Following up on the previous RSC, Timo organized an all-staff meeting on 20th October to discuss the election of two new representatives to the Cooperation Group and to raise awareness of the Cooperation Agreement.
- The outcome of the meeting is to set up an informal working group (IWG) from across the institute to support the representatives and raise awareness among staff. The IWG will also help create a pool of candidates for future RSC representatives and increase rotation. An email was circulated to collect interest for the IWG, receiving positive responses.
- Nan will serve as interim RSC representative until the end of the year, when two new representatives will be nominated and elected.

5) AOB

- Siemon reminded everyone about the change of clock over the weekend.

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List of Participants

Abeer Ahmad	Jannie Lilja
Cecilia Bagge	Diego Lopes da Silva
Anniek Barnhoorn	Amelie Lutz
Sibylle Bauer	Giovanna Maletta
Barbara Becht	Claire McAllister
Alemnesh Belatchew	Karen Meijer
Noah Bell	Vongai Murugani
Lucie Béraud-Sudreau	Jules Palayer
Mirella Bilalagic	Olle Persson
Stephanie Blenckner	Emelie Poignant Khafagi
Vincent Boulain	Nikos Politis
Amal Bourhrous	Nivedita Raju
Hedvig Brage	Maria Riquier
Kolja Brockmann	Lorenzo Scarazzato
Laura Bruun	Amal Sadki
Simone Bunse	Annika Salisbury
Vladislav Chernavskikh	Kristina Sandberg
Yeoun Choi	Martina Selmi
Frederic Daudon	Katongo Seyuba
Shourjya Deb	Timo Smit
Caroline Delgado	Dan Smith
Tytti Erästö	Magdalena Söderqvist
Shivan Fazil	Sepideh Soltaninia
Vitaly Fedchenko	Fei Su
Joey Fox	Kheira Tarif
Priscilla Frimpong Boateng	Nan Tian
Andrea Gadnert	Cyrielle Trebosc
Mathew George	Caspar Trimmer
Maria Gillgren	Jair van der Lijn
Sarah Glannefors	Luc van de Goor
Leo Guenzel	Joakim Vaverka
Farah Hegazi	Sofie Waller Snygg
Ulla Hurtig Nielsen	Pieter Wezeman
Zain Hussain	Siemon Wezeman
Felicia Kihlberg	Lisa Wiklund Lucas
Shannon Kile	Wiktorsson
Kyungmee Kim	Rachel Yuan
Florian Krampe	Emma Zetterström
Xiao Liang	Jiayi Zhou
Noel Kelly	



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