

42nd Directing Board Ersatz Meeting I – Minutes

Location: 2-hour Zoom session (virtual meeting)
Date: 26 March 2020
Note taker: Dirk Behrend
Version history: 26 March 2020

Attending Board members: Axel Nothnagel (Chair), Dirk Behrend, Johannes Böhm, Patrick Charlot, Francisco (“Paco”) Colomer, Alet de Witt, John Gipson, Rüdiger Haas, David Hall, Hany Hase, Ed Himwich, Nancy Kotary, Evgeny Nosov, Chet Ruszczyk, Oleg Titov.

Excused: Gino Tuccari, James Anderson, Jinling Li.

1. Welcome (Axel Nothnagel)

Axel Nothnagel welcomed the attending Board members. Johannes Böhm replaces Oleg Titov as the IAG Representative on the IVS Directing Board.

2. Approval of Agenda

The Board approved the agenda for the ersatz meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes of the 41st DB Meeting (Axel Nothnagel)

The Board approved the minutes of the 41st DB meeting with minor changes.

4. Safeguarding operations of the IVS

The Coordinating Center checked with all IVS correlators about their operational status, ability to handle physical shipment of media, and possible processing delays during COVID-19. All correlators remain operational; most operate remotely but can still handle media with limited staff on site. Some processing delays may happen due to shipment delays.

The Coordinating Center and the Office for Outreach and Communications established a Web page to display a status matrix of the IVS Network Stations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The resulting table is available at <https://vlbi.org/site-status/>. Several stations transitioned to remote operations, albeit with limited technical support on site. Overall operations continued to function. The Coordinating Center worked with the stations and schedulers to have rapid contingencies in place for the three IVS Intensive series in case a station goes down.

The Board agreed on a letter of mandate for the IVS components to continue operations during COVID-19 as essential global geodetic infrastructure.

5. Consequences of cancellation of GM2020

The Board decided to completely cancel the 11th IVS General Meeting; there will be no postponement nor replacement. The next General Meeting will be held in Helsinki, Finland in 2022 as the 12th IVS General Meeting. The participants of the 11th GM shall be polled on their interest in having a reduced proceedings volume.

6. Formal leadership of OPC

The Board agreed on augmenting the IVS Terms of Reference on how the Chair of the OPC is determined. The final wording shall be agreed upon after the meeting via email.

7. General comments on missed Stakeholder Meeting and questionnaire

The Board agreed that the missed in-person Stakeholder meeting should not be held in a virtual setting. For further discussion, the responses to the questionnaire from all major players should be in. At the point of the meeting the feedback from the GSFC group was still pending. An interim result indicated that most stakeholders (80%) see their mandate to be operational components while 20% see their mandate to be scientific ones.

8. General thoughts on IVS Strategy Document; Detailed discussion of Sections A.1 and A.2

There was consensus among the Board members about the core products and observing sessions as well as the required infrastructure in a draft IVS Strategy Document. It was suggested to add robustness as a critical feature for observing sessions. The Strategy Document will be discussed further via email.

9. Next face-to-face meeting

The Board decided that a face-to-face meeting cannot be scheduled at the current time due to the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 outbreak. A few virtual meetings may need to be held in the upcoming months before a meeting in person will be possible again.

10. Next virtual meeting

The Board agreed to hold the next emergency meeting via Zoom on 25 June 2020 @ 11–13 UT.