

Dear CIRA partner

Newsletter Spring-2020

Dear CIRFA-partners, colleagues, and collaborators.

July is already here, we are well into the summer. Many of you have started on summer vacation. We hope everybody is healthy and having a nice time.

We surely speak for everyone when we say that this has been a very unusual year. Suddenly the world changed dramatically, we were all sent home to work from our living-rooms, kitchens or lofts. It looks like the CIRFA workers quickly adjusted to the new situation, and managed to keep activities going. We all have learnt to use new communication platforms and conference systems, and, surprisingly enough, small and even larger meetings can actually be organized digitally, and still be effective. When the pandemic struck, CIRFA had one researcher stuck in London, a PhD candidate stuck in St. Petersburg, and a newly hired Postdoc stuck in Saudi Arabia. They are now back in Tromsø, or on their way back.

The semester started off with a productive workshop in January with members of the Centre Board and WP leaders present. The agenda was to pick up and discuss important issues from the midterm evaluation report, like CIRFA DEMOs and the afterlife of the Centre. Based on this meeting, plans for the final period of the Centre were made, and a response letter was set up and sent to the Research Council of Norway on January 15.

After mid-March, everything was digital. Meeting in the Centre's Management Group was digital, job interviews were digital, committee work was digital, and students' course exams were performed online. We also have arranged PhD defenses digitally. On May 15, Sindre Fritzner defended his PhD, online, and on July 1., Richard Hann defended his PhD, online. They are PhDs number 2. and 3. in the list of PhDs to be graduated from CIRFA. Congratulations to Sindre and Richard for presenting their PhD work in this new setting, and directly moving on to post doc positions.



After more than two years as administrative coordinator in CIRFA, Lise Nordgård officially had her last working day on March 31. She is now coordinator in [CANS \(Centre for New Antibacterial Strategies\)](#) at the Faculty of Health Sciences, at UiT the Arctic University of Norway. We would like to thank Lise for her solid contribution to CIRFA, and at the same time, we welcome our new coordinator Andrea Schneider, who started working for CIRFA on June 1. Andrea has a PhD in geology and geochemistry, and has previous experience in Arctic research and early career researcher education from working as coordinator in [APECS \(Association of Polar Early Career Researchers\)](#) and associated projects. We look forward to collaborating with Andrea.

Despite the unusual situation, the work in CIRFA has progressed well. Work has been focused on developing DEMOs related to the application-oriented work packages. The plan is to be able to present some at the upcoming CIRFA conference in October. Furthermore, the CIRFA researchers have made good progress on publications and conference contributions. Due to COVID-19, many of the conferences have been postponed and/or reorganized as digital conferences, hence demanding less travelling. This situation is presumed to continue for a while.

The annual CIRFA conference is planned for October 14 & 15 at Sommarøy Arctic Hotel, our favorite meeting arena. The hope is to be able to have a physical meeting, and that most of you are able to participate. However, given the uncertainties, we also plan for a scenario where the conference may be digital.

With this brief update on the CIRFA situation, we wish you all a nice summer time, and look forward to meeting you all again soon.

Sincerely,

Andrea Schneider

Torbjørn Eltoft