

## **EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division**

Meeting of the Division Board held on ZOOM on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 4:00 PM CET.

Present: Philippe Corvini, Jeff Cole, Joana Pereira, Joanna Surmacz-Górska, Marta Woźniak-Karczewska.

### **1. Apologies for absence and welcome**

Apologies for absence were received via email due to other commitments from Sónia Ventura, Simona Rossetti and Marlen Vazquez.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting of the Board on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022**

A request for correction in the minutes was received via email concerning the clarification of item 4. In particular, the acknowledgement of the input by Marlen and the COST Action Ocean4Biotech should be added, as well as the clear assignment of responsibility to Concetta and Marlen regarding the organization of future joint (EFB and AFoB) events focussing on marine biotechnology. Such addition and clarification were approved by the Board, and it was agreed that the amended minutes (**Attachment 2023B**) are approved in advance and can be upload in the EB Division website.

**Action:** [Joana](#) will send the final version of minutes to Fernando for upload the website.

### **3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered below**

The Board was recalled that Division website fee has been supported annually by Philippe using his own funds. Although this support should be acknowledged, the Board agreed to commit the Division to the payment of the 2023 fee, and hence envisaging the best efforts to raise funds for the purpose.

### **4. EB Division event(s) in ACB 2023**

Concetta and Philippe reported on the success of contacts kept with the AFoB regarding the organization of a joint session in ACB 2023 focussed on marine biotechnology. This joint session has been secured, and the willingness to keep strengthening the collaboration in the field of marine biotechnology is confirmed considering the mutual benefits. Effort will be put in the organization of the session as much as possible to the highlight of the potential for collaboration between Europe and Asia towards levelling research advance and the accounting of sustainability aspects between the two regions. Concetta reinforced that the European Society for Marine Biotechnology network will synergically be used to attract participants to the session, and consequently to the fostering of the EU-Asia collaboration in the field. Further organization steps will involve Marlen and updated information on progress should be available by the end of January, which will be reported in the next Board meeting.

Philippe reported that there is the possibility of organizing the second joint session as aimed, on environmental biotechnology. Negotiation is ongoing with AFoB members from Taiwan. It was also reported that the AFoB is open to extend the collaboration with other EFB Divisions, should they have interest in organising joint sessions in the ACB meeting.

The Board agreed with the integration of a new member in the Board to support the Division in the field of marine biotechnology, as suggested by Jeff. This is someone with a strong background in this field, having the availability and being keen to contribute effectively in the Division activities.

**Action:** [Jeff](#) will proceed with contacts to involve a new member in the Board dedicated to marine biotechnology, keeping Concetta, Marlen and Philippe informed.

## **5. Meeting under the topic of healthy soil at Mutenz in September 2023**

The meeting organization has been progressing significantly and Fabio will represent the Division as a Co-Chair. The programme has been set and Philippe circulated it to the Board for dissemination; Simona was asked to circulate in addition to the Division members and to include in the EFB newsletter. As per the contract established between the EFB and the organization (advertisement and website support), the Central Office will advertise this meeting through all available channels.

**Action:** [All Board](#) members should circulate the programme among their contacts and within their institutions for the best dissemination of this meeting.

## **6. Environmental biotechnology meeting in Poznan, in November 2023**

The Board was made aware that the FEMS grant application was not approved, which poses important constraints to the meeting organization. Financial liability is obviously the main concern, provided that registrations expected only cover part of the costs considered in the working budget – current estimates indicate that a minimum of 5000€ should be needed from sponsoring to offset the costs. On the other hand, several reasons in favour of going ahead with this meeting were presented: this will be the single event organised solely by the EB Division of the EFB, thus playing a critical role in flagging the activity of a recently renewed Division within the EFB; a very significant effort was put and great amount of work was already done by Joanna and Marta concerning the organization of this meeting, which is unfair to overlook; as announced by Jeff, the EFB will be fully supportive (including loss coverage).

In face of the pros and cons exposed, all present supported the decision of going ahead with the organization of the EB Division meeting in Poznan, in November 2023.

