

Minutes of the 2023 SIRA Annual Conference

December 20, 2023 12:30 – 14:00

Physically in Zurich and online in Zoom

1. Welcome and set-up

Attendees:

In person:

Christian Tschudin – UniBas, SIRA President

Burkhard Stiller – UZH (attended until 13:00; then substituted by Martin Glinz)

Martin Glinz – UZH, Board Member, partial substitute for Burkhard Stiller

Online in Zoom:

Matthias Baldauf – OST

Philippe Cudré-Mauroux – UniFr

Giovanna Di Marzo Serugendo – UniGE

Matthias Hauswirth – USI, Board Member

Peter Kropf – UniNE

Christine Legner – UniL, Board Member

Kenny Paterson – ETHZ

Sandro Pedrazzini – SUPSI

Athina Tzovara – UniBE (substitute for Paolo Favaro)

Excused:

Siegfried Handschuh – UniSG, SIRA Treasurer

Christoph Stamm – FHNW

1. Welcome and set-up

The president welcomes the participants. Initially, 12 voting members are present.

Minute keeper: Martin Glinz – approved

Agenda: Unanimously approved

2. Minutes of the SIRA Conference 2022

Unanimously approved

3. Report on activities, communications

The president explains that due to his other commitments, in particular as head of the department, and then being on sabbatical, he had not enough time and energy to trigger SIRA activities. Also, the board did not meet; they just exchanged some e-mail.

Martin Glinz reports that SI launched a new website and that some SIRA pages, in particular, the member list, also have been migrated. The old SIRA website is still there and will need some refurbishment. This will be an issue for 2024.

Giovanna Di Marzo Serugendo suggests that SIRA teams up with SI in organizing events or other things that are of joint interest for both SIRA and SI.

Martin Glinz adds that SIRA plans to provide some financial support for conferences organized by SIRA members in Switzerland. We will discuss this later.

4. SIRA fees 2024

The SIRA Board proposes to leave the SIRA membership fees for 2024 unchanged.

- CHF 120.– per regular member (36.– to SIRA, 50.– to SI, 14.– to joint SI-SIRA R&E fund, 20.– flat fee for SIG memberships).
- CHF 0.– per emeritus.

Decision: Unanimously approved

5. Approvals

5.1 Financial report of 2022

Siegfried Handschuh, the SIRA treasurer, could not attend this year's SIRA Conference. Martin Glinz presents the financial matters on behalf of him.

The financial report of 2022 (Figure 1) has been sent to all SIRA representatives. SIRA legally is an association of its own, owning all its assets. SIRA has delegated all financial bookkeeping to SI. So the SIRA closing is also done by SI.

Martin Glinz explains the closing and adds some remarks:

- The miscellaneous expense of CHF 527.10 still needs to be clarified. This was no SIRA expenditure, but for whatever reason charged to SIRA. We only detected this problem when preparing today's presentation of the closing. We will follow this up.
- The expenses of CHF 1'270.00 are travel expenses for attending the general assembly of Informatics Europe, where SIRA is a member. Actually, the reimbursement statement and amount paid by SI was CHF 1'274.70. Most probably, a typo was made when entering the figures into the SI bookkeeping. So, eventually, SI has donated CHF 4.70 to SIRA.
- There is an unclarified difference of 2 Rappen when comparing the assets by Dec 31, 2022 with the assets by Dec 31, 2021 plus the surplus of 2022. SIRA will not follow this up.
- Currently we do not know what the liabilities of CHF 577.10 on the passive side of the SIRA 2022 balance are. Maybe tax provisions. Needs to be clarified.

Outlook for 2023

2023 will also close with a surplus; there are no major expenses except the membership in ParIDigi and some cost for the renovation of the SIRA membership webpage. The closing of 2023 will be available by about the end of the first quarter of 2024.

Giovanna Di Marzo Serugendo asks about the value of the ParlDigi membership for SIRA. She also remarks that SIRA is not visible on the ParlDigi Website.

