

EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division

Meeting of the Division Board held online (ZOOM platform) on Wednesday, 31st January 2024 at 17:00 CET.

Present: JSG (Chair), JC (Co-chair), DJR, JP, MS, MV, MWK, RM, SV.

1. Apologies for absence, welcome to all and to new Board members.

Apologies for absence were received from MH and DS.

2. Brief self-presentation of new member to the Board.

DJR briefly introduced his career path and field of work at the University of East Anglia as a bacteria biochemist focused on respiratory processes, electron transfer and nitrogen cycling, concerning different environmental matrices.

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

No additional matters were identified by Board members.

4. Thematic issue of the Bioeconomy Journal.

The Board was updated by JC on the progress regarding the Thematic Issue. Despite the elaboration of this Issue was the basis for the sponsoring of the Green Deal Biotechnology meeting, and the prospect of potential submissions from speakers at this and at the Division March meeting, very few submissions have been secured. So far, two submissions are secured and one submission was assessed but found unsuitable. Two-to-four submissions from Board members are expected. An appeal was made to the Board members towards an extra effort to consider the possibility of submitting paper(s) to this Issue in the Bioeconomy Journal as per the importance of this activity to the Division. It was remarked that research work, commentaries, opinion, and the journal updates to previews review papers are acceptable submissions. It was highlighted that the publication in the Bioeconomy Journal within this Thematic Issue will be free of charge for the Board members, and that high citation rates of papers published in this Journal are expected. The official deadline for submissions is the 30th of April, but tolerance is in place if needed.

Action: all Board members will revisit their availability to produce a contribution to the Thematic Issue, benefiting from JC advice if needed concerning the adequacy of their manuscripts.

5. EB Board participation and contribution to the ECB

Under the theme “Grand Challenges for Biotechnology: Health; Food Security; and Global Warming”, the ECB programme organization is progressing very well. Many high-profile plenary speakers have confirmed their participation. Despite the success, the input from the Division has been disappointing as proposals for symposia and invited keynote speakers have been scarce. It was clarified that keynote invited speakers, including those from the Division Board, are offered the registration. The Board discussed the fees of the congress, which were not fully clear in the website at the time of the present meeting.

Action: JC will reach the ECB organisation with the concerns expressed by the Board.

6. Regular activities of the EB Division and activities for 2024.

The Board was updated regarding the organization of the online EFB-AFOB meeting on “Plastics: challenges and biotechnological solutions”. Although the organization is still waiting for responses to some speaker invitation letters, a full list of invitees is already available and several positive replies were already received. JP will represent the Division, chairing Session 4 (Environmental impact of discarded plastics) and briefly presenting the Division and developed activities. An appeal was made to the Board members towards the broad dissemination of this low-cost meeting.

Action: JP will ask Ewa at the Central Office to circulate promotional material of the meeting, supporting the dissemination efforts made by the Board members. JC will reinforce the request in the next internal meeting.

JP updated the Board regarding previous contacts towards collaboration with an ongoing COST Action (PURPLEGAIN) for the organization of the 1st International Conference on Novel Photorefineries for Resource Recovery (PHOTOREFINERIES 2024). The Central Office has been handling the process and the conference is announced in the Division website since 16/01/2024. As requested by the protocol of collaboration, the EB Division is announced as a Sponsor in the conference [website](#).

Action: JC will consult with the Central Office on the possibility of including this meeting in the Newsletter as a collaborative event with the Division.

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

The Board was updated by JP and SV on the preliminary steps taken regarding the organization of the meeting. The University of Aveiro agreed to provide the venue for the meeting and two research centres confirmed already their administrative support. The composition of the Scientific Committee core was agreed, including JC, JSG, DJR, JP, MS, RM and SV. As sessions become established, the committee will consider the assignment of two head persons (internal or invited) to support the development of the session, including for suggesting high-profile invited speakers. After a review of relevant meetings already scheduled for 2025, the meeting was tentatively scheduled to 26-28 May 2025. The title of the meeting was also discussed. It was agreed that, for branding reasons, the main title should be kept as *Green Deal Biotechnology*, followed by a subtitle specifying better the focus of the meeting. A discussion on preliminary proposed topics for the meeting followed and the input from the Board members was included in a working document that will be shared with the Committee at a later stage, after key confirmations and primary revision.

Action: JP will contact Michaela Holecova, Secretary of the Plant, Agriculture and Food Division to confirm that their G4G flag meeting dates does not clash with the tentative dates for the Green Deal Biotechnology meeting 2025.

Action: JP and SV will discuss possibilities for the meeting subtitle (3 guiding words) and circulate the proposal to the Committee members for feedback.

Action: JP and SV will propose a set of 6 to 8 sessions organising the different topics covered in the meeting to the Committee for discussion.

Action: After confirming the meeting dates, JP and SV will contact the Central Office (Ewa) to onset the administrative organisation of the meeting.

8. Any other business.

No other specific businesses were raised for discussion.

JC expressed the view that the Environmental Biotechnology Division of the EFB has now established a lively Board expectedly capable of meaningful contributions to the EFB activity.

The best wishes from the Board are sent to DS towards a rapid full recovery.

9. Scheduling of the next meeting

The Board agreed to tentatively schedule the next meeting to the 22nd, 23rd or 26th of April 2024 at 17:00 CET.

Action: JP will circulate a poll closer to the tentative dates to fix the most convenient to the Board, then schedule the online meeting and circulate the Agenda in due time.

JP. 31 January 2024