Following on this decision, the consequences were discussed: (i) sponsorship requirements; (ii) promotion of attendance; (iii) title reworking.

The Board was informed that the raising of the fee will be avoided as much as possible, but for that to be sustainable, sponsorship raising must be effective. Joanna and Marta can collect up to 1000 € sponsorship locally, thus the Board was requested to invest in contacts to raise this amount with alternative sponsorship sources. The sponsorship packages are nearly ready and they are broad enough to cover from small to large companies across Europe.

**Action:** [Joanna](#) will circulate the sponsoring packages for this meeting to the Board as soon as they are closed.

The attendance will be promoted first by keeping the fees low as much as possible and by having reduced fees for group attendance. Then, the programme will be addressed for covering a broader range of topics that can collect more participants. Concetta remarked that, if a session on marine biotechnology is included in the programme, she will be available to support the organization of this session through colleagues working in Poland. The Board agreed with the inclusion of this session. Joanna expects 70-80 participants based on reasonable estimations that include 30 persons from Poland and the remaining from abroad provided an efficient advertising supported by all Board members. Finally, a strong advertising campaign will be carried out by the EFB and the Board was requested to make all efforts to disseminate within their institutional and (inter)national networks.

**Action:** [Joanna and Marta](#) will revise the programme towards a broader coverage of topics within environmental biotechnology.

Upon agreement on the need to change the title of the meeting to render the advertising more efficient and potentiate interest, the board discussed several alternatives based on constraints imposed by the

banner design. The agreed title was “Green Deal Biotechnology”. If the necessary information is available, first announcement will be made in the February EFB newsletter.

**Action:** [Jeff](#) will ask [Fernando](#) for banner production with this title, adding the due reference to the organization by EB Division.

## **7. Organization of the EB event in the EFB online meeting in March 2023**

This will be an AFoB-EFB online joint meeting with four sessions: carbon capture for energy; from waste and wastewater to valuable products; biotechnology to mitigate climate change and global warming; towards a circular bioeconomy: progress and bottlenecks. The EB Division will be involved in two sessions: from waste and wastewater to valuable products; towards a circular bioeconomy: progress and bottlenecks. The corresponding AFoB Board was asked to ensure half of the programme, and there are currently seven AFoB members and 11 EFB members involved in the organization of the meeting. Top speakers were invited and two already accepted; there is a short list available for substitution if speakers initially invited decline. The organization is investing strongly in sponsoring and the meeting will have extremely cheap fees to promote attendance. Announcement will be available soon via the EFB newsletter and the website.

## **8. Any other business.**

Concetta announced the European Congress of Marine Biotechnology organized by the European Society of Marine Biotechnology in November 2023 (Málaga, Spain). The participation of the Division is a possibility that can benefit its promotion. The support from EFB was requested and Jeff noted that this is a possibility, especially for advertising upon an agreed cost.

## **9. Scheduling of the next meeting.**

The next meeting was scheduled to February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 17:00 CET.

**Action:** [Joana](#) will set up the meeting on Zoom and circulate the scheduling information with the corresponding Agenda in due time.

## **EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division**

Meeting of the Division Board held on ZOOM on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 involvement by Concetta and Marleen is to be acknowledged, as well as the support by the European Society for Marine Biotechnology and EU COST Action Ocean4Biotech. 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 and Marlen 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 Nguyễn Đăng Quân (Chair of ACB 2023), with marine biotechnology and environmental biotechnology 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. The Marine Biotechnology session was also a success. It was remarked that the 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 co-chairing will be held by Sebastian Wendeborn (Plant, Agriculture and Food Division), Fabio Fava (Environmental Biotechnology Division) and Alexander Wissemeier (BASF), 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.**

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 co-organize such a meeting by the end of March. Several topics have been discussed, namely waste recycling and wastewater treatment, biotechnology to mitigate climate change, biotechnology for food sustainability and power to X (P2X) area - carbon capture is becoming a mature industry and so it is hydrogen production from electricity as well as direct electrolysis of CO<sub>2</sub> into C1 and C2 compounds that can then be further processed using biology into numerous useful products. 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:** [Al](#) 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 minutes, 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.