

EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division

Meeting of the Division Board held on ZOOM on Wednesday 2nd November 2022 at 4:30 PM CET.

Present: Philippe Corvini, Jeff Cole, Joana Pereira, Joanna Surmacz-Górska, Marlen Vasquez, Marta Woźniak, Simona Rossetti.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome.

Apologies for absence were received via email due to other commitments from Concetta Messina, Fabio Fava and Sónia Ventura.

2. Minutes of the meeting of the Board on the 7th of September 2022.

The minutes were approved.

3. Any matters arising from the minutes not covered below.

The Board agreed with the appointment of Joanna Surmacz-Górska to the position of EB Division Board Co-Chair. Jeff expressed his willingness to continue as a Presidential *ex officio* member of the EB Board, and the Board agreed. With the agreement of the Board, Fabio will be nominated as the EB Division EU ambassador.

Action: [Jeff](#) will ask from [Fernando](#) the necessary updates regarding the Board composition in the website.

4. EB Division event in the AFoB Congress in Bali.

Philippe reported that the event was well attended and its organization was successful, despite the difficulties faced by the overall organization of the Congress regarding last-minute switching of many registered participants into virtual participation. The onset of a direct collaboration aimed at jointly reinforcing Asian-European networks in the field of marine biotechnology was achieved to be driven by Concetta on the EB-EFB side. As a major outcome, it was highlighted the willingness of the AFoB to continue collaborating in the organization of joint sessions in Congresses. The first opportunity will be the Asian Congress of Biotechnology (ACB) that will be held in Ho Chi Min, Vietnam, in October 2023 - a note was made on the kind agreement of the AFoB to anticipate this meeting to avoid clashing with the European Congress on Biotechnology (Maastricht) in 2024. The Board was made aware of the importance of building a good representation of the Division in ACB 2023. Topics for joint events in ACB are being discussed with Le Ha, Quan (Chair of the meeting), with circular economy and wastewater being key focal themes.

5. EB Division event on Marine Biotechnology in the EFB October conference.

Jeff reported that the meeting was a success in terms of attendance, with typically 80 attendants in all sessions, with a very good record of actual participation in discussions. It was remarked that this attendance success was likely due to the fact that this was a very focused meeting that captured the attention of an interested audience. The strategy for future online meetings should hence consider a focused approach avoiding broad coverage of diverse topics by different Divisions of the EFB.

6. Meeting under the topic of healthy soil at Mutenz in September 2023.

Philippe reported that he will not be the EFB representative at this meeting due to other commitments, but Fabio will be co-chairing with Sebastian Wendeborn and Alexander Wissemeier (Plant, Agriculture and Food Division), promoting the link to EU and related missions. It was highlighted that this meeting is not formally organized by the EFB, but rather organized with the collaboration of the EB and the PAF Divisions of the EFB. Among other aspects, this implies that the EFB will not advertise the meeting as an EFB event but an advertising agreement with the EFB will be made, and that the EFB will not be legally responsible for any litigation, including that relative to insurance against liability. Still, the Division should work in fundraising as always.

7. ENBIOECONOMY meeting at Gdansk, in October 2023.

Gdansk University of Technology provided a quotation of approximately 10 000 € for hosting the meeting, excluding catering and poster boards, with the remark that the quotation is not fixed, as well as the booked rooms can change depending on the needs for internal events. This quotation was found exaggerated by the Board and other options were discussed under the premise that the hosting costs should be as low as possible to keep the budget controlled and better support attendance with reasonable registration fees. The Poznan University of Technology was found a very interesting option considering both the potentially low hosting costs (Marta will be involved in the meeting organization, providing an internal liaison to the Institution) and the overall conditions of the venue and the city to host the meeting. The Board agreed in exploring the Poznan possibility.

Action: [Jeff](#), [Joanna](#) and [Marta](#) will meet, preferably with Ewa, by next week to tune the request for a quotation from the Poznan University of Technology. Then the request will be made and the response will be circulated to the Board for approval.

The efforts to gather local sponsoring were reinforced, these being expected to represent approximately 50% of the total funds raised for the meeting. Fundraising through the application to a FEMS grant will also apply. Given the deadlines for the application, the venue needs to be fixed soon, as well as the draft budget.

Action: [Joanna](#) and [Marta](#) will draft the FEMS funding application with the assistance of the [EFB Central office](#).

8. Organization of online meetings until mid-2023.

Platform availability, EFB support, budgetary benefits and topic preferences.

As previously clarified by email, the EFB Central Office secured a licence to run on-line meetings until April 2023 at minimal cost to the meeting budgets and with a low registration fee. Jeff informed the Board that AFoB has been invited to participate in such a meeting organised by the end of March. Several topics have been suggested, and the Board agreed to organize an event in this meeting under the topic “Biomass pre-treatment for waste valorisation” as suggested by Joanna and Simona.

Action: All should send any additional ideas for focused topics to Jeff in the next days for consideration.

9. Website.

After the update regarding the EB Division Board structure as agreed in item #3 of the present meeting, the website will be complete and following the general EFB branding guidelines. Any suggested changes should be sent to Marlen, who will assess their feasibility and implement with the support of Fernando, pending the approval of the EFB for compliance with the guidelines.

The availability of the Board meeting minutes in the website for download was discussed, considering that confidential issues should be protected from open dissemination. The minutes from the last EB Board meeting on the 7th of September were analysed by the Board members and it was agreed that these can be uploaded in the Division website in their present version. The addition of an ordinary item to the Agenda of the next EB Board meetings was agreed that concerns the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting for open dissemination in the website. If confidentiality issues arise, a second version of the minutes will be prepared accordingly by the Board Secretary specifically for upload in the website.

Action: Following the Board approval, Jeff will ask Fernando to render the minutes of EB Board meeting in the 7th of September 2022 available in the website.

10. Any other business.

No additional items were raised for discussion.

11. Scheduling of the next meeting.

The next meeting will tentatively be held at the beginning of January 2023, unless an earlier meeting is deemed necessary by the EB Board Chairs to discuss any urgent matters.

Action: Joana will circulate a scheduling poll by the beginning of December, then set up the meeting on Zoom and circulate the scheduling information in due time.