FGAM meeting – 29th July 2009 – Room A122, Department of Chemistry, York, YO10 5DD

Attendees:

Alan Blyth,
Matt Hobby,
Trevor Ingham
Bill Sturges,
Brian Bandy,
Geraint Vaughan,
Hugo Ricketts
Hugh Coe
James Dorsey,
Paul Williams.
Jim Hopkins,
Ruth Purvis,
Katie Read,
John Nicol,
Paul Hayden,
Spiros Ventouras,
Adrian Kybett,
Stephen Mobbs
Chris Collier,
Vitchko Tsanev

Apologies:
Fay Davies, Anthony Illingworth, Alastair Lewis, Martin Gallagher, Lisa Whalley, Dwayne Heard

Notes:

The FGAM group were deeply saddened to hear of the recent death of Kate Furneaux and would like to offer their sincere condolences to her family, she will be sorely missed.

1. Verbal reports on status of instruments from all groups (issues or highlights)

All groups reported on their instrumentation, activities and key issues – *see separate document for links to each presentation given.*

2. Field campaigns - issues arising from recent projects and planning ahead

FGAM Instrument scientist to run sodars?

- The FENNEC proposal was recently funded and includes the use of the FGAM sodars with a dedicated FGAM operator. However, Barbara Brooks is currently on secondment to the University of Leeds and no replacement has been put in position.

ACTION on Alan Blyth: to pursue the situation and provide feedback to the FENNEC scientists

Links between FAAM and FGAM are they strong enough? Are there problems which need to be addressed and what could be done to provide stronger links?

- General comments were made that the communication links needed to be improved, but it was pointed out that communications were getting better. The FAAM working groups have been a big help in improving communication and a continued strong FGAM presence at these meetings will also help.

- A representative from FAAM should be invited to all future FGAM meetings including the proposed monthly conference calls/virtual meetings.

- Points of contact at FAAM and FGAM should be clarified to enable proper lines of communication between facilities when problems arise.

ACTION on Jim Hopkins: to discuss with FAAM and confirm points of contact for instruments and general operating issues

3. FGAM strategy: Fitting FGAM strategy to NCAS strategy

Stephen Mobbs gave a summary of the NCAS strategy in the form of a mind map, this is in the process of being written in document style before being available (via NCAS website) for feedback.

- Technology Development was highlighted as an area which FGAM could/should lead developments and strategy.

- It was agreed that technological development has so far been limited due to current funding and time restrictions. Some re-organisation would be needed for FGAM to operate more efficiently (for routine duties) and free-up time for each of the FGAM instrument scientists to play a more influential role in developing technologies, enabling field campaigns and performing intercomparisons and calibration exercises etc.

- Re-organising according to expertise may make this more achievable for example:

    - technological development
    - enabling field campaigns
    - enabling long-term measurements

- It may be possible for some FGAM instrument scientist to share duties such as running instruments during fieldwork.

- For example, someone within the current FGAM set-up could take the lead with this and work for a proportion of their time to oversee a number of areas of development, they would not need to be an expert in all (or any) of these areas, but instead would be a point of contact within NCAS for outside partners to enquire about what the key technological developments within NCAS had been.

- It was acknowledged by all that there is considerable activity in FGAM which is currently happening, but is not well-publicised or structured. With better organization of these activities, there may be more interaction with other scientists within FGAM and more progress could be made. Grouping scientists together with key skills may help this.

Action on Alan Blyth: To determine possible groupings and efficiencies based on current skills.

Action on Alan Blyth: To modify FGAM strategy document to align with NCAS strategy.

Action on Alan Blyth: To write an implementation plan.

4. i. Science questions
ii. New instruments - priorities, plans for funding
iii. Technology programme
iv. Staffing issues: Cardington, FAAM a/c instruments

- Due to a shortage of time, much of this section had to be skipped over. Some topics had been discussed elsewhere. More detailed discussions will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Cardington site:

- 24 hours a day total air exclusion zone above the Cardington site. It has secure buildings with offices, labs and workshop, currently there are about 10 people working there.

- It is possible that FGAM could make better use of the site by running instruments there or for instrument development and testing – especially for airborne balloon instruments.

- We could possibly fund a new person to be based at the site and help improve links.

