

Vistís AGM 2024

Location: Askja, University of Iceland, Sturlugata 7, 102 Reykjavík

Meeting Chair: Sandra Magdalena Granquist

Meeting Secretary: Isabel C Barrio

Attending: Snorri Sigurðsson, Lilja Jóhannesdóttir, Haseeb Randwha, Filipa Samarra, Starri Heiðmarsson, Sandra Granquist, Isabel C Barrio, Edda E Magnúsdóttir, Michelle Valliant, Skúli Skúlasson

Meeting started 18:00

1. Annual report of the society

The 2024 annual meeting represents the 15th anniversary of the Icelandic Ecological Society, which was established in 2009. Edda presented an overview of the annual report, which covers the period since the last AGM in March 2023. The previous annual meeting was held in Laugarbakki and was attended by 84 participants. As usual, the 2023 AGM took place at the conference. During the AGM, and there were no major changes made to the statutes.

Over the last year, Vistís has supported the participation of students in the biannual NSO meeting held in Lund on March 12-15, 2024. Vistís also organized its present annual meeting in Reykjavík, and is organizing a workshop for students in science communication and graphic presentation of science that will take place on April 6, 2024, following the annual conference. About 20 students will participate in the workshop.

In addition, Vistís contributed one media article about whales and greenhouse gas emissions.

Vistís counts as of today with ca. 100 members.

2. Financial report audited by elected auditors

Filipa presented the financial report for the society, which has been approved by the two external auditors (Bryndís Marteinsdóttir and Hildur Magnúsdóttir) as required by the society's laws. The accounts are in good health.

Vistís receives support from NSO every year. The other source of revenue is the income from the memberships. The main expenses are to cover expenses to support students for attendance to the biannual meetings of NSO (as was the case in 2024), and in alternative years, for the organization of the annual meeting outside Reykjavík (which was the case in 2023). The cost of organizing the annual meetings in the capital area is usually less.

The financial report was approved by all meeting participants.

3. Changes to the society's rules, if any were received formally

No formal suggestions were received. One point that was brought up during the AGM, as a question of whether this should be included in the society's rules or not, was the allocation of finances. Currently Vistís has a surplus of money in its accounts that has been there for the last 5 years. The question was if we should explicitly regulate the use of funding and encourage its use for specific activities. It was suggested that this should not be formally included in the society's rules, but funding allocation should be discussed at the AGM, which could provide some recommendations. In general it was agreed that Vistís should keep the costs of organizing the annual meetings in the capital area within the revenue coming from the memberships, and use the NSO grant to cover the costs of the meetings outside of the capital area and student support to participate in NSO meetings. Vistís funding should support student activities, but Vistís should be better at engaging with students to learn more about their needs. For example, this could be done through institutional points of contact that engage with student groups in the different institutes and universities, and report back to the Vistís board. As well, including a student representative in board meetings is a step forward in this direction.

4. Board election.

Board members are elected for 2 years and extra board members are elected for one year at a time. Board members are elected at the AGMs, and at the AGM several board member positions had to be re-elected:

- Freydís Vigfúsdóttir (chair; current term: 2022-2024) – renewed as chair of the Vistís board for the period 2024-2026.
- Sandra Granquist (current term: 2022-2024) – renewed as member of the Vistís board for the period 2024-2026
- Starri Heiðmarsson (current term: 2022-2024) – steps down as member of the Vistís board
- Guðbjörg Ásta Ólafsdóttir steps down as member of the Vistís board

Two other members, Filipa Samarra and Isabel C Barrio, were re-elected in the previous AGM for the period 2023-2025 and continue their role in the Vistís board.

The following persons were elected to the board:

- Haseeb Randwha joins the board as a member for the period 2024-2026.
- Bryndís Marteinsdóttir joins the board as an extra member for the period 2024-2025

The specific roles of the board members will be discussed at a board meeting.

In addition, it was suggested at the board election that it would be very beneficial for Vistís to have a student representative, without the full obligations of formal board members. At the next AGM in 2025 this decision could be revised and the need of including this position formally as part of the rules of the society revised. One student volunteered for this position:

- Michelle Valliant will act as student representative for the period 2024-2025

We thank Starri and Guðbjörg for their excellent service to Vistís, and welcome warmly Haseeb, Bryndís and Michelle to the team.

5. Election of the auditors for the following year's audit

Hildur Magnúsdóttir has agreed to continue acting as an external auditor for Vistís. Bryndís Marteinsdóttir becomes part of the board, so she can no longer be an auditor. Ragnhildur Guðmundsdóttir has agreed to take on this role.

6. Decision on the annual fee amount

The current membership fee is 21 EUR. Since the finances are going well, the fee will remain the same.

7. Other items

Logo of the society: the logo of the society has been an outstanding issue for a long time, and we should prioritize that for visibility of the society. It was suggested that we could organize a competition to involve students in the process.

Next year, the founder of Vistís, Ingibjörg Svala Jónsdóttir, will be retiring, so we should have a celebration for her at the annual meeting, perhaps organizing a specific symposium and inviting some of her former students who are abroad to give a talk. A nice idea would be to offer Inga Svala the first honorary membership of Vistís.

One additional point that was discussed regarded transparency in the activities of Vistís, both regarding the archiving of materials (e.g. making available the minutes from the AGMs on the website or on some cloud space?) and documenting information better, and also for future processes (e.g. how do people apply to become a member of the board?).

Meeting closed: 18:55
