

Meeting of UKFN Executive Committee

11:00, Monday 1 November 2021

via Zoom

MINUTES

Present:

Matthew Juniper (Chair)

Nick Daish

Matthias Heil

Ignazio Maria Viola

Neil Sandham

Cath Noakes

Yannis Hardalupas

1. Agree last minutes

The EC agreed the Minutes of the previous meeting (8/4/2021).

2. Outstanding actions from previous EC meeting

MJ noted the status of the outstanding actions:

- The level of each SIG's activity, which is the metric to decide whether UKFN continues to support them, would be assessed once the NFFDy Scheme was underway, as this will hopefully encourage activity via engagement with the NFFDy fellows.
- MJ reported that the legislation to set up ARIA (Advanced Research and Invention Agency)¹ had reached its second reading in the House of Lords. Senior appointments are still pending. There is speculation that ARIA might receive a large policy area such as net zero.
- The ED&I survey would be revisited in Item 5.

3. Progress of National Fellowships (NFFDy) proposal and Hub proposal

MJ reported on the NFFDy Hub proposal and NFFDy Fellowships. The proposal for the NFFDy Hub has been submitted and progress on the NFFDy Fellowships will start in the New Year, if the NFFDy Hub proposal is successful. The main elements of the Hub are:

- linking the fellowships to UKFN via the SIGs
- funding a Coordinator (ND); and
- running two Summer Schools, in 2023 and 2024, each with around 40 attendees, including a number from the general Fluids community.

MJ noted that, following the announcement of the NFFDy Fellowship scheme in September, there had been questions about the nature of data to be proposed for the first Summer School and in fellowship applications. The intention, since confirmed with EPSRC, is that data can come from experiments as well as from CFD.

¹ See for example <https://bit.ly/aria-policy>.

4. Update on plans for a future UK Fluids initiative

MJ noted that any large-scale UK Fluids initiative, as discussed at the launch event for the 'Our Fluid Nation' report, will depend on the outcome of the current Spending Review. While this outcome remains uncertain, the immediate focus should be on what a Fluids initiative might look like.

CN reported that, with this in mind, LIFD is organising a face-to-face meeting in Leeds on 14th January 2022 to discuss the possible shape of a new initiative, and will involve a cross-section of around 50 Fluids stakeholders. An initial group of around 20 academics had already been identified – all fairly senior people, with a spread of institution, discipline, gender and experimental vs computational background – and these have now been invited. Invitations to the meeting would then be opened up to the Fluids community, with around a further 20 people selected by lottery but again covering a spread of backgrounds, etc.

The EC discussed who else to consider for individual invitation.

- Representatives from funders – Research Council members
- Researchers from industry: they should be decision makers rather than technical if possible, with preferably an interest in the broader Fluids community
- International researchers if their country provided a useful model. One good example was GertJan van Heijst (a member of the UKFN Advisory Board), who has long been involved with the JM Burgerscentrum in the Netherlands.
- Representative from the Alan Turing Institute or Henry Royce Institute, which might provide a model for a future Fluids Institute
- People who asked questions at the 'Our Fluid Nation' launch event, as indicative of their interest in the future of UK Fluids
- Researchers with EPSRC involvement, such as members of SATs or the Engineering Early Career Forum

Finally, CN suggested it could be worth conducting a brief survey as well, to allow input from the wider community, especially ECRs.

Action: MJ to send GertJan's details to CN; CN to contact GertJan, if that would be desirable.

5. ED&I in Fluids

MJ noted that the NFFDy Hub proposal commits us to consider ED&I in Fluid Dynamics ahead of the official start of the grant, in particular to inform the call for NFFDy fellowship applications. A suitable set of guidelines must therefore be developed soon.

There had been some earlier progress on developing the guidelines, with a draft ED&I survey prepared for the previous EC meeting by CN for comment. CN reported some comments had been received, and the next stage was to incorporate these in the draft.

The EC discussed possible additional sources of input on ED&I:

- Contact Melanie Welham of UKRI for information on recent/current ED&I activities
- RAEng guidelines²
- YH mentioned there had been recent funding opportunities for ED&I in the energy research community (EPSRC)³ and environmental science (NERC)⁴.

² See, for example, <https://www.raeng.org.uk/diversity-in-engineering>.

³ <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-energy-research-community/>

⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/making-environmental-science-equal-diverse-and-inclusive/>

MJ suggested that an efficient way forward would be to form a smaller Working Group on ED&I, and MJ, MH and CN agreed to set this up, along with Claire Savy of LIFD. The goal would be to draft a light touch set of ED&I guidelines, possibly using input from a survey of the Fluids community, with a quick turnaround, so they would be available to inform the NFFDy fellowships call at the start of 2022. MJ agreed to set up the first Working Group meeting as soon as possible.

Action: MJ to propose dates for the first ED&I Working Group meeting by 5/11/2021.

Complete

6. EC membership

MJ noted that NS had decided to step down from the EC, and therefore a new member was required. The EC agreed that, rather than seek a direct replacement from University of Southampton, it would be preferable to open up the search by advertising for a new member in the UKFN newsletter. MJ/ND agreed to draft an advertisement, with input from the EC, as soon as possible.

CN commented that over the longer term, it could be worth expanding the EC by one or two members, for example to represent explicitly other sectors of the Fluids community such as NERC or STFC-supported researchers. It was agreed that this could be revisited in a few years' time when longer-term plans were clearer.

Action: MJ/ND to advertise in 4/11/2021 UKFN newsletter, with a deadline for responses of 30/11/2021. Complete

Action: MJ to follow up with applicants, with input from the rest of EC, by 17/12/2021.

7. Elsevier book series

MJ reported that there had been an invitation to the UK Fluids Network from Brian Guerin of Elsevier to work with them on a book series, prompted by attending the launch event for 'Our Fluid Nation'.

The EC discussed the pros and cons of various options. A book series might need too long a timescale and prove difficult to find an audience. YH suggested a novel approach may be to focus on societal impact over technical content. CN suggested a set of conversation pieces could be more flexible and relevant. UKFN would potentially have a wide pool of expertise to tap into and the means to contact them. MJ commented that this could eventually become a new facet of UKFN, in addition to communicating with funders and bringing the fluids community together, but perhaps now was not the time.

Nevertheless, MJ agreed to obtain more details of Elsevier's proposal to enable a considered decision to be made.

Action: MJ to contact Brian Guerin for more details and report back to the EC by 19/11/2021. Complete

Postscript

MJ talked to Brian Guerin on 2nd Nov. Elsevier wants to publish books with a broad potential readership, including industrial and academic researchers. Books can be edited volumes or single author. Most books are downloaded in soft copy. They print hard copy (paperback) on demand. From our discussion, it became clear that the best point of contact for Elsevier is the SIG leaders, rather than the UKFN EC. MJ agreed to help Elsevier make contact with the SIG leaders, if necessary.

8. Photo/video competition

The EC agreed to reduce the frequency of competitions to once every 6 months.

9. AOB

IMV and MJ agreed to meet informally at the APS DFD meeting taking place in Phoenix, Arizona later in the month.

NCD/MPJ, 16/11/2021