

Meeting of UKFN Executive Committee

12:00, Thursday 23 March 2017

via Webex

MINUTES

Present:

Matthew Juniper (Chair)
Nick Daish
Anne Juel
Paul Linden
Neil Sandham
Berend van Wachem
Michael Ward (EPSRC)

Apologies:

Steve Tobias

1. Minutes of last EC meeting (9/9/16)

The EC unanimously accepted the minutes from the last EC meeting.

2. Outstanding actions from previous EC and AB meetings

- (a) There were two outstanding actions from the last EC meeting (9/9/16), both ongoing:
- ND continues to pursue further series of talks to list on the website Talks page (see also Item 3)
 - MJ and ND will shortly approach project partners for supplementary funds (see also Item 6)
- (b) There were two outstanding actions from the last AB meeting (21/9/16), both ongoing:
- ND will shortly conclude the application to acquire the *fluids.ac.uk* domain name.
 - Web developer to add Jobs page, but this is a lower priority.

There were no further comments from the EC.

3. Website

MJ reported on the current status of the website, in particular developments since the last EC meeting, under the headings of Home, Registration, SIGs, SRVs, Talks and Admin. It is an ongoing task to get more talks, and, where possible, to encourage the organisers to make recordings for uploading to the Talks page. PL commented it was good to see recorded talks available.

NS, who is the EC member monitoring the website, gave a brief evaluation of the current version. He noted there appeared to be a problem viewing the SIGs and Talks pages with Internet Explorer; and there were some minor differences in the website appearance on other browsers.

Action: ND to investigate IE issue with web developer.

MJ also reported on the next main developments for the website, in particular

- the Researcher Resources page, which would soon be available with a first example that would act as a template for further resources; and
- the individual SIG pages, which will either be linked to an external website set up by the SIG itself or will have further tabs added to contain, for example, SIG outputs.

MW suggested it would be helpful to have more on the Home page describing UKFN's overarching objectives – “what it's for and why should people join”.

Action: ND/MJ to strengthen the “Welcome” panel on the Home page.

4. Special Interest Groups

MJ gave a recap of the SIG allocation: the first and second batches of SIGs were now up and running and many had planned their first meetings. The main question to consider now was how to monitor the SIGs, both financially and operationally, and what to do if they were under-performing.

Spending plans

It was agreed to have a mechanism to ask SIGs to have a spending plan, and to re-allocate money if they underspend. This money would either be re-allocated to existing SIGs (e.g. if they are growing) and/or used to create a small number (e.g. 2-5) of new SIGs in a third call for proposals.

It was agreed that SIG leaders would be asked to present a spending plan for the rest of the project once they had held their first meeting, which they would then be expected to follow. The preferred timescale would be for all SIGs to have presented spending plans by September 2017, which would be reviewed in October/November and thereafter at 6-monthly intervals.

Action: ND/MJ to notify SIG leaders they will be required to produce a spending plan.

It was agreed that having this mechanism in place would probably motivate SIG leaders to follow through on their spending plans.

PL asked whether the mechanism for reimbursing the SIGs was working satisfactorily. ND reported that this had not been tested so far, due to timing and format of meetings to date, but indications were that most SIGs would work with the suggested model of a single invoice after the meeting.

Allocation of SIGs to EC members

As a result of an action from the last EC meeting, ND/MJ allocated the 41 SIGs across the EC members. The EC agreed on the proposed allocation.

On the question of what activities the EC members would undertake, ND/MJ agreed to continue administering the SIGs, while EC members would

- attend meetings of SIGs to which they belonged and share best practice
- contact the leaders of the other SIGs they have been allocated and ask to be included in correspondence, so they can give advice on best practice, where appropriate.

Action: ND/MJ to draft email to SIG leaders for EC members and provide relevant contact details to each EC member.

It was agreed that at the next EC meeting (i) members would report on their findings regarding best practice, and (ii) the question of additional monitoring activities would be re-visited.

5. Short Research Visits

MJ reported the first batch of SRVs had been allocated. BvW, who is the EC member monitoring the SRVs, commented they were all reasonable proposals. It was noted they are all academic to academic visits so far.

MJ noted that Items 1-5 were largely reporting on setting up the major focus of the network (website, SIGs, SRVs) while Items 6-8 were focused on making the best use of what is now in place.

6. Supplementary funds

MJ gave an overview of discussions to date on possible uses of supplementary funds pledged by the project partners, focusing on prizes and outreach/public engagement.

