

NEESPI Steering and Coordinating Committee (NSCC) Session on 24 February, 20006, IIASA, Laxenburg, Austria

Participants:

Markus Erhard, Denmark
Alexander Georgiadi, Russia
Garik Gutman, USA
Alexander Isaev, Russia
Vladimir Kotlyakov, Russia
Richard Lawford, USA (Chair)
Jiyang Liu, China
Sten Nilsson, Austria
Tetsuo Ohata, Japan
Leonid Vedeshin, Russia
Mykola Zalugin, Ukraine
Panmao Zhai, China

Secretary: Nadia Kovaleva (UK)

The Chair opened the meeting with some remarks about the purpose of the meeting and the role of the NSCC. He noted that this committee would concern itself primarily with the governance and resourcing of NEESPI. For this reason membership would be limited to those countries and agencies that were contributing or had an interest in contributing to NEESPI. Comments were then invited from all members concerning the role of NSCC, the involvement of their country or agency in NEESPI and their view of the NEESPI research activities.

V. Kotlyakov (RAS): The Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences is very much involved with projects similar to those being carried out in NEESPI. Russia has 2 important territories: European Russia and Siberia. He indicated several NEESPI working groups have been launched with funding by the state. NEESPI studies are only now being organized. Acad. A. Isaev indicated that from next year RAS will have special funding (much more than before) including money for 1) Basic research and 2) for some special (fundamental) studies. This fund could be as large as 180 000 -200 000 US Dollars per year. RAS has already received \$1 million USD for the International Polar Year (IPY) studies we've already received 1million USD. He also noted that the approval of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) is important for Russian NEESPI studies. He indicated that internationally, NEESPI needed such an umbrella and expressed hope that IGBP would approve NEESPI thus ensuring it could act as an international body. He also noted that some Russian IPY work would support NEESPI.

A. Isaev (RAS): He emphasized the importance of RAS approval of NEESPI projects in Russia. He also noted that there is also the Siberian branch of the Academy of Sciences

that would have an interest in NEESPI and could be a source for additional funds for NEESPI projects.

A. Georgiadi (NEESPI RAS project manager) noted that his time as a project manager had been spent primarily on planning activities.

L. Vedeshin (Working Group US, NASA –RAS) indicated that priority should be given to addressing organizational issues.

P. Zhai (CMA) indicated that Climate change issues are important to China (e.g., ecosystem change, etc). CMA feels interested in this regional cooperation initiative and wishes to promote cooperation between countries. He expressed concerns about Mongolia's possibilities to participate in NEESPI activities.

R. Lawford (International GEWEX Project Office) noted that NEESPI has been presented to IGBP, GEWEX and ILEAPS. However, these programs do not have money. He noted that some international organizations do exist that could allocate money for Mongolia's participation although this could be a role for China.

J. Liu (CAS): In China there is a core budget for NEESPI from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. They have recently signed an agreement with the Siberian Academy of Science. While they do some work in Mongolia (e.g., Flux network) they would like to see the Japanese provide some additional support to ensure NEESPI is truly international. The CAS is currently looking for a partner in Kazakhstan in particular. CAS is seeking to bring more parties under the NEESPI umbrella. He noted that NASA and NOAA could sign agreements with the Chinese government in order to provide funding for NEESPI. However, G. Gutman noted that NASA has a policy that precludes agreements with China.

R. Lawford recommended that an inventory of all existing agreements that impact NEESPI should be developed.

M. Erhard, (EEA HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark), noted that there is need for decision on how NEESPI will proceed in its activities. There seems to be two options: Either NEESPI continues its work as a consortium of international projects and will further look for funding of research activities or it will focus on coordination as an international umbrella for research activities in the region. He hopes to be able to offer some support to NEESPI if it is labeled as an international body and noted that in any case GMES and the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) are potential sources of financial support. He noted that NEESPI needs to further specify and formulate its needs for getting support from EU bodies.

R. Lawford suggested that there was a need for a coordinating body for NEESPI and encouraged country representatives to help define this body.

There was some discussion about whether NEESPI should compete for funding with other projects. G. Gutman indicated that he believe that this approach would not work. G. Gutman also suggested that a listing of EU projects was needed. R. Lawford indicated

that some BALTEX scientists had concerns that NEESPI and BALTEX people might have to apply to the same EU body for money. G. Gutman believes this is a communications problem that needs to be addressed through better communications and outreach.

T. Ohata (Japan): Japan works on the basis of bilateral agreements. In his view the NEESPI umbrella does not yet exist and then NEESPI would have to be popularized in the science community. International approval would be the first step in obtaining Japanese investments in NEESPI. We hope to increase the amount of money in the NEESPI area.

M. Zalogin (Ukraine) was concerned with sustainable development issues in Ukraine and wanted to see how NEESPI could help in addressing them. In particular, regional concerns need to be clarified in the NEESPI program in order to get financial support for work in Ukraine. He noted that NASA has recently signed an agreement with the Ukraine National Space Agency.

G. Gutman (NASA) indicated that NEESPI is reasonably well supported by NASA (>30 recently funded projects). In particular, NASA has supported several regional programs, such as in Amazonia (LBA field campaign) and in North America (NA Carbon Program). Since LBA has come to its final phase, NEESPI represents the primary international program supported by NASA, with several NASA Earth Science programs contributing to it. NASA contribution to NEESPI will increase this coming couple of years due to NASA's interest in supporting the International Polar Year program. He called for a general agreement or Charter so we know each other's positions and the Terms of Reference for their NEESPI activities.

S. Nilsson (IIASA) noted that the status of NEESPI needs to be identified. IIASA is waiting to see how NEESPI agenda correlates with their goals and based on that, to determine how what role IIASA will play in the coming year.

The meeting concluded with agreement by all members that this committee should continue to exist and play a central role in guiding NEESPI. Furthermore, the draft Terms of Reference for the committee were adopted in principal although the Russian delegates indicated that they wished to have more time to review them more thoroughly. The NCSS urged project leads to place the highest priority on getting the project approved as part of an international program (ESSP, or if this not possible, IGBP). The NEESPI project leads are also asked to develop a listing of bilateral and multilateral agreements that could be used to help in implementing some aspect of NEESPI.