



Meeting Minutes

MIRAI (2024-2026) General Assembly

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

9:00-10:30 SE / 16:00-17:30 JP

Participants

As the attached list.

1. Welcome

The meeting began with an opening remark by Professor Katrine Riklund, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Umeå University. She went over the agenda items and confirmed that the General Assembly partners have the voting rights for questions that require making decisions.

2. Quick Introduction from Representatives at Member Universities

Prof. Natalie Konomi from Kyushu University read out the names of representatives at member universities on behalf of the Japanese side. After that, likewise, Prof. Riklund named Swedish representatives. Prof. Riklund confirmed that the number of attendees was adequate to convene the meeting.

3. MIRAI 2.0 Summary – Evaluation Report

Magnus Machale-Gunnarsson, analyst at the University of Gothenburg, reported on the evaluation of the second phase of MIRAI (MIRAI 2.0). The sources were drawn from the collected data: project plan, evaluation report for the Research and Innovation (hereafter R&I) Weeks, final reports from the seed-funding projects and a survey to selected participants. The survey was sent to 265 participants of MIRAI, selected by coordinators at each university with the instruction to, focusing on approximately 10, who are the most active participants. 106 people responded to the survey, about half from Japan half from Sweden roughly. As shown in the slides, he went over the following contents: goals, activities, results of these activities and learnings for the future.

4. Approval of Appointments

1) Board of Directors (BoD)

Prof. Riklund presented the overview of the Board of Directors (hereafter BoD), referencing to the organizational structure of MIRAI and went on to suggest the candidate member of BoD.

- Sweden: Linköping University and Umeå University

- Japan: Nagoya University and Kyushu University

It was endorsed that the four universities above will take the role of BoD.

2) Global Challenges Teams (GCTs)

Prof. Riklund explained the overview of GCTs including the structure and presented the current distribution table of each of the four teams. The suggested composition of members in four GCTs were endorsed without any objection or abstention. Following this, it was endorsed that the BoD is allowed to take an interim decision regarding the teams that have a lower number and a team whose chair must be filled in, which means that an extra General Assembly will not be held for this matter.

3) Reconsider Organizing Specific Task Teams (STTs)

Prof. Riklund explained the overview of STTs, planned activities and status of teaming. Given the status of STTs, she suggested the possible actions for STTs respectively as shown on the slide and asked to give mandate to the BoD about the composition of the three STTs. Without any question, comment or abstention raised, the suggestion was endorsed.

5. Overall Plan for MIRAI Third Phase (2024-2026)

Based on the slides, Prof. Natalie Konomi explained the overall plan in the third phase of MIRAI, which included its aims, its organizational structure. She went on to cover the upcoming event and activities: the kick-off, Global Challenge Winter School and R&I Week and more shown in the slides. As a part of the plan, she also touched on the MIRAI website as a strategy to reach out to external stakeholders, mentioning the possibility of adding sort of updated platforms for enhancing communication and branding.

It was followed by a discussion with participants as summarized below.

- Besides the webpage, there is a LinkedIn page of MIRAI, having over 500 followers. It should be a good venue for promoting MIRAI's activities. Two coordinating universities put out information there about calls that might be relevant for researchers. Everyone is encouraged to follow the LinkedIn page as well.
- Regarding the Winter School, Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) hopes to have at least one student from each of the MIRAI member universities and to have the

winter school in connection with Sasakawa Nordic Networking Conference so that the network for Ph.D. students could extend to Nordic universities doing Japanese studies beyond Swedish universities. That could benefit the overall environment for younger researchers in the field. SSE will send out information, noting that students from Sweden will have to cover some kind of fees or other expenses, but not quite high though.

- Is it possible to post on website about the news about any work of member university? The example would be a presentation together with Institute of International Affairs on Asian barometer on Swedish public's perception on India, China and Japan, which demonstrates that Japan has a strong standing among Swedish public. Is that the type of information that we can link to MIRAI page to spread the message?
 - Yes, it is important to bring up such kind of collaborations between Sweden and Japan that are unaware of, and which is why a platform for sharing information is necessary.

- Is it possible to have the R&I Week earlier than at the very end of the project? It would be great to have in the middle or at least a little bit earlier because it is the most important physical meeting.
 - The reason for placing R&I week at the end was to use it to showcase to everyone the achievements including activities of GCTs.
 - It might depend on how to distribute the other meetings. Even if R&I week is held once during the third phase, that is not the only opportunity to meet together.
 - In case R&I week happens in 2025, EAIE 2025, European Association for International Education, to be held at the University of Gothenburg, would be a good onsite opportunity for involvement of GCTs.

As for the localization at least, members in principle agreed that MIRAI the third phase have R&I Week, which is to be hosted in Japan. It could be too early to decide if R&I week should be held in autumn in 2026. That depends on the operation of GCTs.

6. Introduction GCTs

Prof. Riklund explained in more detail about GCTs including what is expected and what are matters that the teams should be responsible for with thoughts how the GCTs could work.

7. Moving Forward the STINT Project Activities

Prof. Greg Neely from the Umeå University briefed on the STINT application: current situation and proposed activities in the application.

- As of the day of this General Assembly, the result of the STINT application has not reached Umeå University. Historically, STINT announced the result from the beginning of June to the end of July.
- Even if STINT decides to fund MIRAI project, there is still an expectation to continue to apply for other types of funding and other types of activities other than STINT project.

*Note:

After the GA meeting, Umeå University reported that it received the result from STINT, saying that the application was successful.

8. Summary and Closing, Group Photo Taking

Prof. Kenji Iwata from Kyushu University made his closing remarks with words of gratitude to the participants for contribution to activities in MIRAI including efforts in STINT application, wishing for its success. He also expressed his expectation toward further collaborations in the activities lying ahead including interdisciplinary work, development of early career researchers, interactions with external stakeholders and ultimately innovations in wider areas.

The General Assembly meeting ended successfully on a high note after taking Group Photo on Zoom.