

50th Directing Board Meeting – Summary Minutes

Location: Tsukuba, Japan
Date: 9 March 2024
Note taker: Dirk Behrend
Version history: 23 September 2024

Attending Board members: Rüdiger Haas (Chair), Dirk Behrend, Patrick Charlot, Pablo de Vicente, John Gipson, Phillip Haftings, Hayo Hase, Masafumi Ishigaki, Nancy Kotary, Lucia McCallum, Alexander Neidhardt (remote), Fengchun Shu, Oleg Titov, Gino Tuccari, Anastasiia Walenta.

Excused: Alet de Witt, Chet Ruszczyk.

1. Welcome and approval of agenda (Rüdiger Haas)

Rüdiger Haas welcomed the Board members. The Board approved the agenda for the 50th DB meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 49th IVS DB meeting (Rüdiger Haas)

The Board approved the minutes of the 49th DB meeting.

3. Comments, questions, discussions on short written reports

The Board appointed Christian Plötz (BKG) for the newly created position of deputy chair of the Observing Program Committee (OPC).

The Board unanimously approved José Antonio (“Pepe”) López Pérez as the new chair of the VGOS Technical Committee (VTC), succeeding Gino Tuccari.

Alexander Neidhardt was planning to establish a TUM-supported platform for updating Network Configuration Files. He led a student project to develop a toolbox for identifying RFI at stations; it was planned to make the software available via GitHub.

The Board encouraged the establishment of an official IVS Working Group on VLBI Scale, further investigating the potential scale drift that was detected during the ITRF2020 production.

Anastasiia Walenta announced that she would leave VLBI at the end of June and did not work on a draft charter for the Working Group on Data Documentation. A new lead would need to be identified, possibly via an open call.

4. Election of new IVS Analysis Coordinator

The call for proposals for a new Analysis Coordinator (successor to John Gipson) resulted in two proposals being submitted. The Board elected Benedikt Soja from ETH Zurich to be the next IVS Analysis Coordinator and thanked John Gipson for his excellent work over the past decade.

5. Upcoming changes to the IVS Directing Board (Rüdiger Haas)

Hayo Hase pointed out that his time on the Board would end in February 2025 and that a successor would need to be identified for his work as IVS representative on CRAF. The person needs to be from Europe. The Board agreed to extend the IVS Terms of Reference (ToR) with wording to allow for the appointment of IVS representatives to other organizations (e.g., for frequency management).

Anastasiia Walenta will vacate her position on the Board at the end of June. A possible replacement would be Minghui Xu from GFZ Potsdam, who was the runner-up in the recent elections.

Gino Tuccari announced that he was planning to retire at the end of January 2026.

6. IVS success analysis and performance feedback (Alexander Neidhardt, Lucia McCallum)

The group held several Zoom meetings. This was still work in progress.

7. UN-GGCE Consultation (Rüdiger Haas)

The UN Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE) requested feedback from the services with an inventory of their needs. A questionnaire included items on Evidence, Resources, Governance, Capacity, and Awareness. A group consisting of Rüdiger Haas, Dirk Behrend, Hayo Hase, and Lucia McCallum met with UN-GGCE personnel directly following the IVS General Meeting to discuss the questions.

8. Outcome of ESA GENESIS workshop and consequences for IVS (Rüdiger Haas)

Rüdiger Haas reported on a recent meeting held at ESA/ESOC about the GENESIS mission. The four space-geodetic techniques would be represented as follows: DORIS (CNES), GNSS (ESA), SLR (ILRS), and VLBI (IVS). It is planned to fly a VLBI beacon onboard the satellite (6,000 km orbit, 95° inclination). The signal would be in VGOS broadband (1–10 Jy).

The IVS plans to support the establishment of an ESA Working Group and to propose three candidate chairpersons (to come from ESA countries). On the IVS side, it might be needed to revive the WG on Satellite Observations with VLBI to have an IVS WG dealing with GENESIS.

9. CRF Committee: governance, IVS CRF (Oleg Titov)

The Board approved that Oleg Titov replaces Alet de Witt as the chair of the IVS CRF Committee.

10. IAU Commission A2 "Rotation of the Earth": confirmation of IVS representative (Dirk Behrend)

The Board approved Oleg Titov to be the IVS representative on IAU Commission A2 “Rotation of the Earth.”

11. Regional IVS groups: AOV, EVGA

Fengchun Shu reported that several organizations in Asia/Oceania, such as JAXA, NTSC and NARIT, showed an interest in participating in AOV observing sessions. The elections of a new chairperson were postponed, likely to be held late 2024.

12. Where to have IVS GM 2026? (Dirk Behrend, Rüdiger Haas)

There was no proposal received in response to the request for proposals to host GM2026. Dirk and Rüdiger will contact various groups to find a host.

13. Miscellaneous

The next International VLBI Technology Workshop (IVTW) will be held at Haystack Observatory in October 2024.