

EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division

Meeting of the Board held online (ZOOM) on Monday, 25th November 2024 at 17:00 CET.

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

1. Apologies for absence and welcome.

JC welcomed all present and the Board was informed that apologies for absence were received from CM, RM and SV.

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

No other matters were raised for discussion.

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

JP informed the Board that pre-reservations for the welcome reception, lunch and coffee breaks were made, and formal proposals were received that comply with the budget anticipated. The Board was made aware that, provided that the expected number of registrants is met, recent budget simulations reveal that the meeting organization will not result in a shortfall. The Board agreed to reconsider covering for a conference dinner in case actual registrations surpass the expected number and/or an efficient sponsorship raising is met.

Action: JP, with JSG and SP, will agree on the options for the menus of the welcome reception, lunch and coffee breaks with EW at the Central Office.

The Board was informed on confirmations received from invited speakers and on unsuccessful contacts made. Suggestions for new contacts from DR, JP, MS and MH covering nutrients, bioeconomy, sustainability and policy making (EU DG-MARE/DG-ENV) were well received, and the Board delegated them to approach specific speakers. The importance of drafting a preliminary programme to publish on the website and guide next actions towards speaker invitations or definition of offer packages for group registrations was highlighted

Action: DR, JP and MS will follow-up on contacts potential high profile keynote speakers as discussed, keeping the committee members informed on the progress.

Action: JP will draft a preliminary programme and circulate it to the committee members as soon as possible, allowing its publication on the website by December 9th, 2024.

JC informed the Board that Elsevier agreed to sponsor the EB Division official meetings, including the Green Deal Biotechnology meeting as part of its partnership with the EFB. Nevertheless, the importance of keep driving efforts to sponsorship raising was highlighted. An appeal was made to all Board members to support the committee in this task by envisaging direct contacts with potential sponsors, which can then be follow-up by the Central Office for formal agreements.

Action: Board and committee members will keep contacting potential sponsors for the meeting.

A proposal was made regarding the possibility of establishing a new sponsorship package potentially meeting better the industry interests. This new package would be based on visibility of the sponsor in meeting promotional materials, the possibility of delivering a promotional talk embedded in the meeting programme and *in confidence* bio-partnering opportunities with selected meeting attendants. The Board suggested that this package should be limited to the first sponsors manifesting interest.

Action: JC will prepare the new sponsorship package with the Central Office as agreed, and then circulate to the committee members to support new contacts.

A renewed appeal for disseminating the meeting through the network of collaborators of each Board member was made. The Board agreed that the availability of talk and/or flash poster offers for group registrations (possibly one short talk and one flash poster granted upon the registration of five persons) could stimulate participation.

Action: JC will discuss the group registration offer with the Central Office and communicate final decisions to the committee so that this possibility can be incorporated in personal contacts.

Action: MWK will contact the Central Office with a request to send a “save the date” email to the participants of the last Green Deal meeting for promoting participation in the present meeting.

The Board was made aware of contacts made by RM with the ACIB addressing the possibility of partnering for the Green Deal Biotechnology 2024, as well as of the questions raised concerning the topic to be covered, timeframe of the dedicated session and costs coverage. The opinions of the Board on questions raised were collected and will be integrated in further discussions with the Central Office towards a final follow-up with the ACIB. Further actions were delegated to JC, JSG and JP.

Action: JC will discuss the ACIB partnership for the meeting with the Central Office for final definitions to be communicated to the ACIB.

4. EB Division support to the online meeting “Biotechnology in extreme environments”.

JC clarified that the organization of this meeting has been progressing well, and the three sessions that compose it have been established: Biotechnology in Space; Biotechnology in extreme environments; Extreme environment of industrial fermenters. The contribution of the Board in suggesting high-profile keynote speakers for the sessions was acknowledged. Any further contribution in this regard should be sent as soon as possible to JC and EW at the Central Office since invitations will start in the upcoming days. The meeting will be held online, likely via Zoom and more specific information will be released soon.

Action: JC undertook to contact a colleague from Israel for delivering an invited keynote concerning biotechnology in extreme environments.

5. EB Division support to 9th European Bioremediation Conference in June 2025.

JP presented the request from the organizers for support by the EB Division to the mentioned conference. It was highlighted that the most common approach concerning events that are not organized by the EFB directly or through its Divisions is the assumption of a role as advertising partner. In such case, the EFB and concerned Divisions advertise the event through established networks following a proposed advertising package at an agreed cost. Still, a final response will be discussed with the Central Office and the applicable sponsoring proposal(s) will be sent to the conference organizing committee.

6. Any other business.

MWK informed the Board that the polishing of the Division website is nearly finished and requested attention of the Board members towards the revision of their profile details on the website.

It was noted that some Board members have not been able to attend recent meetings, probably due to excessive pressure of their other commitments. In this context, it was agreed that any member who consistently fails to respond to the poll circulated for the next meeting should be asked whether they have time to help the Division. If no response is received, it will be assumed that they no longer wish to remain on the Division Board.

The Board was made aware that DR is involved in the organization of the European Congress of Biotechnology, ECB2026, which was welcome by the Board as per the entailed representation of the Division in this keystone event of the EFB.

7. Scheduling of the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Board was tentatively scheduled for the second week of January (6-10 January 2025), by 17:00 CET.

Action: JP will circulate a poll by the middle of December to find the most suitable day of the week proposed for the Board meeting.

JP. 25 November 2024