

## **Minutes from first MINSC network meeting in Seefeld, Austria : Dec. 15 – 19, 2012**

### **Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>:**

Introduction to the MINSC network by Liane Benning

Liane presented the MINSC Network and introduced all of the various participants. She also presented the rights and obligations of the fellows as participants in a Marie Curie network. Following Liane's presentation, each fellow presented one slide giving the current title of their research project, information about their origins and host institutions and a funny picture they had chosen to represent themselves.

After presentations from each of the fellows, Dina Belova presented her experience as a former Marie Curie fellow. She encouraged the MINSC fellows to avail of the opportunity to work closely with each other and to build a strong team and warned them that their time on the MINSC network will go very fast and that they need to really take full advantage of this opportunity right from the beginning.

These presentations were followed by a team building activity where everyone moved around the room asking questions of each other.

### **Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>:**

The morning started with a discussion led by Susan Stipp about how to plan a research project. The PIs and fellows worked with Susan to build a diagram showing essential ingredients of research projects including timelines and questions to bear in mind over the two to three years of their research projects.

After the coffee break, the fellows worked in a group on the theme of becoming an effective researcher.

The afternoon session was devoted to further developing effective research skills and included a team building activity entitled "Houston, we have a problem".

In the evening, each PI stood up for approximately three minutes to give a brief presentation about themselves and what they do.

### **Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup>:**

The morning activity was devoted to techniques for working effectively with other people. After the coffee break, the PIs and fellows separated into two groups: the fellows worked on planning a project together while the PIs discussed financial management issues.

#### **Financial Management Issues:**

These financial issues included recruitment costs, running costs, network costs, secondment costs, network meeting costs and the costs associated with bringing in external speakers. The group agreed that the costs of network meetings should be divided pro rata amongst the

various participants from each institute. The PIs also discussed the best way to recruit fellows to this type of network. It was generally agreed that it was important to have feedback from supervisors before offering a position to a new student as cvs are inadequate tools for evaluating potential candidates.

The PIs suggested that the MINSC logo should be added to the MINSC website in a downloadable version along with a sentence that fellows should use to reference their work on a Marie Curie project. Clare will add this information to the website in January.

Liane asked that all PIs send the precise titles of their fellows' research projects to Clare. These titles will also be posted to the MINSC website.

Following the management discussion, the PIs discussed potential secondment opportunities for each of the fellows. At the present time, it is too early to know exactly where each fellow will go, but a tentative list was proposed:

Diwaker (KU)	Uni Iceland
Giulia (KU)	?
Cristina (WWU)	Maersk + Uni Granada
Nik (CNRS)	KU + Uni Munich
Jan (Uni Iceland)	Reykjavik Energy /KU
Prathap (Reykjavik Energy)	Uni Iceland
Thomas (CNRS)	?
Christopher (Uni Oslo)	KU
Fernando (West)	Reykjavik Energy / CNRS
Stan (KU)	CNRS
Mia (KU)	CNRS
Daniela (Uni Leeds)	Uni Iceland/Reykjavik Energy
Tomek (Uni Leeds)	KU / ESRF
Taher (Uni Leeds)	?
Bi Yun (Maersk)	KU

This issue will be revisited at the next network meeting and all fellows will be encouraged to contact PIs and fellows at other host institutions to learn more about the work being done in other locations.

The afternoon discussion with the PIs revolved around plans for future network meetings. It was agreed that most fellows would likely attend the Goldschmidt Conference in Florence in August 2013, but that this date was too far away for fellows to continue to bond successfully. West Systems has offered to host a visit of the MINSC group to their facility (located approximately 1 hour from Florence). Because August is too far away, it was suggested that a second network meeting be run in May or June in Copenhagen. A portion of this meeting will take place at the Maersk Oil and Gas facility and will include presentations by industry representatives as well as visit to the Maersk Core Lab and also include a training aspect related to the Industrial partners. After the industry visit, the group will move outside Copenhagen for a three day training school in Fundamental Geochemistry.

While the PIs discussed financial management issues, the fellows worked on developing a team building task. At the end of the day, three groups of fellows presented three possible team building projects they had developed to the PIs. They received feedback about the viability of their projects as well as the potential costs and the innovative aspects of their projects.

### **Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>:**

This day was essentially devoted to encouraging the fellows to promote their research. This included a group activity aimed at producing a newsletter to publicize the MINSC network. At the end of the day, the fellows presented their ideas for a newsletter to the PIs including the type of information to appear in the newsletter, a tentative list of first contributors and a timeline for production. PIs asked about issues of confidentiality and accessibility. It was agreed that no sensitive information (ie regarding confidential data or research) would appear in the newsletter and that each fellow could include a link to the MINSC website and newsletter in his/her email signature.

