

European Federation of Biotechnology - Microbial Physiology Section

Meeting of the Section Board during the 18th European Congress on Biotechnology in Geneva on Monday, 2nd July 2018, 17:30-19:00.

Attendees:

Branduardi Paola (PB), Cole Jeff (JAC), De Biase Daniela (DDB), Ferrer Pau (PF), Francois Jean-Marie (JMF), Lund Pete (PL), Mattanovich Diethard (DM), Morrissey John (JM), Sauer Michael (MS).

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence

Lang Christine, Müller Susan, Neubauer Peter, Nielsen Jens, O'Byrne Conor, Porro Danilo, Rinas Ursula, Saloheimo Markku

2. Minutes of the last Section meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting (Dubrovnik, 2017) have been posted on the EFB Website

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

No matters have been arising.

4. Welcome, purpose of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

JAC to lead the meeting.

5. Brief summary of recent Section symposia: attendance and final accounts.

(i) Recombinant Protein Production, April 2017, Dubrovnik. DM reported: the meeting was a great success and fully booked. The meeting was also a financial success, contributing a significant amount to the section budget (shared budget model).

(ii) Bacterial Electron Transfer and its Regulation, France, March 2018. JAC reported: the meeting was successful, however with a very tight budget. The accounts have been closed with a minimal surplus of €540 of which €180 has been allocated to the Section fundsheld by the EFB Central Office (shared budget model).

(i) Microbial Response to Stress, Kinsale, Ireland. April 2018. JM reported. Also this meeting was quite successful. The number of registered participants has been increased, compared to the last meeting. There is significant interest to continue this series. The budget model was at own risk but JM reported that the organisers decided to include the EFB Microbial Physiology Section in the share of the surplus. This resulted in the return to the Section of approx. €4k.

6. **Treasurer's report.** PF reported that all accounts are set, including the accounts of last meeting (Microbial Stress in Kinsale). The finances of the Section are solid, with a current basis of over 70.000 Euro.

7. **Future meetings currently being organized:**

(ii) Applied Synthetic Biology. Joint meeting with the EFB EBBS section, Toulouse, 24th to 26th October 2018. JMF reported: abstract submission and registration are open. So far 80 registrations and 60 abstracts have been obtained. The aim is to reach 120 participants. The deadline for abstract submission was extended to 30th July. Sponsorship recruiting is unexpectedly slow.

(iii) Physiology of Yeast and Filamentous Fungi, Milan, Italy, 24th to 27th June 2019. PB reported: the venue has been decided to be the University Milano-Bicocca. The contract between the EFB and theSection has been signed (shared model in which risk is shared between the EFB Central Account and the Section, but any surplus will be distributed equally between the Section, the local organisers and the EFB). Work on the website had already started, registration will open very soon and the committee will be complete soon - then programme planning can commence.

(iv) Recombinant Protein Production 10. Crete, 23-26 April 2019. DM reported: Colin Robinson acts as local organizer, programme planning will commence right now, Eppendorf has agreed to be a main sponsor for the meeting

(v) Bacterial Electron Transfer and its Regulation. Alicante. April 2021. JAC reported that the Local Organiser will be Rosa Matinez who had originally bid to organize the 2018 meeting, which, due to an earlier promise, was held in France.

(vi) Microbial Response to Stress. DDB reported and agreement was reached to hold this meeting already in autumn 2020. DDB suggested that the interval between meetings should be decreased to 2 years. However, clashes with other Section Meetings, and the Gordon stress Conference must be avoided. September 2020 was identified as best month for the next meeting, then a 3 years cycle shall be roughly followed. The meeting will be organized in Italy, the venue has not been decided yet. The meeting will cover bacteria, yeasts and filamentous fungi. Also, industrial subjects shall be included.

JAC stressed that EFB Sections have been asked not to organize meetings within 3 months of an EFB Congress. This request was noted and agreed. It was agreed anyways that this particular meeting would organized a bit closer to ECB (about 2 months diostance).

8. Strategy for the Microbial Physiology Section for the next five years.

Future of the Microbial Physiology Section: the discussion was based on a cock-shy prepared by the Section Chair JAC:

The Section as part of the European Federation of Biotechnology.

