# Minutes of SPCOM-TC Meeting at ICASSP-2015
## approved by the TC at the ICASSP 2016 meeting

**Tuesday, 21 April 2015, 13:00-14:20**

**In attendance: 9 TC Members, 0 Associate Members, 1 Affiliate Member, 1 other**

Erik G. Larsson (Chair), Tim Davidson (Past-Chair), Chong-Yung Chi, Yindi Jing, Amir Leshem, Wing-Kin Ma, Chandra Murthy, Mathini Sellathurai, Zhi Tian

Wei Xiang (U. Southern Queensland)

Charlie Bouman (TD Board)

Minutes written by T. Davidson.

**Formal Apologies: 3 TC Members**
Matthew McKay, Michael Rabbat, Wolfgang Utschick

**1. Welcome from the Chair**
Erik Larsson called the meeting to order and welcomed all those in attendance, including affiliate member Wei Xiang, and the Chair of the Technical Directions Board, Charlie Bouman.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**
Although it was recognized that we did not have quorum for formal TC business, the agenda was approved unanimously by those TC members who were present.

**3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting at ICASSP 2014**
In the absence of quorum, there was no attempt to have the minutes of the meeting at ICASSP 2014 formally approved. However, a call for comments regarding the accuracy of the minutes did not result in any concerns being brought forward.

**4. Review of outstanding action items**
Erik Larsson reviewed the outstanding action items. He reminded TC members of the opportunity to submit a proposal to host SPAWC 2017. He also requested suggestions for people who could be added to the reviewer pool for papers submitted to ICASSP 2016.

**5. Highlights of the Chairs report**
Erik Larsson reviewed his Chair's report for 2015. The full report is appended. To begin, Erik highlighted the renewal of the membership of the committee. In particular, he
- Offered a formal vote of thanks to Shuguang (Robert) Cui, Gesualdo Scutari and Dirk Slock who stepped down from the TC at the end of December, following the completion of their terms.
- Warmly welcomed Yindi Jing, Wing-Kin (Ken) Ma and Alejandro Ribeiro, the newly elected members of the TC.
- Welcomed back Urbashi Mitra and Rui Zhang who were re-elected for a second three-year term,
- Thanked Tim Davidson for his service to the TC as the Chair for the previous two years.

Erik also reminded the TC that in the election in Fall 2015, the TC will need to elect a new vice-chair. He encouraged TC members to consider standing for this position, or to nominate others for the position.

Erik then discussed his efforts to establish a more effective subcommittee structure. The goal is to engage more members of the TC in the core operations of the TC. He highlighted the Marconi award subcommittee as an example of a highly effective subcommittee, and he thanked Matthew McKay and his committee for their contributions.

In addition to the successful nomination of the paper "MIMO Broadcasting for Simultaneous Wireless Information and Power Transfer" by Rui Zhang and Chin Keong Ho for the Marconi paper award (for papers published in the *IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications*) Erik drew attention to the TC's successful nominations of the paper "Fast Distributed Average Consensus Algorithms Based on Advection-Diffusion Process" by S. Sardellitti, M. Giona and S. Barbarossa for the Signal Processing Society's Best Paper Award, and the successful nomination of T. Gou and C. Wang for the Society's Young Author Best Paper Award for their paper, co-authored with S. Jafar entitled "Aiming Perfectly in the Dark-Blind Interference Alignment Through Staggered Antenna Switching". In last year's award's process, three other papers were nominated and one nomination was made for the Technical Achievement Award. Unfortunately, those nominations were not successful.

The significant drop in the number of papers submitted to the SPCOM track for ICASSP 2015 was discussed at some length. It was observed that several TCs had seen a significant drop in the number of submissions, but that the relative drop for the SPCOM TC was among the biggest. The conclusion of the discussion was that the drop in submissions was indeed a concern, but that there may have been mitigating factors, including the availability of competing conferences that did not involve as much travel. Furthermore, there is no evidence of this being a long-term trend. The numbers of submissions for ICASSP 2013 and 2014 were above the long term average. The number of submissions for ICASSP 2016 will be reviewed in this context.

The numbers of submissions for recent SPAWC workshops were also reviewed. A dip in that number was observed for SPAWC 2014, but the number has rebounded strongly for SPAWC 2015. It was felt that the overlap between SPAWC 2014 and SAM 2014 was a significant contributor to the reduction in the number of submissions. These dates were decided within 24 hours of each other at the respective TC meetings at ICASSP 2013, and the TC decided not to move the dates for SPAWC 2014 in order to avoid clashing with ICC 2014 or ISIT 2014. A subsequent analysis of the attendees suggested that it will be very important to avoid clashes with SAM workshops in the future.

It was noted that the TC was not directly involved in the submissions of workshop proposals for GlobalSIP, but that the area of signal processing for communications and networking was strongly represented, with 6 of the 13 workshops at GlobalSIP 2014 being in that area.

Erik pointed out that a regular review of the TC's activities will take place later this week. A report on the TC's activities was submitted to the review.