Martin Glinz replies that there is no immediately visible benefit for SIRA. ParlDigi basically is an association that unites and supports those members of the federal parliament who are interested in informatics and the digital transformation. In contrast to the Swiss farmers, Swiss informatics is badly represented in our parliament. Therefore, it principally makes sense to support an organization who aims at making digital issues better heard in Bern. And, if we have issues that we want to bring forward in politics, it gives us a bridge to National Councilors who are interested in digital affairs and whom we could contact through ParlDigi. We will follow up with the ParlDigi website issue.

Christian Tschudin suggests that members interested in more actively engaging with ParlDigi should contact him.

[Burkhard Stiller leaves.]

SIRA Closing 2022			
Income	Budget [CHF]	Actual [CHF]	Comments on actual values
SIRA Membership fees (gross income)		45'360.00	
SI share of fees		-27'272.00	
SI-SIG & SISR membership fees for SIRA members		-4'460.00	
Membership fees (SIRA share)	11'000.00	13'628.00	
Total income	11'000.00	13'628.00	
Expenses	Budget [CHF]	actual [CHF]	Comments on actual values
Sponsoring ParlDigi	6'000.00	6'000.00	
SIRA Event 2022	2'000.00	1'500.00	Swiss IT summit
other measures/events at discretion of the board	3'500.00	1'270.00	ECSS 2022 (actual cost is CHF '1'274.69, but only 1'270.00 charged to SIRA account
Miscellaneous (at discretion of the board)	500.00	527.10	Meeting catering cost
Taxes, negative interest	1'500.00	50.00	Provisions in closing, i.e., this is an estimate
Total expenses	13'500.00	9'347.10	
deficit (-) / surplus (+)	-2'500.00	4'280.90	
Assets (Jan 1, 2022)		233'723.02	
Unclarified difference in SI Closing		-0.02	We consider this as a donation to SI – no follow-up
Assets (Dec 31, 2022)		238'003.90	
The 2022 balance of SI states for SIRA:			
SIRA Actives			
Liquid assets		232'109.00	
Debtors		6'472.00	
Total Actives		238'581.00	
SIRA Passives			
Liabilities		577.10	Unclear what this is. Tax provisions? Needs to be clarified.
Capital		238'003.90	
Total Passives		238'581.00	

Figure 1. Financial closing 2022 of SIRA

Decision: The SIRA closing of 2022 is approved unanimously with one abstention.

5.2 Discharge of the board

Decision: The SIRA Board is discharged with 7 yes and 4 abstentions (by the Board members).

5.3 Budget 2024

Martin Glinz presents the SIRA budget for 2024 (Figure 2) on behalf of the treasurer. The Board proposes to budget income based on the actual income of 2022. On the expenses side, the board proposes to include in the budget some money for supporting major international scientific conferences organized by SIRA members and held in Switzerland. The budget deliberately plans for a deficit.

SIRA Budget 2024

	Budget 2024 [CHF]	Actual 2022 [CHF]	Comments
Income			
Membership fees (SIRA share)	13'600.00	13'628.00	Actuals of 2023 not yet available Estimate based on closing of 2022
Total income	13'600.00	13'628.00	
Expenses			
Sponsoring ParlDigi	6'000.00	6'000.00	
SIRA Event 2024	2'000.00	1'500.00	Or supporting a suitable SI-Event
Support for major Informatics conferences in CH	5'000.00	0.00	Actual support to be decided by the board upon request by conference organizers
Other measures/events at discretion of the board	2'000.00	1'270.00	
Miscellaneous (at discretion of the board)	600.00	527.10	
Taxes	500.00	50.00	
Total expenses	16'100.00	9'347.10	
Deficit (-) / Surplus (+)	-2'500.00	4'280.90	

Assets (Jan 1, 2024) 243'000 Rough estimate; actuals of 2023 not yet available
 Assets (Dec 31, 2024) 240'500 Estimate if income and expenses in 2024 will be as budgeted

