EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division

Meeting of the Board held online (ZOOM) on Monday, 14th October 2024 at 17:00 CET.

Present: JSG (Chair), JC, DR, EW, JP, MWK, SV.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome.
JSG welcomed all present and informed the Board that apologies for absence were received from RM and MS.

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not covered below.
No other matters were raised for discussion.

3. Thematic issue of the Bioeconomy Journal.
JC informed the Board that the number of submissions to the Thematic issue was disappointingly low, and that no changes or news arose since the last Board meeting. Final decisions regarding the Thematic Issue will be made by the end of October.

4. EB Division support to the online meeting "Biotechnology in extreme environments".
JC informed the Board that a list of contacts will be approached in brief for collaborating in the committee, for suggesting speakers and as invited speakers. The meeting is provisionally scheduled for early April 2025, as a 1-day online meeting. JSG and DR expressed their interest in being involved in the organization of this meeting. MWK and JP will support the meeting by suggesting potential speakers.

5. Next EFB-EB regular meeting, Aveiro, Spring 2025.
The scope of the meeting, including topics and sub-topics was finalized by the Board and approved. There is still a topic slot that should be completed by November 2024 after confirmation by RM.
Action: JP will forward the scope of the meeting to the Central Office for inclusion in the next EFB Newsletter and addition to the meeting website.
The ranking of keynote speakers to invite was revised by the Board concerning all sessions, with some new suggestions being added on the basis of recent impressions and contacts by JC and DR. Gender balance was taken into account in the invitations ranking to the best extent possible. Budget sustainability was also taken into account in the ranking. The members of the Board in charge of making a first informal contact were assigned for the top ranked speakers, and it was remarked that this first contact should be made carbon copying the Central Office (EW). Provided a positive response by the invited speaker to this first informal contact, an official invitation letter, signed by JSG, JP and SV, will follow, sent by the Central Office. The relevance of having an opening plenary speaker and a closing plenary speaker was discussed, the Board agreeing that invitations should be made in this regard provided considering budget sustainability, after securing one keynote speaker per session/topic. Finally, the importance of rapidly gaining confirmations was highlighted, as this greatly supports the efficient dissemination of the meeting and capture of attendance.
Action: Members of the Board assigned to the first informal contact with top ranked suggested invited speakers will proceed with the task as soon as possible.
Budget was thoroughly discussed towards meeting the format allowing better efficiency, particularly for raising a minimal surplus that can mitigate the currently accounted Division shortfall with the EFB. The social events offered were reasoned and the Board decided to consider the offer of one lunch, one welcome reception (including buffet dinner), four coffee breaks; an optional gala dinner may be scheduled against a contribution fee by participants. The offer of 10 free registrations was approved by the Board, which can cover for the registration of four committee members and six invited speakers; adjustments can be made depending on own resources that invited speakers may have to participate in the meeting. The critical importance of raising sponsorship to avoid a shortfall

in the budget was highlighted, thus all committee members were asked to use their contacts for proposing the sponsoring of the meeting. Sponsoring packages were revised, and approved pending a correction in the values (particularly the platinum package); EW reinforced that the packages can be negotiated and that the EFB is flexible concerning the included benefits.
Action: EW will provide the committee with a revised version of the sponsoring packages that should support the contacts to be made.
Action: EW will collate a list of potential sponsors that can be contacted for this meeting and provide it in the shared folder.
The definition of the calendar for opening registrations was discussed and it was agreed that registrations should open as soon as some keynote speakers are confirmed, so that a more efficient dissemination campaign grounded also on the quality of the speakers can be launched in parallel.

6. Any other business.
No other specific businesses were raised for discussion.

7. Scheduling of the next meeting
The next meeting of the Board was tentatively scheduled for the last week of November, 25-29 of November, by 17:00 CET.
Action: JP will circulate a poll by the end of October to find the most suitable day of the week proposed for the Board meeting.

JP. 14 October 2024