(a) Concerning prizes, it was agreed to pursue three lines:

- Prizes for best image and video (with short description) submitted to website, reviewed on regular basis. These would build up into a gallery of media, and would be publicised via the website and social media.
- Prize for best presentation and poster by Early Career Researchers (PhD students and post docs who are within 3 years of the award of the PhD) at the UK Fluids Conference.
- Prize for best doctoral thesis, along the lines of the Royal Astronomical Society scheme. Investigate making it like the Acrivos prize at APS-DFD (worth \$1000), so that the winner would also give a plenary talk at the following year's UK Fluids Conference.

Action: ND/MJ to discuss UKFC-related prizes with organisers.

(b) Concerning outreach/public engagement, this could be either published material (both printed and other media) or public events. It was agreed that:

- UKFN would work with EPSRC on publicity highlighting Continuum Mechanics, one of the Maths Portfolio sectors earmarked for growth (see also Item 8). This could feature content on fluid mechanics, fluid/solid interface and advanced materials from SIGs.

Action: MJ to liaise with MW on how UKFN/EPSRC can work together on Continuum Mechanics publicity, and what form it would take.

- A revised Album of Fluid Motion and re-make of the NSF fluid mechanics films could be worthwhile longer-term goals; PL will take these up with Cambridge University Press via his association with the Journal of Fluid Mechanics.

Action: PL to follow up with JFM/CUP.

- There may be scope for fluids-related titles in the Ladybird Expert series (following publication of their climate change book). Ideas from EC would be welcome.

Action: All EC to email in suggestions for fluids-related Ladybird Expert titles.

- PL would follow up on possibility of working with the BBC's "Naked Scientists" for a radio article about fluids.

Action: PL to follow up with BBC “Naked Scientists”.

- Public events (e.g. science festivals, public lectures, school visits) would be considered further at the next meeting, along with photographic exhibitions.

Action: overall, MJ/ND to write a 1-page document on what UKFN intends to do with the supplementary funds and send it to the institutions who pledged funding when requesting their contributions.

7. Engagement with other UK activities

MJ reviewed the background to (a) ERCOFTAC¹ and (b) konfer².

(a) Concerning ERCOFTAC, it was agreed:

- UKFN would take over responsibility for the UK Pilot Centre, whose coordinator is currently David Standingford (UKFN Advisory Board member). MJ/ND would absorb the extra workload. MJ will continue as coordinator in the long term.
- On the question of combining the Osborne Reynolds Day with the UK Fluids Conference, and the issue of the current timing mismatch, it was agreed to ask DS if the OR Day finalists could be carried over to the da Vinci prize shortlist of the following year, rather than that of the same year.

Action: MJ/ND to discuss modifying shortlist arrangements for da Vinci prize with DS.

- MJ/ND would continue to investigate how UKFN could combine forces with the QNET CFD Wiki.

(b) Concerning konfer, it was agreed to continue discussion on how it can interface with UKFN, in particular UKFN providing konfer with valuable data on fluids experts, and konfer acting as the “business-facing side” of UKFN.

8. Liaising with EPSRC

MW reported on the EPSRC perspective and some general aspirations for the future, where UKFN could possibly contribute.

- The Mathematics portfolio would like to grow Continuum Mechanics. While fluid mechanics is recognised as world-leading, the fluids/solid and solid aspects of CM have a lower profile, which could be raised. UKFN has representation in complex fluids and the interface between fluids and solids.
- Increase the links between Mathematics, Engineering and Physical Sciences and discourage “silos”.
- Extend the links between mathematical, numerical and experimental aspects.
- Encourage interaction with industry.
- Assess the need for equipment (capital budget) and scope for re-use of equipment through sharing across institutions.

¹ European Research Community on Flow, Turbulence and Combustion (<http://www.ercoftac.org/>).

² <https://konfer.online/>.

MW noted that EPSRC believed greater use of responsive mode proposals should encourage these trends.

MW also noted that EPSRC would welcome UKFN's input into its evidence base relating to the research and training landscape in relevant research areas. This could be a digest of recent ideas from the community (i.e. from the SIGs and the people on the mailing list).

It was agreed that in, say, 3 months' time, MJ would begin dialogue on behalf of UKFN with MW, Judith McCann (Engineering portfolio) and some other portfolio managers to review research directions coming out of the SIGs.

Action: MJ to arrange a meeting with EPSRC in late July, probably in Swindon.

9. Any other business.

PL reported that he was on the Council of EUROMECH³, and that there was an upcoming meeting on 21/4/17 to discuss applications for 2018 EUROMECH Colloquia. PL offered to screen proposals from SIGs for correct input (ND having already written to SIG leaders to alert them to the call for proposals).

Action: ND to follow up with SIG leaders about proposal screening by PL.

10. Next meeting

It was agreed the next EC meeting would be scheduled for 3 months' time (June 2017).

Action: ND to poll EC members by mid-May for date of next meeting.

³ European Mechanics Society (<http://www.euromech.org/>).