

# SASNET

Swedish South Asian Studies Network

## Minutes from the Board meeting, January 24, 2002

**Venue:** Conference Room 1, Department of Sociology, Paradisgatan 5, Lund University

**Members present:** Boel Billgren, Alia Ahmad, Catarina Kinnvall, Kjell Härenstam, Pamela Price, Christer Norström and Birgitta Göransson

**Others:** Staffan Lindberg and Lars Eklund

### 1. Election of chairperson, secretary and person to verify the minutes

*Decision:* Boel Billgren will chair the meeting, Lars Eklund will be the secretary, and Catarina Kinnvall will verify the minutes.

Boel Billgren chaired the meeting during points 1–11. Pamela Price took over the chair thereafter.

### 2. Agreement on the agenda. Any other business to be added to the agenda? (see last point)

The agenda was agreed upon after two additional questions were added: Point 15 regarding a suggestion given by Bo Lindblad to make Afghanistan an additional country for SASNET to work with, and point 16, regarding a proposal from Pamela Price on forming a Nordic discussion network.

### 3. SASNET work report for 2001. Staffan Lindberg, director/co-ordinator

- **Overall report** (Enclosure 1: *WorkreportSASNET2.doc* is attached)
- **Internet gateway**, Lars Eklund (Enclosure 2: *GatewayReport.doc* is attached).
- **Workshop** on global networking, 27-28 August 2001. Short evaluation – implications for our work (see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/workshop.html>)
- **Other activities** such as the Symposium on Managing Common Resources in September (see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/manressymp.html>), work with Øresund Network for South Asian Studies, visits, guest lectures, the new undergraduate course

on India/South Asia at Tomelilla/Lund University (see <http://www.osterlen.fhsk.se/sydasiien/index.htm>), etc.

- **Balance sheet 2001**, see Enclosure 3: *Balance sheet2 2001.doc*, which is attached

*Discussion:* Staffan Lindberg gave a brief overview of SASNET's work during its first year, also presented in the enclosed overall report, and Lars Eklund reported on the development of the Internet Gateway. Staffan then gave specific reports on the outcome of the Workshop on Global networking in August, the Symposium on Managing Common Resources and other SASNET activities.

The board was very positive towards the work carried out by the root node.

*Decision:* The board approved the Work Report and the Balance sheet for 2001.

#### **4. Distribution of Planning Grants, Spring 2002**

The reference group, consisting of Pamela Price, Neil Webster and Malin Åkerblom, had met the same morning and its decisions concerning the five applications were presented at the meeting.

*Decision:* The board approved the decision made by the reference group, as follows:

##### **I. Research Planning Grants**

1. **Alia Ahmad**, Department of Economics, Lund University: "State, Community and Resources". (RPG01F:01) The committee decided to fund the planning activities with SEK 125 000.

(Alia Ahmad did not participate in this decision)

2. **Baboo M. Nair**, Applied Nutrition and Food Chemistry, Center for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Lund University: "The development of an interdisciplinary Swedish South Asian Studies Network for research on fermentation of foods, public health, and social welfare". (RPG01F:02). The committee decided to fund the planning activities with a Travel grant amounting to SEK 40 000.

3. **Sidsel Hansson/Eva Hellman**, History of Religion, Lund University: "Gender and religious activism in South Asia: A study of Christian, Hindu and Muslim women's organisations". Complementary application to Spring 2001 Grant. (RPG01F:03). The committee decided to fund the planning activities with SEK 57,000.

##### **II. Research Networking Grants**

1. **Anoja Wickramasinghe**, Dept. of Geography, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: "Regional co-operation and conference on gender, food security, and the local

environments”. (RNG01F:01). As SASNET can only fund projects which are applied for by researchers at Swedish institutions, this project is not eligible for funding.

### **III. Education Planning Grant**

1. **Lars Berge**, Dept. of History, Högskolan Dalarna: “Högskolan Dalarna 2001/2002 South India field study project”. (EPG01F:01). The committee decided to fund the planning activities with SEK 46 000.