After the newsletter presentation, Christopher Pearce (also a former Marie Curie fellow) gave a short presentation about his experience as a fellow in a European network. He said that this is a rare opportunity for the MINSC fellows to be part of a vast group of European institutions and to be able to exchange with experts in many different fields. He has very good memories of his time in this type of network and is still in contact with many of the people he met as a fellow. He encouraged the fellows to persevere even in the face of disappointing results and assured them that with persistence, they will succeed.

During the afternoon, the PIs met to discuss feedback from this first network meeting.

### **Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>:**

The PIs and fellows worked in groups to discuss ethical issues in research. The fellows moved around the room to have the opportunity to hear from each of the PIs and to ask questions or give their opinions. After the small group discussions, the whole group came together to discuss the issues that had been raised in the various groups. Liane concluded the meeting with a formal thank you to all those who attended and to Heather and Jenny who led many of the team building activities.

## Feedback from MINSC fellows regarding training program

Feedback forms were completed after ‘Doing the right thing – ethical issues in research’ session.

Overall, how would you rate the training programme?

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
3	6	4	0

Overall, how useful was the training programme to you?

Very	Mostly	Partly	Not really
1	4	8	0

### What were the most useful/beneficial/enjoyable aspects of the training?

*Selected quotes from the feedback forms.*

“emphasis on communication - how it is done properly, the importance; networking; get to know each other; developing trust in the network”

“Houston' and 'Working at a distance were both fun and provided good learning about communication. The talks by Susan and Dina were very useful and gave very useful hints and advice about planning and executing a PhD”

“Meeting people with the same professional problems, talking to them, discussing, sharing ideas...”

### What did you find least useful or would change about the training?

“I would prefer to have more training in the context of science and MINSC and not in general”

“I suggest training with activity games related directly to our research. More applied activities integrating with the research at different levels: molecular, monoscopic and fluid, are essentials for the success on the MINSC project”.

“I think there were a little bit too many games. We could use that time to talk about our research and learn more about each other”.

### What are you going to *do* as a result of participating in the training?

*Selected quotes from the feedback forms.*

“work on my communication skills”

“Find out what my research question is!; Practise a bit on planning; Working with other PhD students. So the networking really worked.”

“I will care more about planning :0)”

“Start writing my first paper(s) at least the sections I can write.”

**What benefits will this action have for you or your research?**

*Selected quotes from the feedback forms.*

“Thanks to this training I have an overview about what I'm going to do as a PhD student in the next years, and I will apply all the suggestions and tips I got during these days: how to do research and how to communicate research.”

“Gave me come ideas about self management. But the most important part for me was that I met new people and learned about them and their research.”

“Be more aware of my strengths and weaknesses”

“I met a lot of new people who can help me to understand, improve and explain my individual project.”

**Please rate the individual sessions on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 = very poor and 5=excellent.**

	<b>Rating (1 - 5)</b>  <b>1=v. poor</b>  <b>5=excellent</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	<b>Mean score across all participants</b>	
<b>Saturday 15 December</b>		
Introduction to MINSC	4.4	
One slide presentations by fellows	4.6	
Breaking the ice	4.4	

<b>Sunday 16 December</b>		
Ingredients of research projects	4.5	
Effective Researcher: What is an Effective Researcher? & Team Task1: Words	2.8	
Effective Researcher Team project task 2: Houston we have a problem	4.0	
<b>Monday 17 December</b>		
Effective Researcher: Working effectively with others	3.2	
Effective Researcher: Team project task 3: Working at a distance	3.2	
Project planning tools	2.7	
Effective Researcher: Team project task 4: Project tomorrow	3.7	
<b>Tuesday 18 December</b>		
Promoting yourself and your ITN: Getting your message across	2.9	
Promoting yourself and your ITN Are we making ourselves clear?	3.0	
Promoting yourself and your ITN Planning a MINSC newsletter	3.1	
<b>Wednesday 19 December</b>		
Doing the right thing – ethical issues in research	4.1	
Promoting Yourself and Your ITN One Minute Madness!	3.9	

**Mean score by participant**

3.9	4.5	4.0	4.1	3.2	4.4	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.8	3.9	3.1	3.1
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**What training topics would you like to cover at future network meetings?**

All comments related to themes: presentations, writing, science

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Pre-course information	7	3	2	1
Venue	8	5	0	0

**Do you have any comments on the administration before and during the course?**

“Really well organized, Claire did everything perfectly”

“Would have preferred more information about room sharing prior to meeting”