

EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division

Meeting of the Division Board – via ZOOM, on Monday, 24th March 2025 at 17:00 CET.

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

1. Apologies for absence and welcome.

JSG welcomed all present and indicated that no apologies for absence were received prior to the meeting.

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

No other matters were raised for discussion.

3. Board composition.

The Board was made aware that MS sent suggestions to the Division chairs, which will be analysed and then circulated to the Board for appreciation. Other Board members have been making informal contacts, but no definitive response has been yet given. Some directions were highlighted for these prospecting efforts relating to the Division prominent needs currently: companies that act in environmental biotechnology and recruit collaborators in research centres; in the academia, a senior profile with large networks and then an earlier-career profile should be prioritized within the fields of marine biotechnology (e.g. biofilms) and possibly ecosystem function recovery.

Action: Board members send suggestions of good candidates to the Division chairs as they identify them within their networks and informally confirm if they would be available to join the Board.

4. Online meeting “Biotechnology in extreme environments”.

Progress regarding the organization of this meeting has been ongoing. There is a seemingly imbalance participation regarding Space biotechnology, but the deadline of the final call for abstracts is set only to the 31st of March, thus this effect may dilute.

Action: Board members inviting registrations in the Green Deal Biotechnology conference should remind the registered invitees that they can attend this meeting as part of the promotional registration package.

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

Registration status and postponing of deadlines.

The deadline for early-bird registration and abstract submission for short talks was postponed to the end of March after many requests received from potential registrants; the next newsletter incorporates this announcement, EFB social media already announced, and the website has been updated with the new dates. At the moment of the present meeting, 86 abstract submissions had been received by the office, yet it is likely that not all will finish registration as per the previous experience of the Chairs.

Abstracts evaluation and programme definition

It was clarified that, despite the deadline for submission of short-talk abstracts, several participants need to receive acceptance notices to trigger the registration fee payments at their institutions. Therefore, the evaluation of the abstracts and assignment to the programme needs to be carried out immediately, so that by the end of the present week most of the acceptance notices can be sent. Submissions received meanwhile will be given equal consideration and short-talk slots will be kept vacant to ensure that excellent abstracts submitted can be accommodated in the programme.

It was additionally highlighted that there are abstracts to be submitted by invited speakers.

Action: Members of the Committee linked to different invited speakers will remind the need of submitting corresponding abstracts.

Sponsorship

SV announced that a new silver sponsor has been secured. Related paperwork and website update will be finished in the upcoming days.

Budget

The Division Board is optimistic as to the budget sustainability in this conference, yet a solid perspective on the possibility of generating a surplus allowing the due return of the Division to the EFB can only be gained in face of the list of effective registration payments.

Website

It was noticed that adding indications on directions and transport possibilities, as well as accommodation options close to the venue, would be important to guide the registrants.

Action: JP and SV will prepare these indications and send them to the Central Office for upload in the conference website.

Logistics

Logistical requests from sponsors were discussed briefly: Elsevier will use the registration desk and coffee break settings; for the other sponsors confirmation of requests needs to be carried out but there is flexibility at the venue to accommodate a diversity of possibilities for booths.

Action: SV and RM will confirm and inform on the requests by current Sponsors for booths.

Welcoming kits for participants will be prepared with the support from the Aveiro Municipality (touristic information) and the University of Aveiro (merchandizing). The EFB will add a folder with leaflets sent in advance to the local organizing committee via postal mail.

Action: SV and JP will make the necessary contacts for the collection of the welcome kit and contact the Central Office to coordinate the assembly of the EFB material.

The opening ceremony was briefly discussed considering the common institutional protocol at the University of Aveiro. The Board agreed in reasonably adjusting the time available for the ceremony in the programme to accommodate the requests and, to render it short as necessary, in moving speeches by the two Division Chairs into the closing ceremony, while local organizers will briefly welcome participants in the opening ceremony. Brief talks about the Division and the EFB will be accommodated in the programme of the second day by JSG and JC, respectively.

Action: SV and JP will make the necessary institution contacts and confirmations concerning the opening ceremony. The final configuration will then be confirmed with the Division Chairs and the Central Office for the update of the programme.

The local support to the organization during the conference was discussed. The Board agreed that SV, JP and MS can indicate 2-3 persons that can provide this support; these persons will be allowed to attend all sessions and will be acknowledged as supporters of the local organizing committee in the conference documentation.

6. Any other business.

JC informed the Board on the progress in organising the ECB2026 Congress. The time window has been established for the end of April to the beginning of June, and a suitable venue is being negotiated in Belgium. If the necessary confirmations are finished by them, ECB2026 will be announced in the online meeting “Biotechnology in Extreme Environments”.

7. Scheduling of the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for the 28th of April 2025, by 17:00 CET. The corresponding Agenda and the link will be circulated closer to the date.

JP. 27 March 2025