

EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division

Meeting of the Board held online (ZOOM) on Thursday, 13th February 2025 at 17:00 CET.

Present: JSG (Chair), JC, DR, MH, MS, MWK, JP, RM, SV.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome.

JSG welcomed all present, noticing that the full Board was attending to the meeting.

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not covered below.

It was noticed that the upload of Board meeting minutes to the website has been failing. This was clarified to be related to miscommunication with the Central Office in this regard, which will be solved in the upcoming days.

Action: JP will re-send the minutes to the most appropriate recipient at the Central Office for upload in the Division website.

3. Board composition.

The Board was informed that messages were sent to inactive Board members to understand their willingness to continue collaborating with the Division, following the strategy defined in the last meeting of the Board. Provided no reaction to the message or unavailability confirmation, the Board has now three less members.

Action: JSG and JC will send an acknowledgement message to each of the Board members leaving, along with the information that their details will be removed from the website.

In face of this downsizing and considering the workload of the current members, the Board agreed that there is the need to reinforce the Board with 3-6 more active persons willing to support the activities. The importance of capturing the participation from industry representatives was highlighted, and some possibilities were discussed by the Board, both from industry and academia.

Action: Board members will approach some contacts informally to understand their willingness to support the Division as Board members. Upon a positive preliminary feedback, contacts will be shared with the Division Chairs as nominations.

4. Online meeting “Biotechnology in extreme environments”.

The meeting has already eight confirmed speakers and the programme will soon be available on the website, which will expectedly promote registrations. Any suggestions by the Board for dedicated contacts promoting participation with the possibility of reserving talk slots are welcome.

5. Next EFB-EB regular meeting, Aveiro, Spring 2025.

General information

The Board was informed of the change of the conference room at the University of Aveiro into a better option at the Rectory building, after consulting the Central Office and the Chairs of the Division. Correspondent updates will be made on the website by the Central Office. JP and SV are also coordinating with the Central Office for the definition of other logistic aspects, including catering.

Collaboration with external groups

SV informed the Board on the possibility of enlarging the dissemination of the meeting through partnering with one large national consortium working in marine biotechnology, as well as with the Oceans Decade. The Board agreed that this is a good possibility, and that they can be highlighted on the website as collaborating partners; the possibility of offering short talk slots for registrants from these partners can be placed during negotiations.

Action: SV will negotiate with these consortia and follow-up with the Central Office for any logo additions in the conference website.

Immediate updates to the website

The urgency of providing a draft programme on the website was highlighted, as this will certainly promote registrations. Titles for invited keynotes should be provided as well as the overall layout of the sessions.

Action: The current draft programme will be uploaded immediately on the website for further update.

Action: Committee members will contact invited speakers for collecting tentative titles of their keynotes to provide in the draft programme, as well as to request registration via the link for the purposes provided by the Central Office.

ACIB participation

RM updated the Board on ACIB participation, confirming their adherence to the Gold sponsoring package, which will involve the setup of a dedicated session embedded in the programme with five talks by ACIB members plus one short promotional presentation; ACIB proposal of becoming a collaborating partner in the online meeting “Biotechnology in Extreme Environments” (logo added in the website) was agreed by the Board members.

Action: RM will finalize negotiations with ACIB and provide tentative talk titles and presenters to complete the draft programme that should be uploaded on the website in short.

Participation of EC DG-ENV

MS confirmed the participation by DG-ENV with an online keynote delivered remotely, and the possibility of having a recorded presentation in advance to prevent connection problems was addressed. The speaker was added to the programme.

Action: MS will request from the DG-ENV representative a tentative title for the keynote.

Action: JC will check with the Central Office that a recorded talk can be incorporated into the programme.

Budget

The budget sustainability was discussed, again highlighting the importance of an enhanced effort to disseminate the meeting for increasing the possibilities of recruiting participants. Contacts with potential group registrants (academia or industry) should be carried out as much as possible, and a short, invited talk can be offered.

Action: JC should be informed on contacts made for group registration in return for a short, invited talk, to avoid invitation duplication and keep control on programme load with offered talks.

Committee members were requested to evaluate their needs concerning the application of a reduced registration fee.

Action: JSG will coordinate requests for free and subsidized registration fees.

Sponsorship

Sponsoring effort should continue by all Committee members, exploring close connections as much as possible, in coordination with the Central Office to prevent double contact.

Action: Every member is asked to take action regarding recruitment of sponsors.

JC informed the Board that sponsoring by Elsevier demands support by the Committee concerning the recruitment of submissions to New Biotechnology. The selection of high-quality talks during the Green Deal Biotechnology meeting for further direct contact with presenters with a submission invitation will be carried out by JSG and JC.

6. Comments to the revised EFB statutes by the Division before public consultation

No comments or suggestions were made by the Board that should be transferred to the Central Office before public consultation.

7. Any other business.

No other matters were raised for discussion.

8. Scheduling of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for the last week of March, between the 24th and the 27th, by 17:00 CET.

Action: JP will launch a poll in the first week of March to define the day of the meeting according to the best availability of the Board.

JP. 13 February 2025