

52nd Directing Board Meeting – Summary Minutes

Location: Matera, Italy
Date: 11 April 2025
Note taker: Dirk Behrend
Version history: 3 October 2025

Attending Board members: Rüdiger Haas (Chair), Dirk Behrend, Patrick Charlot, Pablo de Vicente, Alet de Witt, Susana García Espada, Phillip Haftings, Hayo Hase, Masafumi Ishigaki, Hana Krásná, Lucia McCallum, Alexander Neidhardt, Matthias Schartner, Fengchun Shu, Benedikt Soja, Minghui Xu.

Excused: Nancy Kotary, Oleg Titov, Chet Ruszczyk, Gino Tuccari.

1. Welcome and approval of agenda (Rüdiger Haas)

Rüdiger Haas welcomed the Board members, in particular the outgoing members (Pablo de Vicente, Hayo Hase) and the new members (Susana García Espada, Hana Krásná, Matthias Schartner). The Board approved the agenda for the 52nd DB meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 51st IVS DB meeting (Rüdiger Haas)

The Board approved the minutes of the 51st DB meeting.

3. Comments, questions, discussions on short written reports

The Consultative Committee for Time and Frequency (CCTF) held a discussion workshop with the IERS about negative leap seconds, including the possibility of abolishing leap seconds. The outcome remained open; there would be further discussions with other entities (e.g., ITU, IAU).

The Board voiced concerns about several single points of failure within the IVS pertaining to hardware (e.g., HatLab for DBBC3 and MIT for RDBE) and software (e.g., Field System largely dependent on Ed Himwich).

The Board discussed the chairmanship of the Observing Program Committee (OPC) going forward and agreed that Lucia McCallum would become the next OPC Chair following a transitioning period (with the length of the transition being at least six months). Lucia will take over the reins from Dirk who has served in this function for over two decades.

Hayo Hase pointed out that with the GENESIS mission it would be possible to register VLBI for satellite communication. Before doing so, the inherent risks would need to be evaluated.

Matthias Schartner opined that the VGOS frequency sequence tests should be extended to larger sessions and longer time frames.

Rüdiger Haas mentioned that the 5th IVS VLBI Training School would be held at Chalmers University of Technology from October 26–28, 2025.

4. Election of the IVS Chair for the period 2025–2029 (Dirk Behrend)

The Board unanimously re-elected Rüdiger Haas as IVS Chair for a second four-year term (from February 2025 through February 2029).

5. Update on “How to make the IVS more professional, robust and resilient?” (Rüdiger Haas)

Rüdiger gave a summary/evaluation of the “Five Hats” (objectivity, intuition, critical judgement, positive thinking, and creativity) brainstorming session from the previous Board meeting. Rüdiger and Benedikt Soja agreed on drafting an implementation plan (e.g., tasks, timeline) for the major findings.

Matthias Schartner suggested that there should be more of a community effort to maintain relevant software packages (e.g., Field System, drudg, VieSched++). Phillip Haftings mentioned that he was working on having version control for the IVS control files using Git.

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

The Board greenlighted a pilot project on station feedback and benchmarking. Lucia McCallum reported that UTAS was collecting all available station data to compile a performance report. The pilot project should merge the databases created for similar efforts at ETH Zurich and TUM/Wetzell with the UTAS collection. Patrick Charlot cautioned that there was an inherent risk when such performance information was passed on to upper management.

7. Session-PI group (Lucia McCallum)

Lucia McCallum organized several online meetings of the “session gurus.” The participation was global but small in numbers.

8. IVS Intensives plan (Dirk Behrend)

Dirk Behrend mentioned that there was a subgroup of the OPC that worked on a plan to extend the IVS Intensive program. There was no recent progress.

9. VGOS plan 2025-... (Dirk Behrend)

The Board decided to phase in the source-centric scheduling method for the operational 24-hour VGOS sessions (VGOS-OPS). Starting in July, the VGOS-OPS sessions were to be scheduled alternating between source-centric scheduling and standard SNR-based scheduling. After six months, the two approaches should be compared and the results evaluated.

10. UN-GGCE information (Rüdiger Haas, Masafumi Ishigaki)

Masafumi Ishigaki reported that, starting in April, 50% of his time would be allocated to the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE) work.

11. ESA GSET WG-3 (VLBI) (Rüdiger Haas)

Rüdiger Haas is the chair of WG-3 (VLBI) of ESA's GENESIS Science Exploitation Team (GSET). One of the main goals is to include GENESIS in IVS operations to strengthen the TRF without harming other IVS products.

12. Regional IVS groups: EVGA, AOV

The new EVGA Chair and Co-chair are Susana García Espada and Maria Karbon, respectively.

13. IVS technical paper in *Sensors*? (Chet Rusczyk)

(skipped)

14. Planning of IVS GM 2026? (Dirk Behrend, Rüdiger Haas)

The Board supported the proposal from JPL to hold the next IVS General Meeting at Caltech. Details needed to be discussed with the JPL group.

15. Miscellaneous

Alexander Neidhardt suggested using functional email addresses for IVS positions (rather than personal work email addresses). The practicality needs to be investigated.