The Microbial Physiology Section is one of six Sections of the European Federation of Biotechnology (EFB). We have contributed more both scientifically and financially to the growing reputation of the EFB than any other Section. Each year new people play key roles in our activities. At least two new people have this year volunteered to help us. A few Board members are no longer involved in our future plans.

Current activities of the Section.

The section has organised seven series of meetings at various intervals of between 2 and 4 years. We tend to rely largely upon volunteers from previous meetings to organise the next event, but some of us are especially committed to some series. No-one in the Section is equally interested in every series. People who repeatedly have helped with each series are crudely listed in Table 1, with apologies to anyone who feels the list

ignores their help and commitment! By informal agreement, Diethard has served as the mentor and often taken the lead for some of the series; Jeff has retained overall commitment and responsibility for others.

Each series focuses on the latest developments in the discipline, led by a few invited speakers with top reputations. Most of the talks are either selected from submitted abstracts, or by speakers invited by the local organising committee. We strongly believe it is essential to attract as many early career scientists as possible to participate. To this end, we strive to make meetings affordable, usually with decreased registration fees for early career scientists.

The Board agreed to the following points to contain costs without jeopardising quality:

1. Every effort shall be made by meeting organisers to obtain external sponsorship.
2. The number of free registrations (speakers, committees, Board Members, helpers) must be controlled.
3. Venues should always be attractive, but costs need to be controlled and the facilities offered must be checked for adequacy.

An agreement how future meetings should be organized:

Successful meetings are invariably organised by one or more local committee members with sufficient time to avoid or solve problems as they arise. Excellent communication between the organisers, the venue, and where appropriate the EFB Central Office and the scientific programme committee is essential.

The EFB Central Office is keen to help as much as possible. Fees charged for their work are highly subsidized, though raw costs such as the cost of rental of the registration portal, printing and courier costs are included in the meeting budget. While the overall cost of EFB Office support is comparable to that offered by commercial companies, the level of support is far higher. Nevertheless, a commercial registration and abstract management system used is “rented” from a commercial company. No such system is available that is adequate, sufficiently flexible, reasonably priced and sufficiently user friendly to avoid criticisms from meeting organisers and registrants alike. Improvements are continuously being made, especially to the cumbersome registration forms.

Continuity of the meetings: all of our meetings are part of a series and run under our section name. Their success is based on the fact the attendees get what they expect and that we cover topics that are not covered by other meetings. This leads to a loyal community. Of course, we strive for development and to keep up with the newest developments, nevertheless some lines should be followed constantly. We ought to find a way to proceed that gives the organizers a maximum of freedom to develop their meetings and to realize their own ideas, while still following some general lines, guaranteeing the continuity that is expected. We acknowledge that the success of the meetings and the success of the Section are due to the commitment of all our meeting organizers. At the same time the Section provides service to the community, which makes success more probable. So we should aim to keep it as a mutual win-win situation.

Proposals that have been debated – a formal adoption after voting is planned for the next Section Board Meeting:

1. The local organising committee should include key Board members who have been involved in organising previous meetings in the series, with help from one or more new people as appropriate. Each meeting should be represented by one Member in the Section Board (see below)
2. The Section adopts guidelines how meetings have to be organized under the auspices of our Section, leaving a maximum of freedom to the organizers.
 - a. General rules should include:
 - i. Strong inclusion of students and young post doctoral researchers into the programme
 - ii. Financial aspects as outlined above
 - b. Each meeting series should have some specific content guidelines (to be defined)
 - i. For defined key-topics, at least one Section Board member should be included into the scientific committee of the conference (e.g. to make sure that all desired organisms are included into the programme, or that industrial aspects are represented). One major reason to include the right people into the committee is to make sure that the right communities can be addressed and that communication to the desired communities is guaranteed.

3. **Having said the above, the overall responsibility should be designated to a single person, the Local Organiser,** who *ex officio* would be a member of the Local Organising Committee (LOC) and the Scientific Programme Committee.
4. The LOC will decide whether to commission help from the EFB Central Office or to run the meeting on its own.
5. The budget for any meeting must be approved by the Section Treasurer or designated delegate before any contracts are signed.
6. A final account of income and expenditure, as well as the distribution of any surplus, must be presented to the next meeting of the Section Board.