### 6. Report on SPAWC 2015
Joakim Jalden reviewed the status of the organization of SPAWC 2015, which will be held in Stockholm from June 28 – July 1 2015. He noted that they had received 155 regular submissions and 51 special session submissions, and that he expected notifications of the decisions to be sent

out on 24 April 2015. He conveyed thanks to members of the TC from Mats Bengtsson (one of the technical co-chairs), for the quality of the reviews that had been provided. As a potentially interesting statistic in terms of planning for future SPAWCs, Joakim noted that 65% of the submissions for SPAWC came from three countries, France, USA and Germany.

Joakim then discussed the highlights of the conference, including the plenary speakers, the tutorials that had been arranged, the special sessions, and the social events, which include a reception at the City Hall (offered at no charge by the City of Stockholm) and the banquet at the Vasa Museum. Finally, he made one observation regarding the finances of the conference. The 25% VAT may be recoverable, and that may have a positive impact on the attendees.

### 7. Proposal for SPAWC 2016

Mathini Sellathurai presented a proposal to hold SPAWC 2016 in Edinburgh. She spoke of the support that the University of Edinburgh makes available to conference organizers, and she introduced the TC to the conference facilities and the opportunities for low-cost accommodation that the university makes available. She outlined the proposed social events, including a welcome reception at the Edinburgh Castle, along with a "standing dinner", and a banquet in the old college.

Mathini proposed that the conference be held from 3-6 July 2016 in order to connect with festivals that will be held in Edinburgh. These dates, and their relationships with related conferences were a topic of considerable discussion. There was also an open discussion on the format of SPAWC, and, more specifically, the number of plenary speakers and the number of overlapping sessions. The general tone of that discussion was that the current format of SPAWC is well suited to the workshop format. The possibility of having exhibitors at SPAWC was raised, and this idea was received warmly by those present.

Recognizing that we did not have quorum, Erik asked Mathini to refine the proposal based on the feedback from those in attendance. The proposal, including the proposed dates, will be put to an email vote within the TC.

As an aside to this discussion, Amir Leshem wondered whether it would be possible for us to construct a more inclusive name for SPWAC, but with the same acronym. This has recently been achieved by ICUWB. There was some discussion of this idea, but nobody was able to concoct a concrete proposal for a new name on the spot.

### 8. Policy on Award Nominations

Charlie Bouman, the Society's VP for Technical Directions, was then introduced. He provided an outline of some changes in nomination policies within the Society. In particular, he reviewed a recently developed document on minimum requirements and best practices for the nomination of candidates for the Society's awards. The tone of that introduction recognized that the SPCOM TC has had a rigorous procedure for its nomination processes for many years. One potential refinement of that procedure that is in the "best practices" part of the document is to release the slate of candidates for the award in two phases. The first release would be in the current form of the document. However, rather than immediately calling for votes, the awards committee would first call for commentary on the reviews that were presented on the slate. Those comments, whether supportive or critical of the review, would be added to the slate. The final version of the

slate would then be distributed to members of the TC along with a request for votes. This option was left as something for the TC to consider in the future.

Dr. Bouman also outlined the refinement of the process by which individuals can nominate candidates for the Society's awards. He drew attention to upcoming changes in the Society's Policies and Procedures Manual that would be the formal statement.[1] These "individual" nominations can include co-nominators, and up to two endorsements from individuals. The endorsements will be sent to the Awards Board directly from the endorser. Technical committees cannot act as endorsers. However, if the nominators request it, and the committee wishes to, it can add a statement of up to 300 words in support of the nomination. Dr. Bouman suggested that the selection of endorsers would be important, given that TC nominations carry considerable weight.

Dr. Bouman highlighted the fact that individuals, committees and boards are allowed to submit more than one nomination per award, should they so wish. He emphasized that TC's cannot nominate one of their current members for an award. However, he said that members of a TC could act as a group of individual nominators and nominate a current TC member through the "individual" nomination process. Upon questioning, Dr. Bouman stated that the current interpretation is that TC's cannot nominate a paper for the Young Author Best Paper Award if it is co-authored by a current TC member.


## 9. Review of Subcommittee Tasks

Erik Larsson reviewed the tasks of the TC's subcommittees and spoke at some length about the need to balance the workload of the TC more evenly across the membership. This will be an on-going process, but he encouraged all members to engage in the processes that drive the TC's operations.


## 10. Marconi Award nomination process

Erik noted the success of the Marconi Award process, and thanked Matt McKay and David Love for their excellent work with that nomination. He encouraged TC members to continue to bring our rigorous nomination process to nominations for this award.

## 11. Distinguished Lecturers

Erik highlighted the fact that the deadline for nominations for Distinguished Lecturers in the Society is at the end of May. Nominations would be greatly appreciated.


## 12. Other business
Charlie Bouman opened a discussion on the interaction that the TC had with GlobalSIP. It was stated that several members of the TC had run workshops at the first two previous GlobalSIPs, and that the area of signal processing for communications and networking was well represented in terms of the fraction of workshops that have been in our area. There was some discussion as to how GlobalSIP could be refined in order to make it more attractive to TCs. The overall tone of

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[1] That statement now appears as clause 2.20 in the Society's Policy and Procedures Manual.

that discussion was that the TC was happy to have members organize workshops at GlobalSIP, but it was felt that the TC should concentrate its efforts on enriching the SPAWC workshop.