

International Committee

Minutes of the Meetings held in Sirmione, Italy 23–30 September, 2012

Present:

Richard Forster	President	forster@olympiad.org.uk	Great Britain	2011–2014
Kanchit Malaivongs	Host 2011	kanchit.ma@gmail.com	Thailand	2007–2012
Giuseppe Colosio	Host 2012	giuseppe.colosio@istruzione.it	Italy	2008-2013
Peter Taylor	Host 2013	pjt013@gmail.com	Australia	2009-2014
Greg Lee	Host 2014	leeg@csie.ntnu.edu.tw	Taiwan	2010-2015
Bakhyt Matkarimov	Host 2015	bakhyt.matkarimov@gmail.com	Kazakhstan	2011-2016
Valentina Dagiene	Elected	dagiene@ktl.mii.lt	Lithuania	2009-2012
Eljakim Schrijvers	Elected	eschrijvers@eljakim.nl	Netherlands	2009-2012
Krassimir Manev	Elected	manev@fmi.uni-sofia.bg	Bulgaria	2010-2013
David Ginat	Elected	ginat@post.tau.ac.il	Israel	2010-2013
Kresimir Malnar	Elected	malnar@hsin.hr	Croatia	2011-2014
Madhavan Mukund §	Executive Director	madhavan@cmi.ac.in	India	2011-2014 §Non-voting

1. Welcome

- Richard Forster welcomed the committee to the meeting and commended the IOI-2012 organisation on the opening ceremony.
- Giuseppe Colosio welcomed the committee to Italy and announced that the Education Minister would be present at the end of the opening day to meet the contestants and the International Committee.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Urgent decisions regarding IOI 2012

There were no urgent items to be resolved concerning IOI 2012.

4. Confirmation of Minutes (IC meeting 20–24 April, 2012)

The minutes of the previous IC meeting were approved.

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising in addition to other items in these minutes.

6. Report by President

Richard Forster reported on his activities since April 2012.

- He continued the coordination with some countries initiated when he was Executive Director.
- He has initiated discussions with Wolfgang Pohl, Mathias Hiron and Ben Burton about replacing the IOI website by the IOI Wiki.

7. Report by Executive Director

Madhavan Mukund had nothing significant to report.

8. ISC Report

Michel Forisek reported on the activities of the ISC, focusing on the period between the ISC meeting in April, 2012 and IOI-2012. (This report was presented between the two competition days.)

- The HSC worked for some weeks to improve tasks.
- The competition rules were a bit delayed. A preliminary version was available in June, without many changes, but it was not “announced” formally.
- The ISC more actively involved in proof reading statements. One indication of this was that there were very few objections to the Day 1 problems (0 major objections, about 15 minor objections).
- The ISC would work towards a higher level of quality control. The aim was to make the working of the ISC more transparent and to force future ISCs to defend their choices. The ISC would prepare minutes of all its discussions and share these with the IC.
- In the future, the task submission process would become more like the process for conference paper submissions, with reviews and feedback to the task authors.
- On the first competition day, there was a delay in starting the contest because of a bottleneck created by the process for entry into the competition hall. Teams were admitted one at a time and passwords were handed out as they entered, which took much longer than anticipated.
- The experiment with a paperless contest was reasonably successful. In the first ten minutes of the first competition day, about 2000 pages were printed. However, after about 10 minutes, things settled down.
- Some minor issues were reported with the grader during the competition, but these were resolved without any effect on the contest or in the scoring.
- The new translation system based on mediawiki had serious performance issues when deployed initially. Most bottlenecks had been identified and fixed, including strengthening the hardware and reconfiguring the wiki software. There were also some issues with the power supply to the translation room, which had also been resolved. As a precaution, on the second day, the initial versions of all tasks would be printed and handed out.

9. ITWG Report

Martin Mares reported on the working of the ITWG.

- He is working with Wolfgang Pohl to move the IOI Wiki to a more stable hosting environment at Charles University, Prague.
- He is working with Bernard Blackham to develop a new generation sandbox.

10. Report on *Olympiads in Informatics* and the IOI Conference

Valentina Dagiene reported on the IOI Conference and the latest volume of *Olympiads in Informatics*.

