

Minutes of the Microbial Biotechnology (MB) Division Board Meeting July 1 2024 @ Rotterdam
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Present:

On site: Diethard Mattanovich, Paola Branduardi, John Morrissey, Ralf Takors, Stephanie Heux, Jean Marie Francois.

Online: Verena Siewers, Kjeld Olesen, Pau Ferrer, Karen Polizzi (partly).

1. Welcome and Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting commenced with a welcome and the adoption of the agenda.

2. Apologies for Absence :

Jäntti Jussi, Jan Maarten van Dijk, Pablo Iván Nikel, Ton van Maris, Pascale Daran-Lapujade and Karen Polizzi

3. Division Activities in 2024:

Participation of the Division in ECB2024 (Paola):

- Paola was member of the scientific committee. One challenge was to transition the initial plans made for 2020 to 2024, both building on the existing plans and bringing them up to date. Microbial Biotechnology was very strongly represented in many sessions. It was by intention not to plan specific “Microbial Biotechnology” sessions but to collaborate with other themes and Divisions on session planning.
- Over 700 people registered. The most represented countries are the Netherlands, China, Germany, and Spain.
- It is the plan to have the next ECB in 2 years, in 2026. No decision for the location of the next meeting has been made yet.

ASBE 7 (Brno, Nov 2024) (Paola and Diethard):

- A short committee meeting (between our division and the bioengineering division) was planned for Tuesday July 2 during the ECB2024
- Early bird registration deadline shifted to July 21.
- Few invited speakers are missing, but the program is well advanced. Selection of talks will be handled ASAP after end of the submission deadline.
- Reminder to advertise in email signatures.

Industrial Biotechnology Workshop (Amsterdam, Oct 2024) (John):

- The concept for this workshop arose from discussions with the Microbiology Society that led to a proposal to organise an event to explore how industrial biotechnology can contribute to the transition to a sustainable bio-based economy. Subsequently, FEMS and IBISBA also got involved in planning a colloquium of about 50 people from various sectors.
- The concept was discussed at the Microbial Biotechnology Division meeting held at ASBE 6 in Edinburgh (Nov 2022) and received support for the Division to fully engage. The Division is represented on the organising committee by DM, PB, PF and JM.

- The workshop by invitation only and the goal is to produce policy briefs for the EU and national foundations, plus other scientific articles.
- Part of the rationale is that there is a need to increase visibility towards EU policymakers. EFB can be one of the voices, especially in areas where microbiology is underrepresented.

Microbial Biotech Lecture at the Pseudomonas Conference in Copenhagen (Pablo):

Potential recipient identified. Pablo will introduce EFB with a few slides.

4. Next Activities for the Following Years:

RPP 12 (2025) (Update by Ralf):

- Looking for volunteered to help in organization.
- Location: ULM, Germany, room for 360 people near the river and city center.
- Date: October 6, 2025, for three days.
- Accessibility: Close to airports (Stuttgart and Munich) and rail connections.
- Query if EFB supports the event and who will sign the contract.
- Organizing committee: K. Castiglione (FAU), G. Striedner (BOKU), M. Oldiges (FZ Juelich). Plus member to be nominated, e.g. active committee members from previous editions.
- Further funding applications in Germany planned (German Science Foundation, FEMS Grant for students).

PYFF (Valencia, 2026):

- Preferable to organize with the EFB office for handling money, contracts, etc.
- John will follow up with the local organisers to discuss progress.
- Organizer: Amparo Querol

Microbial Stress (Portugal, 2026):

- Organiser: Sophia Pauleta from University Nova Lisbon.
- The division will ask Matthias Steiger to follow up with Sophia.

Next MB Lecture at a Related Conference in 2025:

- Proposal from Ralf: "Himmelfahrtstagung", an international meeting in the field Bioprocess Engineering in Germany
- The general idea was to make this known, and after a few years launch Open calls for proposals with a deadline.
- Should be a keynote or opening lecture similar to EMBO lectures and typically chaired by a division member.

5. Report of the Treasurer (Pau):

- Transfer of the share to the division of the last meetings to the division account is partly outstanding but scheduled.
- All meetings of the last year had a positive financial outcome. RPP11 (Girona): All sponsors have paid except one.
- The board approves a support of 5000 € to the Microbial Biotechnology Workshop in October.
- Side note: EFB can support online events with their platform.

6. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Division:

- According to the statutes, elections for Chair and Vice Chair(s) should be held every second year, aligned with the EFB Executive Board schedule so election due in 2024.
- Pau & Stephanie confirmed their commitment to continue as respectively treasurer and secretary. Diethard asked if members agree to continue like this and all the members agreed.
- Diethard proposed to elect Paola Branduardi as future Chair. All present members agreed, and Paola accepted.
- Incoming Chair (Paola Branduardi) proposed John Morrissey for the Vice Chair position. All present members agreed, and John accepted.
- All members of the Board congratulated Paola and John and thanked them for their commitment.
- Paola said few words to thank Diethard for the superb and effective way he guided the Division, and to thank John, Pau and Stephanie for their work and support over the next 4 years.

8. Late Items:

- EFB status change: Proposal to extend the duration of presidency and Division Chairs to 4 years. This is in discussion and the new Statutes will be communicated when they are in place.
- New president of the EFB from January 2025: Francesc Gòdia from UAB was elected on June 30, 2024 by the EFB General Assembly.

9. Next Meeting of the Board:

- Possibly in Brno during the ASBE 7 meeting.