The annual meeting discussions were centred on the proposal of the new support group setup on the basis of the suggestion to sub-divide the group into thematic commissions. The proposal is included below for reference:

**N-AERUS XII – Proposals**

- Unique structure of the “support group” is organized into commissions in order to share the support of key tasks and improve it.
- Every commission can be renewed at the N-Aerus conference and candidates can advance their interest for participation

**Proposed commissions:**
1. **COORDINATION**
2. **PROSPECTION**
3. **CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION**
4. **COMMUNICATION & DIFFUSION**

**1. COORDINATION COMMISSION**
Presently: Eva Alvarez Andrés, Viviana d’Aura, Javier Martinez, Luisa Moretto

**KEY TASKS:**
- Coordinate commissions: support their activity, ask for report of activity every 4/5 months, coordinate commissions renewal;
- Facilitate coordination among members interested in contributing to particular events such as WUF workshops/ roundtables, etc.;
- Provide backup for all decisions and documents shared within the support group (historical memory of the network)

**2. PROSPECTION COMMISSION**
3-4 people to be renewed every 3 years
Enrico Michelutti, Cecilia Cabrera, Marián Simon Rojo, Harry Smith

**KEY TASKS:**
- Stimulate discussion amongst support group members on possible N-Aerus actions and lobby to the EU;
- Identify possibilities for joint actions within N-Aerus members (publication, research, etc.);
- Identify possible funds for supporting N-Aeus actions

**3. CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION COMMISSION**
3-4 people to be renewed every 3 years (rolling system)
Eva Alvarez Andrés, Luisa Moretto, Karine Peyronnie, ...

**KEY TASKS:**
- Support conference host through (a) liaising with the N-Aerus support group to discuss the conference call, get the call translated (English, French, Spanish) and peer review abstracts; (b) providing practical and logistical information to host on conference organisation;
- Liaise via e-mail with other commissions of the support group regarding the conference call and abstract review and selection as well as on any other issues arising.

**4. COMMUNICATION & DIFFUSION**
2-3 people to be renewed every 3-4 years
Viviana d’Aura, Peter Gotsch, Javier Martinez
KEY TASKS:
- Receive applications for membership via members@n-aerus.net (which can be forwarded to responsible
  people’s address);
- Respond to applicants and update database and mailing list;
- Upload information relevant to the annual conference and other N-Aerus activities (calls, general
  conference information, conference papers);
- Arrange payment of annual fee for web hosting service;
- Newsletter or alternative via LinkedIn closed group.

The meeting also discussed possible criteria to articulate membership within the support group to tackle the
problem of its increase in size, the issue of non-responsive members and the difficulty of decision-making:

Possible criteria (from now onwards) for participation in the support group
- Attendance to at least 2 N-Aerus conference every 3 years (only required to EU members);
- Be available to review papers submitted to the conference;
- At least 2 group members should support the entry of new members

Extra criteria for being part of the coordination group
- To have taken part in the organization of one of the last conferences;
- To be part of the team organizing the forthcoming conference

N.B. The coordination group is part of the support group

Decision-making
The fact that the network relies on voluntary participation and commitments of its members entails that it
can sometimes be difficult to make decisions i.e. choosing between two proposals for organizing the conference
event or who may or may not be accepted as part of the support group.

Proposals:
- A clear set of criteria concerning basic operational issues is established (criteria for belonging to the
  support group, criteria concerning the selection of the host-institutions, etc.);
- A slot for debate is to be organized as an integral part of the conference to propose, ratify and discuss
  emerging issues or concerns to be treated throughout the year;
- The support group should be able to evaluate and decide on these within a fixed deadline;
- In case of disagreement, the following setup could be established:

  If more than 2/3 of the group disagrees, the proposal will not be approved, if 1/3 or less disagrees, the
  coordination group will be charged with taking the decision

CONTENT/ REVISION OF INITIAL OBJECTIVES

1. What other actions would we like / could we accomplish? What would they imply? What other functions
   could the support group and coordination group take up?
2. Could the network increase its international visibility? Promote joint training/research spaces and/or
   projects?
3. Besides publication on the website, could the annual event’s main findings be diffused in a journal or
   other form of publication to fortify the network’s visibility?

The following issues were then discussed in more detail:

Discussion of new proposal: Prospection commission
- N-Aerus identity/ objectives
- N-Aerus funding/ lobbying
- Relationship with conference commission

Content Issues
- N-Aerus network identity
- Network tasks/ roles
- Network “image”
- Opportunities for renewing/ reinforcing the network
The following conclusive remarks were generated through the discussions:

1) The Network will not change its name or it will lose its identity and strength. The “E” in N-Aerus needs to be taken as the specific qualities/features offered by research on the South based in Europe because of its pluralist and multi-linguistic approach. However, the N-Aerus description needs to be updated.