## **5. SASNET network support during 2002**

*Suggestion:* (see Enclosure 4: *NetworkSupport2002.doc*, which is attached)

In the fall of 2001, there were only four applications eligible for networking grants. We know that there are several groups planning to apply for such grants during the spring of 2002, yet this experience may prompt us to some afterthoughts. Maybe the attempt to establish interdisciplinary networking programmes involving several researchers in several Swedish and South Asian institutions (in more than one South Asian country) can only succeed in a limited number of larger institutions in Sweden. We believe that there is a need to find a simpler and less cumbersome support form, especially for younger researchers. We therefore propose a new form of support from 2002 and onwards, which could be called **Project Networking Grants**. These would invite individual researchers to network with one or more colleagues in one South Asian country to plan and sustain a research or education project, which may be inter- or intra-disciplinary. Maximum support for this type of planning/continued networking would be 75 000 SEK. This would complement the programme grants called Programme Networking Grants, for which perhaps the maximum amount should be increased to 150 000 SEK. For a full outline, see Enclosure 4.

*Discussion:* The board was positive towards the idea of introducing a project grant, making it easier especially for younger researchers to apply for support.

*Decisions:* The board decided to introduce Project Networking Grants in the coming round of applications with a maximum amount of SEK 75 000 per project. The total amount for Programme Networking Grants, was increased to SEK 150 000 per project. It was also decided to change the closing date from 15 April to 15 June.

## **6. Decision about the reference group for the evaluations of the applications 2002 and 2003**

*Suggestion:* It is suggested that we use the same reference group as in 2001, that is, Pamela Price, Neil Webster, and Malin Åkerblom. They are prepared to do the work again. Remuneration is SEK 5 000 per person, which is more or less an honorary fee (like in most Swedish Research Councils' reference groups).

*Decision:* The board decided to reappoint Pamela Price, Neil Webster, and Malin Åkerblom.

## **7. Root node activities during 2002, including work on ØRSA – Øresund Network for South Asian Studies**

*Suggestion:* During 2002 the root node will mainly:

- continue to build the **Internet gateway** in close contact with various user groups, especially doctoral students
- on that basis **continue networking** to initiate, stimulate and promote research and education programmes, including giving support to activities supported by SASNET grants
- **arrange a symposium for PhD candidates** specialising in South Asian studies fall of 2002 (see Point 10 below).
- continue working on the Øresund Network for South Asian Studies, including planning a masters programme
- intensify SASNET's networking in South Asia – contact journey to South Asia in February-March 2002 (see point 11 below)
- continue media watch on the war on terror and its consequences in South Asia

*Discussion:* Some of the activities evoked questions from the board members. Pamela Price asked about the activities of the Øresund Network for South Asian Studies, and especially about the progress in planning a Masters course. Staffan Lindberg explained what has been achieved so far – creating a network and a homepage, starting an undergraduate course at Österlen Folk High School, and organising lectures and cultural activities. The planning of the Masters course is continuing, but requires plenty of preparations to make it sustainable.

*Decision:* The board approved the activities for 2002.

## **8. Upgrading of the webmaster/secretary position to 100 %**

*Suggestion:* The additional cost is estimated at 250 000. This was given high priority at the previous board meeting in August 2001. SAREC is investigating the possibility of giving an extra grant for this purpose. Information about this should be available at the board meeting, otherwise it is suggested that the upgrading is financed within the existing budget of 2 355 878 SEK.

*Discussion:* Staffan Lindberg informed that SAREC is prepared to consider an application for additional support to fully finance the webmaster/secretary position for the year 2002.

*Decision:* The board decided to upgrade the webmaster/secretary position to 100 % for the year 2002.

## **9. Budget for 2002**

*Suggestion:* See Enclosure 5: *Budget2002.doc*, which is attached

*Decision:* The board approved the budget for 2002.

## **10. Symposium with PhD candidates**

*Suggestion:* See Enclosure 6: *PhDSymposium.doc*, which is attached

*Discussion:* The board was positive to the planning done so far. Pamela Price suggested that Nordic PhD students and post-docs be invited to inform about the teaching and research situation in their respective countries.

Christer Norström suggested that the dates for the symposium should be fixed as soon as possible, and that information should be sent out soon.

*Decision:* The board approved the plans for the symposium.

## **11. Contact journey to South Asia**

*Suggestion:* The Director and Webmaster are planning a contact journey to The Maldives, Sri Lanka, India (Delhi, Chandigarh, Varanasi, Hyderabad, Kolkata) and Bangladesh during late February to late March this year. They will visit institutions that the SASNET network has already interacted with, as well as new institutions and centres to inform about SASNET and explore possibilities for co-operation of various kinds. Total cost for the journey is estimated at SEK 85 000.