- The 2012 conference proceedings were among the thickest so far. 22 of 40 abstracts were selected after review. The final editing was done by Richard Forster.
- The quality of papers has been improving, largely due to a better review process. For the first time, non-IOI members attended the IOI conference at IOI-2012 just to present papers.
- Though some people read the journal online, printed copies are still needed for distribution to libraries. Many copies are distributed by post.
- The IC thanked Valentina for her contribution to this activity.

11. Awards and Trophies

- Two trophies have been prepared: best student and Distinguished Service Award (DSA).
- The IC meeting in April, 2012 called for nominations for DSA by May. No nominations were received.
- DSA for Prof Blagovest Sendov, Bulgaria:
 - The Leader from Chile proposed that IOI should honour Prof Sendov, who played a key role in establishing IOI through UNESCO.
 - The IC felt that the most appropriate honour for Prof Sendov would be to confer the DSA.
 - This proposal was discussed and approved through a vote in the GA.
 - The award was announced in the presence of Prof Sendov at the Young Talent Conference organized in Milan during IOI.
 - The actual trophy was sent with Krassimir Manev to be handed over later.

12. Finances and Budget

Kim Schrijvers reported on the financial situation and presented the budget for the next year.

- All countries attending IOI paid the registration fee. Kyrgyzstan requested a fee waiver. The request was not approved by the IC.
- Some countries have asked for a registration fee waiver for Australia to offset additional travel costs.
- Overall the financial situation of IOI remains comfortable.
- In many cases, budgeted items do not incur IOI expenditure because of support from parent organizations. These indirect contributions are now listed as sponsorships in the budget.
- Kim reported that GA members would like the President's expenses to be covered in the budget presentation.
- Concrete changes in budget, from 2012 to 2013:
 - Budget for awards reduced from € 2500 to € 1500.
 - Allocation for IOI Foundation reduced to € 200.
 - Separate heading for visas and accommodation for Executive Director removed and included in the travel costs.
- There was a proposal to substantially increase the registration fee and share the funds with hosts. Peter Taylor pointed out that even doubling the registration fee would yield only about \$ 20,000, which is not a significant amount, given the scale of the typical IOI budget. Some of the Science Olympiads charge a registration fee of the order of \$ 3,500 to assist the host country, but such a large increase would meet with a lot of resistance. The final conclusion was that increasing the registration fee is not a viable option for raising substantial funding for the host country.

13. Report on IOI-2012

Giuseppe Colosio reported on IOI-2012, covering the following items.

- Selection of the Italian team for IOI:
 - In December 2010, about 10,000 students took part in a national contest in the form of a conventional written examination.
 - Of these 1000 were selected to take part in an IOI-style programming competition in Sirmione in October 2011.
 - From this contest, 100 students were selected and given online training and also three rounds of onsite training of 3–4 days each.

- At the end of this process, two teams of four members each were chosen to represent Italy, along with two backups.
- Communications and public relations:
 - Media relations:
 - * The organizers had fixed up a dedicated agency to interact with the media.
 - * Three press conferences were held where the international, national and local press were invited.
 - * It was observed that the press were primarily interested in two aspects: the actual competition and personal stories involving participants.
 - Communication within IOI community:
 - * Following the general trend at this IOI, the Newsletter was paperless and made available electronically on the IOI website and through electronic displays.
 - * In addition to environmental benefits and savings in costs, an electronic newsletter allows for richer content and more creative possibilities for formatting this content.
 - * The IC was not convinced that a paperless newsletter was as effective as a conventional printed newsletter.
 - Richard Forster remarked that he had not yet read any newsletters at this IOI.
 - Kim Schrijvers noted that he missed seeing contestants getting together to work on puzzles that traditionally appear in the newsletter.
 - David Ginat strongly felt that the newsletter should be printed.
 - * One suggestion for the future was to print an abridged version for circulation.
 - Social media:
 - * IOI-2012 had an active presence on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
 - * A competition called MyIOI2012 was organized over Twitter.
 - All video material and photographs were prepared by students from a local high school. These were used to generate content for the website, social media and the newsletter.
- Sponsorships:
 - UNESCO has provided patronage to IOI-2012.
 - The top ranked contestant will receive a special medal from the President of the Italian Republic.
 - Major financial sponsors include Cariplo Foundation, eni, Norton, SEA and Unicredit.
 - In addition, direte (wireless), Acer (computers) Garda Village (hospitality) and the local municipalities provided support in kind.
- Registration:
 - 81 countries registered with contestants, and 3 countries registered as observers.
 - In all there were 322 contestants, 12 invited observers and 19 visitors.
 - The registration numbers became stable only around 15 September. As of 20 July, approximately 275 had registered. By 15 August, the number was approximately 475. On 15 September, the number had reached approximately 600.
 - Due to Italian fiscal law prohibiting cash transactions over Euro 1000, all visitor fees had to be paid through bank transfers or credit cards.
 - The registration process was complicated by continuous changes in personnel, roles and travel information of participants.
- Volunteers:

- There were 120 student volunteers (77 female, 43 male) from secondary school, 17–19 years old. Of these 81 served as guides and 39 as staff.
- The volunteers were selected from 1000 applications sent by teachers based on their command of English and other languages, significant experience abroad, open mindedness, variety of interests and interest in ICT.
- To train volunteers a training document was prepared.
All volunteers had an onsite training session from September 9–12 where they studied the history of IOI, acquired communication skills and learned about their duties.
In the second phase, they had daily assignments and evaluation via a Facebook group.
A second training session was conducted on September 21–22 in which specific duties were assigned. Groups of 13–20 were formed with similar duties, each supervised by teacher.
During IOI there were daily meetings to discuss the agenda and duties.

14. Report on IOI-2013

Peter Taylor presented the report on IOI-2013, to be held in Australia, with some inputs from Chris Shannon.

- Brisbane is Australia's third largest city with a population of 2.1–3 million. The University of Queensland (UQ) is a 12 km, 30 minute drive from the airport. During July, Brisbane will be in the middle of subtropical winter with a typical day temperature of 21° C.
- Finances:
 - There is still no formal government support, though this is not ruled out.
 - The event will run smoothly on a reduced budget of under \$1,000,000.
 - The Australian Mathematics Trust (AMT) and UQ have a partnership with an underwriting agreement.
 - The guest fee will be approximately \$1500.
- Accommodation:
 - Everyone will be accommodated on campus, in UQ colleges. The distances on campus are similar to those at Waterloo (IOI 2010).
 - Teams will be picked up from the airport (both international and domestic terminals) and the train station. Efforts will be made to pick up teams that arrive early directly from the hotels where they are staying. The registration form has to be updated to collect this data.
- Venues:
 - The opening and closing ceremonies will take place off campus, in a venue with capacity 1200.
 - The competition venue will be the UQ Computing Centre, similar to Montichiari (IOI-2012).
 - Of the two excursions, one will be outside Brisbane, probably to a wildlife park or amusement park, and the other will be in Brisbane.
- Computing facilities:
 - The competition site has been booked one week in advance for setting up the competition hall.
 - All the computers will be sourced via UQ. They will not be new, but the plan is to have identical computers for all contestants. Any significant issues concerning the computational infrastructure will be communicated to the GA in advance.
 - The organizers had underestimated cost of cabling within the competition hall.
 - All UQ rooms have Internet. It may not be able to switch this off since it is centrally administered. The IC recommended that it is better to avoid Internet access for students during quarantine to avoid accidents.

- On the day of the closing ceremony there will be an outreach programme, aimed mainly at teachers.
- Visas and customs restrictions:
 - Visas should normally take 4 weeks or less. The Department of Immigration will have access to IOI registration data to expedite visa processing.
 - Australia has severe import restrictions to preserve its natural heritage. No fresh food is allowed. All bags are x-rayed. All visitors have to fill a declaration form.
- Guide programme:
 - The programme will be run by a specialist from Sydney who handled IMO in Australia.
 - Guides will be recruited from Brisbane.
- IC meeting in February, 2013:
 - The dates for the meeting are February 22–24. February 21 is the arrival day and February 25 is the departure day.
 - IC members will stay in a hotel. IC meetings will be held in the morning, either in the hotel or in UQ. The afternoons will be used for site inspections of the university facilities and the venues of the opening and closing ceremonies.
 - In February, the weather will be hot, humid and wet, with a temperature of 33° C.
- Personnel:
 - Peter Taylor retires from AMT at the end of December, but will continue to chair the Organizing Committee of IOI-2013
 - Chris Shannon, UQ, will coordinate activities on campus.
 - Andree Philips, UQ, is handling events and publicity and will be working two days a week for IOI.
 - Some senior people from UQ are on the Steering Committee.