NOTE: The money that could be available for a new FGAM instrument scientist could only be justified if it was a "strategically important" appointment. ie. not for helping with current instrumentation.

Action on Alan Blyth: Communicate with others in FGAM and NCAS and make decision on best way forward with regards to Cardington.

5. Ramp down targets

Adrian Kybett gave a brief description of the ramp down targets.

- In the last financial year FGAM was required to recoup funds (approx £74k) to account for the ramp down in national capability funding. It is likely to be a similar amount this year as well (possibly up to £100k).

- It was pointed out that the majority of the money for last year was recouped from Alan Blyth's successful research projects and the loss of one of the FGAM positions. However, it was also acknowledged that the main reason for this gap was that FGAM was initially presumed to be 100% funded through national capability and therefore had no targets to meet.

- Now and in the future it is the responsibility of FGAM instrument scientists to ensure that if they are deployed on a project that they recoup adequate funds for their time.

Action on all: Think about collaborative consortium projects involving many FGAM groups and discus with Alan before net meeting (planned for January). Alan Blyth to coordinate.

6. FGAM brochure

- All were agreed that an FGAM brochure was needed. It was agreed that this should not give too much detail, but rather give a broad overview of the areas which FGAM covers. It should be short, colourful and eye-catching.

ACTION on Ruth Purvis and James Groves: prepare a draft of an FGAM brochure.

- An FGAM review paper was also discussed. The FGAM instrumentation special issue was not successful, because of the broad range of instrumentation and science covered by FGAM – a consequence of the strength of the facility. But a review paper covering the facility may be successful.

ACTION on Alan Blyth: to begin work on this with considerable help from all instrument scientists.

7. Web pages

- The FGAM website has been simplified and improved. It will be used more regularly now with meeting agendas and minutes included for public viewing etc..

- The FGAM planner has also been adapted and improved so that all of the links now work and brief descriptions of all projects are included.

- The FGAM blog is up and running and has been popular with some instrument scientists. All others are encouraged to submit more entries to highlight activities

ACTION on all Instrument scientists: submit new entries to the FGAM blog as and when they happen.

- Separate pages for each of the FGAM instruments should be written to include methods, calibration methods. detection limits and other meta-data. Instrument scientists should use the CO instrument page as a template for their own instruments.

ACTION on all Instrument Scientists: to produce one summary document per instrument for which they are responsible and send to Ruth or Jim to include on the FGAM website.

8. Emerging new technologies

- In the interests of time new technologies will be discussed at the next meeting.

9. DONM and AOB

- There will be a brief FGAM meeting in oxford coinciding with the NCAS staff meeting – details to be confirmed.

- The next FGAM Instrument Scientists meeting will be in around six months (start of 2010). This will likely be an instrument scientists meeting with more of a focus on scientific achievements and discussion rather than strategic planning.

ACTION on Jim Hopkins: circulate a poll for a suitable date for the next meeting

s**ummary of actions arising from the meeting**

- ACTION on **Alan Blyth**: to pursue the situation and provide feedback to the FENNEC scientists

- ACTION on **Jim Hopkins**: to discuss with FAAM and confirm points of contact for instruments and general operating issues

- Action on **Alan Blyth** to determine possible groupings and efficiencies based on current skills.

- Action on **Alan Blyth** to modify FGAM strategy document to align with NCAS strategy.

- Action on **Alan Blyth** to write an implementation plan.

- Action on **Alan Blyth**: Communicate with others in FGAM and NCAS and make decision on best way forward with regards to Cardington.

- Action on **all FGAM scientists:** Think about collaborative consortium projects involving many FGAM groups and discus with Alan before net meeting (planned for January). Alan Blyth to coordinate.

- ACTION on **Ruth Purvis** and **James Groves**: prepare a draft of an FGAM brochure.

- ACTION on **Alan Blyth**: to begin work on this with considerable help from all instrument scientists.

- ACTION on **all FGAM Instrument scientists**: submit new entries to the FGAM blog as and when they happen.

- ACTION on **all Instrument Scientists**: to produce one summary document per instrument for which they are responsible and send to **Ruth** or **Jim** to include on the FGAM website.

- ACTION on **Jim Hopkins**: circulate a poll for a convenient time for the next meeting