**ACTION:** Revise the existing description of N-Aerus in order to update its image

The Network will invest in opening itself to the South (without, for this reason, changing its name).

**ACTION:** Reinforce the role of members within the support group with a regional grounding (1 for Sub-Saharan Africa, 1 for South Asia, 1 for Latin America)

The Network will continue to organize its conferences in Europe, also due to the many self-supported members the Network has. Rather than conferences, specific meetings could be held in the South to implement its capacity.

**ACTION:** Pursue the tradition of keeping all 3 languages in presentations as to include as many researchers from the South as possible and continue the tradition of providing bursaries for Southern conference presenters, with a specific attention for young doctoral students.

The Network approves the new proposal for structuring the support group

**ACTION:** Communicate the new structure to all support group members and activate thematic commissions

The Network confirms its efforts to be visible (and increasingly so) internationally

**ACTION:** Prepare a proposal for the upcoming WUF VI in 2012, eventually considering a tandem setup (thematic?) with the conference in Paris.

---

The full discussion is outlined below:

**Discussion of new proposal: Prospection commission**

- N-Aerus identity/objectives
- N-Aerus funding/lobbying
- Relationship with conference commission

**What is the prospection commission?**

Intended as a “think tank” space for debate and for building new thematics - It is one of the most open-ended commissions. The prospection commission could play a crucial role in terms of researching funds. It is however important to consider that lack of funding did not interrupt N-Aerus, and the lack of funding was not only a negative aspect.

**Prospection:**

- Identify research issues
- Intercept main discussions
- Looking back – question of memory
- Synthesis of what is now state

Interesting idea which requires some connotations

Database research in the UK / public international database

Practical on what should and can be done

For example:

What could be done = research project across 7 countries

Can it be done?

**Balancing host institution which is devoted to conference organization**
Keeping in mind basic rule: something works if people in N-Aerus do it

**We need information for think tank => it should however be an open space for people to work together, not to work for them**

Very important - but also very difficult to get funding
If some people want to do it, fine but it is important to distinguish this activity from opening space for debate
N-Aerus should only give/provide access to information

Prospection commission: operational issues
what is out there
what opportunity -> pointing to it

Through commissions on communication and diffusion then opportunities and activities can be disseminated

**Content Issues**
- N-Aerus network identity
- Network tasks/roles
- Network “image”
- Opportunities for renewing/reinforcing

The proposal of thematic commission in the support group was born out of idea to avoid the only focus of the network to be conference organization

Many other opportunities, but also questions:
- Lobbying EC
- Channel funds on urban issues
- Do we want this objective?
- Do we need a different idea of N-Aerus?
- Is N-Aerus more than a platform?

Dangerous for N-Aerus to pick up the name of others actions/research proposals.
We should not think of lobbying without funding since other forms of lobbying exist

We should also not forget that lobbying can happen without financial support:
- Nation – wide scan of lobbying/funding opportunities
- Internal networks – how are they?
- How can networks be federated?

In the end it all boils down to willingness, but it remains interesting to re-articulate the support group
As things stand, the support group is present mainly (if not only) for abstract review
The idea was to spread out the group in the EU + other countries of the South (at least one representative per region) as to promote/consolidate networks in their area

But this depends on individuals and specific circumstances and people are just too busy

However the prospection commission has been interpreted as a way to identify and reinforce new efforts which have proved interesting in the course of conferences, as is the case of the “poster sessions” here in Madrid
This is an example of willingness, and slots can be engined and sponsored by those who propose – this formula could be kept in mind for future events.

Very good idea also in terms of opening N-Aerus to younger generations

**N-Aerus: 2 ways of lobbying**
- Be present at international events i.e. WUF workshops
- Be present in our single countries

Work on image they have of N-Aerus => should be presented as a dynamic international network of European researchers
Because in the end quite a lot of people are saying the same things and N-Aerus needs to prove itself a reliable and special network

Conference themes are a third way of lobbying => by not neglecting the “political” dimension
Development of Paris conference and the Call for Papers will keep this in mind, in a way it is going back to N-Aerus origins
Then contacting separate institution to lobby based on the political priorities
Backing up image of N-Aerus to use for smaller research works
Example: petition letter to government, not expensive

Example from work at the German Development Cooperation:
Problem of positioning itself
First step forwards lobbying platform, hard even to identify reference people
i.e. link with EU partners can be made when one is lobbying for water and energy issues
Should be similar for urban development questions but seldom is

Perhaps even considering to join European countries rather than having a German Development Cooperation, or considering Universities which have that potential for WUF in Naples 2012 and position European countries from academic point of view

Would be important to communicate the value of the international profile of network which stretches well beyond:
- Number of members
- Number of countries
- Individuals / institutions

Does it make sense to still refer to the South?
Connections with Brazil, China and other emerging countries
NOT just Europe, European in origin but interchange/exchange -> how much broader is the network, how to take into account breadth now that context is changing.