*Discussion:* Board members believed the journey will be useful in developing SASNET. Alia Ahmad suggested that more effort should be put in visiting other countries than India. Lars Eklund informed that discussions are already under way to visit Pakistan and Afghanistan in the fall. It was suggested that Staffan and Lars should send out an itinerary for their tour to the board as soon as possible. The board members can then suggest persons and institutions worth visiting.

*Decision:* The board approved the contact journey.

## 12. General discussion about SASNET activities during 2003-2005

*Suggestion:* See Enclosure 7: *Plans for 2003 – 2005.doc*, which is attached. This plan and a budget (see next point on the agenda) along with a work report for the period 2000-2002, will be submitted to SAREC in April 2002 as an application for funding during the period 2003 – 2005. (See also [Principles for SASNET](#))

*Discussion:* Staffan Lindberg opened the discussion by saying that the proposed plans for the period 2003–2005, as described in Enclosure 7, follows the original October 2000 plan, and asked the members to feel free to suggest priorities, changes, etc. He felt that by the end of 2002 the organisation of SASNET would be ready to take new initiatives. The Internet Gateway needs constant updating and improvement. One way of improving it would be to publish working reports by members of the network and have a discussion forum connected with this. At the same time it is important to realise that the Gateway is only one of several tools in networking, which primarily has to be via personal contacts of various kinds. It is also important to continue networking among already existing SASNET nodes before we try to build new ones. One major concern is the recruitment of doctoral students in the near future, when the number of students at the universities seems to dwindle.

Catarina Kinnvall asked why there is only a small financial allocation for the Øresund Masters course. Staffan explained that the idea is to avoid making the course too dependent on external funding. The main resources should come from the universities and institutions organising the programme.

The question of how to keep the spirit alive in the SASNET network was raised. Christer Norström and other members of the board emphasised that in order to make SASNET a viable network, the fruits should be distributed widely in the network, in order to promote strong second level nodes in Uppsala, Stockholm, Göteborg, etc.

Kjell Härenstam suggested that more emphasis should be put on linking with the schools at all levels, e.g. by providing lectures, video films and other material. He also suggested that we need to do more didactical research on how to involve children and teenagers in the study of other cultures. Pamela Price told about the work in this field done by the Association of Asian Studies, which publishes a magazine for teachers and schools four times a year (<http://www.aasianst.org/EAA/about.htm>).

*Decisions:* The board approved the plans made for the years 2003–2005, along with the suggestions presented in the discussion.

## 13. Budget for SASNET year 2003, and the following two years

*Suggestion:* See Enclosure 8: *Budget 2003-5.doc*, which is attached

*Discussion:* Several board members emphasised that, given the overall financial frames of Sida and Lund University, there should be a reasonable balance between the cost of running the

root node, and the support to network partners. At least half of the funds should be allocated for the latter purpose. The idea of creating a visiting lecturers programme, was appreciated.

*Decisions:* The overall budget was approved.

#### **14. Date for the board meeting in August 2002**

*Decisions:* The next board meeting will take place on Tuesday 27 August, 2002, 13–17.

#### **15. Suggestion to include Afghanistan in the network**

*Suggestion:* Bo Lindblad has suggested that Afghanistan should be included among the countries in South Asia, and that SASNET should extend its activities to that country.

*Discussion:* All members were enthusiastic about the suggestion, because of the many historical and contemporary links between Afghanistan and the rest of South Asia. It was also pointed out that Afghanistan belongs to the South Asia desk at the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

*Decisions:* The board decided that Afghanistan should be included in the SASNET activities. However, if any of the absent members of the board raises serious objections against this inclusion, the decision will be reconsidered at the next board meeting in August.

#### **16. Suggestion to form a Nordic discussion network**

*Suggestion:* Pamela Price reported that the Norwegian Forum for South Asia, NoFSA, suggests that their e-mail discussion forum should, through SASNET, be extended to cover Sweden and the other Nordic countries as well.

*Decision:* After some discussion the board members came to the conclusion that at the present stage it will be better to form national discussion fora. Pamela Price suggested a meeting between the SASNET root node and the NoFSA-net webmaster Ram Gupta to discuss this.

**Lund 25 January 2002**

***Lars Eklund***.....

Lars Eklund, secretary

Verified by:

***Catarina Kinnvall***.....

Catarina Kinnvall