Table 1

| Series | Originated by | Most recent meeting | Recent organisers | Next meeting planned; lead person |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|
| Microbial response to Stress | Jeff and Isabel Sa Correia, Portugal, 1997 | Kinsale, April 2018 | John Morrissey, Conor O'Byrne and Daniela De Biase | Italy, 2020 Daniela De Biase |
| Recombinant protein production | Diethard and Danilo Porro. Austria 2000. | Dubrovnik, April 2017 | Diethard and Jean Maarten van Dijn, | Crete, 2019 Colin Robinson |
| Single cell analysis | Danilo Porro, Como, IT, 1998 | Retz, 2016 | Nicole Borth | We should revive this series. The Section shall actively look for volunteers. |
| Bacterial electron transfer | Jeff; Oberammergau; May 1988 | Saint-Tropez; March 2018 | Fred Barras, Vincent Mejean, Jeff | Alicante, 2021 Rosa Martinez |
| Physiology of yeast and filamentous fungi | Lisbeth Olsson; Denmark 2001 | Lisbon, July 2016 | Isabel Sa-Correia | Italy, 2019 Paola Branduardi |
| Synthetic biology | Tim Overton, Jeff and Karsten, Barcelona | Lisbon, 2017 | Tim Overton; Jeff | Toulouse, October 2018. Jean-Marie Francois |

9. **Board Membership: achieving a balance between continuity and renewal:**

The following proposal for re-organisation of the Board of the EFB Section on Microbial Physiology was presented. This proposal was discussed between Jeff Cole, Pau Ferrer and Diethard Mattanovich at the last RPP meeting in Dubrovnik (2017) with the aim to bring it to discussion at the Board Meeting in Geneva 2018.

Over the past years the Section Board of Microbial Physiology has been recruited mainly among organisers of individual meetings, with only few persons having continuing tasks.

This has been both beneficial in supporting continuity and the commitment of people to the Section, but also detrimental, as board meetings tended to be only infrequently attended by many, and having an unclear agenda as most members' activities lied more in the past.

In compliance with the EFB Statutes, previous Section meetings were open to all interested individuals. This had advantages and disadvantages. It helped make more people aware of Section activities, and to recruit potential future meeting organisers. However, the presence of people without affiliation to the Board made it often impossible to discuss more critical or confidential issues, which let the Board meetings appear just as short presentation of activities without any operative function.

Therefore, a new structure of the Section Board, and of Section Board meetings is suggested.

- 1) The Section Board should include the following positions that are the minimum necessary functions for running the Section
 - a. Chair
 - b. Vice Chair (at least one, may be more than one)
 - c. Secretary
 - d. Website manager/communications officer (could be one, or two individuals)
 - e. Treasurer
- 2) Additionally, each meeting series should be represented at least by one Board Member who is responsible for the continuation of the series in the interest of the Section. He/she reports to the Board on progress of the series and represents the Section towards the local organisers.
- 3) Industrial representation: at least one Board member should be recruited from industry to represent the interests of biotech industry in the topics of the Microbial Physiology Section.
- 4) Additional members of the Board. Additional members with a strong commitment to support Section activities can be co-opted as Board members.
- 5) Board membership is confirmed by election for terms of set time length. 4 years appear useful, because this will cover 2 cycles of each meeting. Board members can be re-elected for as long as they are willing to serve and as long as they are active in the Board.

6) Local meeting organisers should be co-opted as Board Members until after the meeting accounts have been closed and the organizer reported to the next following Section Board meeting.

7) Board Meetings should be held as closed meetings. This will ensure that important, and sometimes critical issues can be discussed in detail, and decisions made. These issues will include Section finances, thematic orientation and organization of conferences, Section (and EFB) strategy.

8) Open meetings may be held after Board meetings with the intention to inform Section members. Additionally, or alternatively, information should be distributed by email. The open meetings also allow interested individuals to make contact to the Board and get involved into Section activities.

9) Board meetings should be held annually. One meeting should be organized during ECBs, and another in the years between, upon decision of the Board. Participation to the congresses is strongly encouraged but no prerequisite to attend the Board meetings. For members who find it difficult to finance their attendance, travel costs may be supported as long as Section funds allow for this.

10. Late items

DM suggested to redesign the logo of the Section, which was acclaimed by the Board. It would be desirable if all sections have logos that are consistent with the new EFB logo. The goal is to obtain a visible corporate identity for the whole of the EFB.

The Section website shall be overhauled and renewed.

11. Next meeting of the Board

To be announced!

MS, DM and JAC. July 2018