15. Report on IOI-2014

Greg Lee presented a report on IOI-2014, to be held in Taiwan.

- The funding situation is comfortable.
- Computers will provided by Acer, with extra machines for grading (approximately 40).
- The contest site is still planned as Taipei 101, 84th floor. Since this can be booked only 1 year in advance, a backup venue is the World Trade Centre, close to Taipei 101.
- Student accommodation continues to be in dormitories. If additional funding is found students can be moved to hotels.
- Leaders and deputy leaders will stay in hotels. The GA and IOI conference will meet in the hotel.
- The planned date for IOI-2014 is the first week of July. The IC recommended to the organizers to check that these dates do not overlap with IMO.

16. Report on IOI-2015

Bakhyt Matkarimov presented a report on IOI-2015, to take place in Kazakhstan.

- The proposed dates are in the range August 1–20, preferably August 1–15.
 - Location:
 - The government prefers to hold IOI at Astana (the new capital) while the organizers prefer Almaty (the traditional capital and largest city).
 - One possibility is to start in one city and end in the other. Astana–Almaty is 1000 km; the possibilities are to charter flight or take a train (which will take about 10 hours).
 - The IC strongly recommended avoiding long travel days.
 - Proposed deviations from normal schedule:
 - Related to the previous item, the organizers are contemplating extending the duration of IOI from the usual 7 to 8–9 days.
 - As usual two excursions are proposed; one to the mountains and one in the city.
 - Since the the excursion to the mountains will be a longer one, instead of excursions between the two competition days, would it be possible to have competition days back to back?
The following points were discussed regarding this possibility.
 - * It is more a manpower issue than a technical one. Back to back competition days would place additional burden on students, HSC and translation.
 - * Greg Lee observed that consecutive competition days can save rental costs for PCs.
- The IC recommended that it is better to stick to a traditional schedule.
One possibility is to have a broader discussion on these issues: either a discussion in the GA, or a questionnaire, or an online vote.

17. New Countries

- Malaysia and Bolivia were two new countries participating in IOI-2012.
- Tunisia, Uzbekistan and Jordan participated as observers in IOI-2012.
- Enquiries were received from Benin and Lebanon. A standard reply was sent, but there has been no response.
- Chile
 - After a two year gap, Chile has returned to IOI-2012 with Alexander Velkov as Leader.
 - In the past there has been some friction involving Mr Velkov and government of Chile.
 - Some new enquiries have been received from organizations within Chile interested in selecting a team for IOI.
 - The IC may have to discuss and resolve this situation soon.

18. Future Hosts

Russia made a formal presentation on their bid to host IOI-2016

- The venue will be Kazan, in the Republic of Tatarstan.
- Kazan hosted the national olympiad in 2012, with 350–400 participants.
- The dates are flexible, within the period July–August.
- The budget is \$1.6 million. Half of this will come from federal sponsorship and the other half from the Republic of Tatarstan. There will also be other sponsors.
- New computers will be bought for IOI and distributed to schools after the event.

The IC voted to accept the bid and declare Russia the Future Host for 2016.

19. Candidate Hosts

Iran has submitted a Letter of Intent to host IOI in 2017 and is now a Candidate Host for IOI 2017.

20. Potential Hosts

- Informal enquiries have been received Brazil, Ireland, Japan, Turkey and Vietnam.
- Richard Forster reminded the IC that the regulations specify time bounds for announcing Future Hosts, Candidate Hosts and Potential Hosts.

21. IOI workshop

There was a discussion about holding an IOI Workshop in 2013.

- A potential topic could be how to bring together visualization and other teaching tools presented in the IOI Conference in 2012.
- Krassimir Manev proposed the topic “Informatics in schools”.
- It was suggested to solicit proposals to host workshop, with a deadline at the end of October.
- Kanchit Malaivongs proposed that the workshop should involve more than just those who could physically participate at the venue. A larger number could take part if one could enable electronic participation. Also, the content of the workshop should be recorded and distributed.

22. Other business

Fredrik Niemelä, ISC, has proposed a project to put up an IOI Online Judge.

- The expected budget is € 6000–8000.
- The IC felt that more details were needed before initiating a discussion.
- It was agreed that there should be a general framework for funding such projects, including a clear indication of expectations, guidelines for measuring success etc