Figure 2. SIRA budget for 2024 as presented to the SIRA Conference

There are questions and suggestions from the participants about the budget position for supporting major conferences. Christine Legner asks whether we currently have applications and whether there is an application process. Martin Glinz replies that so far, SIRA has received a request from FHNW for the 2025 XP conference. Kenny Paterson mentions Eurocrypt 2024 which will be held in May 2024 in Zurich (<https://eurocrypt.iacr.org/2024/>). Martin Glinz mentions REFSQ 2024 which will be held in April 2024 at ZHAW in Winterthur (<https://2024.refsq.org>). If the budget is approved, the SIRA board would define criteria for eligible events and send an information message to the members with instructions about how to apply for funding.

Christian Tschudin raises the question whether we should increase this budget position. After a brief discussion the conference votes.

Decision: The vote yields nine votes for increasing the funding amount in the budget to 7.5 kCHF and two votes for sticking with 5 kCHF. The budget proposal is revised accordingly; yielding a budgeted deficit of CHF 5'000 (Figure 3).

Decision (unanimous): The revised SIRA budget 2024 as shown in Figure 3 is approved.

SIRA Budget 2024

	Budget 2024 [CHF]	Actual 2022 [CHF]	Comments
Income			
Membership fees (SIRA share)	13'600.00	13'628.00	Actuals of 2023 not yet available Estimate based on closing of 2022
Total income	13'600.00	13'628.00	
Expenses			
Sponsoring ParlDigi	6'000.00	6'000.00	
SIRA Event 2024	2'000.00	1'500.00	Or supporting a suitable SI-Event
Support for major Informatics conferences in CH	7'500.00	0.00	Actual support to be decided by the board upon request by conference organizers
Other measures/events at discretion of the board	2'000.00	1'270.00	
Miscellaneous (at discretion of the board)	600.00	527.10	
Taxes	500.00	50.00	
Total expenses	18'600.00	9'347.10	
Deficit (-) / Surplus (+)	-5'000.00	4'280.90	

Assets (Jan 1, 2024) 243'000 Rough estimate; actuals of 2023 not yet available
 Assets (Dec 31, 2024) 238'000 Estimate if income and expenses in 2024 will be as budgeted

Deficit (-) / Surplus (+)

Figure 3. SIRA budget for 2024 as decided. Changed positions are highlighted.

6. Miscellaneous

Future SIRA events

The attendees discuss potential SIRA events. Martin Glinz suggests that departments who organize evening talks or colloquia related to the SIRA goals inform SIRA so that such events could be co-labeled as SIRA events. Christine Legner suggests holding a SIRA event about generative AI in teaching and examining at Swiss universities. Martin Glinz welcomes such proposals, but underlines that such events only happen when there are members who are willing to organize them. Christian Tschudin states that the SIRA board will follow up with Christine's proposal.

SIRA statutes

The current SIRA statutes implicitly state in Article 5.7 that the SIRA conference is a physical, in person meeting. From 2020 up to now, we could argue that we did online or hybrid meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it would be better to allow online and/or hybrid meetings explicitly in our statutes. The board proposes that we work out an amendment of the statutes that would be voted on in the next SIRA conference. The SIRA Conference supports this proposal.

Including lecturers in the SIRA membership

When SI distributed the request to update the list of SIRA members to the departments, they also suggested to include lecturers on that list.

Christian Tschudin asks whether the SIRA Conference has an opinion on that. Martin Glinz states that the SIRA Statutes do allow to include lecturers, including Lehrbeauftragte/chargés de cours. The departments decide about whom they declare as SIRA members and pay the fee of Fr. 120 per member.

Date of next SIRA Conference

Christian Tschudin suggests two potential dates for the next SIRA Conference:

Fri Nov 8, 2024 12-14 or

Fri Nov 15, 2024 12-14

The conference will be in presence if we have a solid side program, else it will be held as an online or hybrid event.

Note that board elections will be on the agenda. Nominations are welcome.

The conference is closed at 13:42.