

-Minutes for Board Meeting-January 8 2025-

-Online Meeting-

Present:

Stephanie Heux, Jäntti Jussi, Paola Branduardi, Diethard Mattanovich, Jan Maarten van Dijk, Jean Marie Francois, John Morrissey, Kjeld Olesen, Pablo Iván Nikel, Pau Ferrer, Ralf Takors, Verena Siewers

1. Welcome, and adoption of the agenda

The meeting started with a welcome and the adoption of the agenda.

2. Apologies for absence

Karen Polizzi, Ton van Maris, Pascale Daran-Lapujade.

3. Past activities:

ASBE 7 (Brno, Nov 2024) (Paola)

- This Conference is always organized by our division together with the Division of Bioengineering and Bioprocessing. Paola highlighted the success of the congress, which had a high turnout (150 participants) and was well-organized and received. The community was described as active and stable, and thanks to the effort of Pavel Dvorak as chair in finding grants and sponsors there was a surplus of about €20,000 from the event. The next meeting was confirmed to be chaired by Neil Dixon in Manchester, with Verena Siewers as the co-chair.
- Paola discussed the issue of surplus distribution, revealing that the contract signed with EFB did not involve the local organizer or the chair of the conference. She suggested splitting the surplus between the division and the local organizer, but noted that the contract was not in their favor. All present agreed to split the surplus 50/50, with the understanding that this applies to our Division, and would be presented to the other division for approval. Pablo suggested having a proper procedure in place for future contracts and the Board unanimously agreed to draft a contract clarifying the risk and surplus sharing between the organizers and the division.

Industrial Biotechnology workshop (Amsterdam, Oct 2024) (John)

- John provides an update on the industrial biotechnology workshop co-organized with IBISBA and FEMS in Amsterdam. The workshop brought together around 45 participants from industry, academia, and policy to discuss advancing the biotechnology agenda. Draft documents are being prepared with the aim of producing a policy document by Q1 2025 to promote industrial/microbial biotechnology, targeting organizations like the upcoming Danish EU Presidency and EU biotechnology policy. Paola suggests circulating draft documents at the next board meeting.

Microbial Biotech Lecture at the *Pseudomonas* Conference in Copenhagen (Pablo)

- Pablo explains his experience organizing the *Pseudomonas* conference where the Microbiology Society did not allow sponsorship from EFB's division, citing potential

conflicts of interest with promoting non-society journals. The board expresses disappointment at this stance given the societies' collaborative relationship. John agrees to communicate their concerns to the Microbiology Society leadership.

4. Next activities for the following years:

RPP 12 (2025) (update by Ralf)

- Ralf provides updates on the venue, funding, and topics. Event will take place on October 7-9 in Ulm in Germany. The venue is rented and rooms are booked. In terms of announcement, EFB made it but we asked for an accurate checking of the website, as we all noticed problems over time.
- Pablo suggested the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation as a potential sponsor and Ralf mentioned that they cannot receive additional funding if they go for DFG.
- John emphasized the importance of fixing the EFB website issue, as it was affecting the visibility of their conferences.

PYFF (planned in Valencia, 2026, update by John)

- John mentioned that he did not have a specific update to provide on this event, but he will be in Valencia next week to discuss the venue and budget.

Microbial Stress (planned in Portugal, 2026, update by Paola)

- Paola mentioned that she did not have an update on this congress because she contacted the local organizer but she has not replied yet. Together with Matthias Steiger Paola will try to help Sofia Pauleta in planning activities and deadlines.

Next MB Lecture at a related conference in 2025

- Paola has an official request for the 32nd International Conference on Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology, July 21-24, 2025 - Paris, France.
- Ralf asked for support on funding allocation for bursaries for young researchers at RPP12.
- Diethard asked if we could support two lectures, and Pau agreed.
- We all agreed that this lecture has the main aim to spread the voice and the awareness of EFB and Divisions, therefore for the future we will try to differentiate as much as possible the Conferences to which we give support.

Open discussion: draft a *vademecum* for organizing a congress

- Everybody agreed to have an open folder to share all the information related to organizing congress; listing of the sponsor with the deadline; the contract with EFB, and eventually make a schedule to make the life of the local organizer easier.
- Paola will create a google folder.

Report of the Treasurer (Pau)

- Pau reported on the financial status of the division, stating that there is about €88,000 on the account.

How can we effectively recruit/involve young researchers into the division, and what types of missions or responsibilities should we assign to them?

- Stephanie suggested involving young researchers by promoting their careers through face-to-face meetings or webinars.
- John agreed, suggesting the creation of an early career forum for global interaction and to involve them in activities such as co-chairing sessions and organizing webinars.
- Pau mentioned the existence of a Spanish foundation managed by young people see: <https://febiotec.es/>
- Pablo agreed, suggesting a coordinated effort at the EFB level with other Divisions involved as they wished.
- All the board agreed to work on this initiative, with the aim of involving more young researchers and providing them with support during conferences.

Present and future of EFB: Paola reports on the meeting of the “Finance & Strategy” working group. Connected to that, discuss the possibility of participating in an open call. One example: EU project CSA: HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBIO-11: Support to the EU Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative: scoping action

- Paola discussed the financial situation of the EFB and the potential risks associated with it.
- Stephanie presented the scoping action and members discussed the possibility of EFB entering such a consortium for a potential funding opportunity. Paola expressed concerns about the lack of personnel to manage such an endeavor. She suggested that dedicating one of the EFB employees to this task could be a possibility, but was not proposed by the President by now.
- Kjeld proposed the idea of individual employees of a company paying for a personal membership, which could potentially generate more income.
- Diethard agreed that the model needs to be reconsidered, but also highlighted the difficulty of tracing individuals for membership fees.
- Paola concluded that the issue needs further discussion and suggested that some organizations or companies might be willing to contribute financially to certain initiatives.
- All present members decided to continue evaluating the situation and potential solutions, with Paola promising to report back after the next executive board meeting February 1 2025

Late items

- No further point to discuss

Next meeting of the Board

- Paola proposes to organize another shorter meeting in the middle of the year.