Opportunities of Habitat Partner Universities
WUF – suggestions should be sent in for N-Aerus’ participation

But knowledge is in universities, perhaps universities should participate in the network instead of individuals?
Since the future is in universities and this would make it more easy to get more people to understand/ participate if institutions are main interlocutors

No, N-Aerus is made of individuals from universities, it becomes quite impossible to ask universities
We should reflect on the added value of N-Aerus as a platform for young researchers
N-Aerus is composed of individuals/making links with institutions

For example, take the example of conference organizations, where in some cases the institution requires a business plan to set the event up: each country has a different situation, bureaucratically it can become very complicated

However, knowledge does not only lie with universities
Lots of other institutions and research centres, so perhaps universities need not be the only place to organize N-Aerus events, but other forms and publications should be considered

Making N-Aerus visible - question of publications/ proceedings:

- London conference: specific issue of Environment and Urbanization
- Publish a book / given opportunity Best paper + thematic issue of a journal (4 – 5 to journal)
- Trialog (bilingual) – can serve as a platform

  Venice
  Paris – neoliberal city
  Lund
- Relation between print and paper is very important, some contributors do not appreciate that papers are put on-line

However, this boils down to the same issue: There should be coordination therefore, and to setup a platform there must be someone doing the job. Could be that the commitment to publish the best papers is taken on by the institution organizing the conference, supported by the commissions. People organizing the conference should be doing that as a way of publishing the results of the event N-Aerus has always put them on-line.

Issue of graphic design – there should be a kind of “N-Aerus label”, not just funding other reviews/journals/institutions but fostering N-Aerus first of all, impose role of N-Aerus

However pressure to publish is problematic: PhD students can be effectively voiced through events and proceedings.

**Question of originality -> identity of the format in the N-Aerus**

If lobbying starts then it can be something that begins. It can all be done, but relationship and willingness needs to be there.

Abstract review/ process work -> People of the network looking at the network

**Coordination Group**

Problems of understanding how the network innovates its crowd, what rules, etc.

Criteria for being in support group?

Membership?

But the support group has an advisory function

No need to approve/disapprove with coordination

There was never no response

Minutes should be there.

**How to move on to new question since same questions come up at each debate session?**

- Name of network (does it make sense to call it N-Aerus?)
- Conference in South (should and can it be organized?)

If one turns to previous minutes of past events these questions were actually answered. Rules set by proposal make no difference in answering – especially if these rules are seen as a way to clarify for good something that continuously comes up and which therefore probable emerges for a very particular reason.

Perhaps however, it is important to re-articulate and “refresh” N-Aerus in terms of its presentation to the wider public.

These aspects concerning the name and its European-based events should be better explained in the base text of N-Aerus.

The current descriptive text of the network requires an urgent update since the times have changed.

One should also consider that if we change, the visibility might be reduced because what would we be, an international network of what?

What is the added value?

Network is really open and always will be open for everyone.

Lose something from our part.

Concerning more participation in the South, there already are networks in the South.

We know what we lose and don’t know what we gain.

Researchers have received support to attend events taking place in Europe.

Some works have also received epistemological and theoretical support.
We should reflect on the idea that N-Aerus should be more about a certain quality of researching than
the localization of research
It is more important to support the spirit of the web, the “R” is more important than “E” !!!!

**Question of visibility is related to the question of identity**
N-Aerus has certain specific qualities as it stands:
- multilingual
- different histories including colonial history (importance in knowledge channels to and from Europe)
- European means more open, we would operate very differently if we were an American network or a
   Chinese one
- Particular self-reflection represented in Europe

Would it make sense to have Latin American chapter of N-Aerus
Many academic limitations with language
Could be a network associated with N-Aerus, so that N-Aerus can keep its identity

Conferences should not be reduced to language, but really be about quality
Differences are strongly felt by researchers who have experienced research in the USA and then have
come to Europe, learning about terms such as “social justice” for the first time!

It is therefore a good idea to maintain European base identity, a pluralist platform which can transmit
this pluralism in its approach
It is therefore not so important to change name but rather to transmit an identity and where it comes
from

Attendance/geographic groups: not necessarily a good idea, it is working already as it is

**Commissions are more important as a device**
In terms of the support group, perhaps number of people can shift
Presently there are no limitations to the number of support group members
Basic role of support group is abstract review
Critical mass is necessary/ but volunteers should be accepted
LinkedIn might prove useful in this respect

**Description of N-Aerus should change**
Solutions for the South should be found
The description does not agree with network validity of the “E” (finding research)

Even in the South we are very busy with the network since Europeans do not have solutions
It’s about sharing ideas, tap into what can be benefitted from

Important for the description should change
Articulate that N-Aerus is careful to give to everyone opportunity to express interesting research
Informal translations in parallel sessions

N-Aerus offers multiplicity
But three languages should always be ensured
When no money for translations was available volunteer summary translations were, which gives a
particular spirit