

EFB Environmental Biotechnology Division

Meeting of the Division Board held on ZOOM on Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 5:00 PM CET.

Present: JSG (Chair), JC (Co-chair), CM, JP, MWK.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome.

Apologies for absence were received via email from MV and DS due to other commitments and health issues, respectively.

2. Minutes of the meeting of the Board on 22nd February 2023.

The minutes were approved by the Board, including for website upload. It was agreed that the previously approved flow for minutes approval and consequent upload in the website (circulation of draft minutes and approval by not objecting within one week; item 3 in Attachment 2023D) will be implemented from this point onwards. The next meeting Agendas will thus contain an item regarding matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting that are not covered in following items.

Action: JP will send the minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd of February 2023 to FC for upload in the Division website. The current minutes, after any corrections, will be sent to the EFB Office one week after circulation to the Division Board.

3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered below.

The integration of DS and LC as full members of the EB Division Board was approved unanimously.

4. EB Division contribute to the consultation launched by the BM Division.

A request for consultation was launched by the EFB Biobased Materials Division and forwarded by the Executive Board to all EFB Divisions. It relates to the formulation of guidelines for the experimental protocols of scientific articles dealing with biobased materials and polymers. Considering the specificity of the request, it was decided that Board members should respond directly if they have expertise and experience in the field, to Lucia Gardossi (gardossi@units.it) by 28th May.

Action: JP will send an email to the chairs of the BM Division and Lucia Gardossi acknowledging the consultation and indicating that any comments will be sent directly by Board members individually.

5. EB event in the EFB online meeting in March 2023.

JC reported that the EFB is very pleased overall with the success of the meeting, with 226 registered participants, 201 paying the fees and average attendance per session of 80 participants. It was noted that attendance per session was never higher than 100 participants, suggesting that there was a focused interest of participants in a given session or a given communication within sessions, but not towards the full programme.

6. EB Division event(s) in ACB 2023.

CM clarified that there has been some time since she could reach the ACB organisers to get updates on the Marine Biotechnology session and on the possibility of getting some support for travelling expenses to attend in person. New attempts will be made, if necessary with the support by JC or the Central Office, and any updates will be circulated to the Board via email.

7. Environmental biotechnology meeting in Poznan, in November 2023.

(i) Meeting advertising in the EFB May Newsletter.

It was agreed that an extra effort will be made to secure three gender-balanced invited speakers on time for the advertising in the EFB May Newsletter. A brief summary of the topics that will be addressed by these speakers will be requested to them to include in the Newsletter.

Action: JC and JSG are committed to meet this target and will interact with the Central Office to deliver the materials for the Newsletter as requested.

(ii) To report on the progress of the organization.

MWK reported that the contract is ready for signature. The involvement of indicated experts to cover Marine Biotechnology in the scientific committee and in the session organization was confirmed. JC and JSG are developing the best efforts to secure several other high-profile keynote speakers, ideally by the end of May. The deadline for short-talk submission was discussed and it was agreed to fix it to the middle of September, mostly considering the preceding summer holidays period. Sponsoring continues to be a critical issue. The Central Office has been developing huge efforts jointly with the Organizing Committee but success rates are not positive. The appeal for the contribution of the Board members with suggestions for contacts envisaging Sponsorship was renewed. Any contributions should be sent to EW at the Central Office, so that a formal contact can be made and to avoid duplication of contacts.

(iii) Renewed appeal for help from each Board Member to recruit groups to register and attend the event.

Action: Board members were requested to support the dissemination of the event through their institutional channels and professional networks as much as possible.

8. Approval of plans for a thematic issue of the Bioeconomy Journal.

The Board was informed of the provisional title of the Special Issue (Environmental biotechnology for a circular bioeconomy) and of the secured Special Issue Guest Editors. It was highlighted that contacts were successful in securing a high-profile member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences as a Guest Editor, committed with the promotion of Asian contributions to the Special Issue. The importance of having a successful Special Issue for the EB Division was reinforced and the whole Board was requested to contribute with the recruitment of at least one submission. Submissions by Board members are specially acknowledged. The lack of an impact factor and the fees were briefly discussed as potential constraints to the willingness of authors to submit. It was suggested that late-career authors could be targeted as a strategy for recruitment of submissions since they are less impacted by publication in Journals that still have no Impact Factor; it was noted that there might be a limited possibility of fees negotiation for Board members submitting to the Special Issue.

Action: JC will contact the three Guest Editors for interaction with the Central Office (EW) towards defining a strategy to encourage submissions to the Special Issue.

Action: JP will provide JC with an email draft concerning the encouragement of the Board members to recruit submissions to the Special Issue.

9. EB Board current composition.

The Board agreed that there is still a need for recruitment of new members, especially for coverage of fields that are not currently represented, e.g., soil bioremediation. Board members are invited to suggest the integration of new members.

10. Division website fee 2022.

It was agreed that the EB Division will ask the forgiveness of the current 2022 website fee debt. Any surplus from the Poznan meeting will be used to cover Division website fees for 2023 and, hopefully, also 2024.

11. Any other business.

(i) JC reported that the venue for the ECB in 2024 is being reassessed. Main reasons for transferring from Maastricht to Amsterdam or Rotterdam include accessibility, especially for colleagues from Asia, and the very high costs associated with Maastricht.

(ii) JSG suggested a new item for the Agenda of the next Board meeting on the expectations of each Board member concerning activities for 2024; these should not be limited to the organization of meetings.

Action: JP will draft an email to circulate to the Board after revision by the Chairs concerning the planning of activities for 2024.

12. Scheduling of the next meeting.

The disappointing attendance rates of Board members at meetings was discussed. In an attempt to improve participation in our next meeting, JP will circulate a DOODLE poll for the selection of the most favourable among three possible dates: 5, 6 or 7 June 2023, always at 17:00 CET. The date collecting the preference of the Board members within one week allowed for reply will be fixed for the meeting.

Action: JP will operate the selection of the meeting date and scheduling as agreed.

JP. 12 May 2022