



# ALTER-Net Council meeting Uppsala, Sweden

## 28 February 2017

<b>Venue</b>	Ultuna University Campus, SLU, Uppsala
<b>Contact</b>	Tessa Van Santen <a href="mailto:tessa.vansanten@inbo.be">tessa.vansanten@inbo.be</a> NC: network council representative; MB: management board member
<b>Attendance</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maurice Hoffmann (INBO; council chair) NC</li> <li>2. Györgyi Bela (ESSRG, council vice chair) NC</li> <li>3. Allan Watt (CEH – Chair MB) NC</li> <li>4. Jiska van Dijk (NINA, vice-chair MB) MB</li> <li>5. Jean-Marc Callois (Irstea) NC</li> <li>6. Marta Dobrovodská (ILE-SAS) NC</li> <li>7. Eeva Furman (SYKE) NC</li> <li>8. Michael Mirtl (EAA) MB/NC</li> <li>9. Ulf Grandin (SLU) NC</li> <li>10. Stefan Klotz (UFZ) NC</li> <li>11. Mart Külvik (EMU) NC (MaK)</li> <li>12. Christoph Plutzer (SEC) NC</li> <li>13. Miki Kertesz (MTA) NC</li> <li>14. Jan Frouz (HBU-CAS) NC</li> <li>15. Tor Heggeberget (NINA) NC</li> <li>16. Joan Pino (CREAF) NC</li> <li>17. Kinga Krauze (ERCE) NC</li> </ol>
<b>Absent with notification</b>	<p>Marion Mehring (ISOE) NC          Christoph Görg (SEC) NC          Allison Hester (JHI) NC          Angheluta Vadineanu (UNIBUC) NC          Tomas Mozga (HBU-CAS) NC          Diana Hummel (ISOE) NC          Keimpe Wieringa (PBL) NC          Lawrence Jones-Walters (Alterra) NC          Jesper Fredshavn (DCE) NC</p>
<b>No notification yet</b>	<p>Dominique Joly (CNRS) NC          Sonja Jähnig (IGB) MB/NC          Julius Oszlanyi (ILE-SAS) NC          Mihai Adamescu (UNIBUC) NC          Rob Wolters (ECNC) NC          Olga Roig (CREAF) NC</p>

### 1. Welcome and start of meeting

MH welcomed everyone and gave the floor to the Dean who welcomed Council members to SLU and introduced the work of SLU.

## **2. Approval of the agenda**

Agenda approved after MM highlighted the papers on infrastructure circulated.

## **3. Approval of the minutes council meeting in Barcelona Nov 2016**

Minutes of Barcelona Council meeting were approved and Ann Milbau thanked for producing our excellent record of the meeting. MH highlighted the decision made in Barcelona to continue with ALTER-Net. EF asks if the minutes are open encouraging us to do so but asks that any personal details are kept out of the minutes.

Council agrees to make our minutes open to the network.

Council also agrees that draft minutes are circulated and members are invited to request removal of any sensitive information before being made public after one month.

## **4. State of affairs budget**

€3000 unpaid fees noted. SLU notes a budget cut of 50% to ALTER-Net which may affect their payments. Some partners have problems paying late in the financial year and MH proposes earlier invoicing to overcome this. A positive credit balance noted.

## **5. Follow-up of minutes council meeting Barcelona Nov 2016**

### **5.1. State of affairs, budget**

See Doc 02 and above.

### **5.2. Principal agreement on the continuation of Alter-Net, April 2017-December 2020**

Continuation of ALTER-Net agreed.

### **5.3. Council chair and vice-chair election**

MH re-elected as Council Chair and GB as Vice-Chair.

### **5.4. Management Board composition**

Those volunteering to remain or join the Management Board as discussed at the last Council meeting were discussed. Ann Milbau is now unable to join the Board. Both JP and MaK offered their membership and Council agreed. The Management Board will discuss and agree their particular responsibilities. Council agreed that JVD chairs the Board with AW is vice-chair.

Council agreed membership of Management Board as follows:

Jiska van Dijk (NINA), chair

Allan Watt (CEH), vice-chair and summer schools

Carsten Nesshöver (UFZ), science-policy interface

Philip Roche (Irstea), AHIA

Petteri Vihervaari (SYKE)

Sonja Jähnig (IGB-Berlin)

Andy Sier (CEH), communication

Joan Pino (CREAF)

Mart Külvik (EMU)

TH proposes a budget for the Board, particularly for the chair and vice chair, for travel. MH notes the previous discussion on the use of mobility Fund but Council does not agree that this should be open to the Management Board. Council agrees to promote the Mobility Fund better including the expenses of the Summer School alumni and make the Fund more visible, perhaps by a new programme, eg a 'visiting programme', which includes the option for travel. Council asks that it gets greater visibility on the website and through the support of Council members and their institutions.

Council agrees to consider financial support for Management Board meetings later in the agenda, expressing support in principle.

#### **5.5. IPBES stakeholder representation of Alter-Net**

Stakeholder representation of ALTER-Net at IPBES meetings supported in principle. No Council members will attend the Bonn meeting but SK will ask his colleagues to represent ALTER-Net (in addition to their other roles). ALTER-Net will also be represented in the European Stakeholder meeting 12-13 June. See information already sent by CN. Now the venue is an ALTER-Net one – MTA. If attending, please let the secretariat know.

#### **6.1. Memorandum of Understanding: discussion about amendments, partnership issues**

In addition to suggestions in the papers, JP proposes raising additional funds within the network for specific activities. The strategy of raising funds at the European Level was advocated by TH. Neither should affect the principle of core funding by the partners. The idea of seeking additional funding from outside the network is supported by Council members although there was concern that this should not affect our independence. Council expressed the view that Council members should take a more proactive approach to fund raising, perhaps working together, and that this should not be the sole responsibility of the Management Board.

Council supported the cuts to fees proposed by MH

The potential positive impact of this reduction on new members joining was noted by EF. GB suggests that the budget surplus be used to increase our visibility. MH noted the substantial communication efforts by Andy Sier. Council welcomed any additional contributions from partners both in-kind and ear-marked for specific activities.

A change to the MoU was agreed: "In addition, each full partner will at the institute level voluntarily reserve the same amount as spent on its cash contribution to sponsor certain ALTER-Net activities and/or secure participation in certain ALTER-Net activity relevant to the institute."

#### **6.2. Relation Alter-Net - PEER**

Council supported the proposal that we are represented at PEER meetings (as well as being involved in any joint activities). The idea came from the Director of SYKE, a PEER member. UFZ is now leading PEER:

Council agreed that SK will take this forward with his director and colleagues.

#### **6.3. Alter-Net High Impact Action – goals and conditions (AHIA)**

MH reminded Council that the aim was to involve the network's top scientists and that outputs should not be limited to a science paper but also e.g. a policy brief and/or a presentation Council members reminded that these projects are open to all. EF proposes

that links to Oppla and EKLIPSE be added as options, including the possibility that EKLIPSE receives a question that ALTER-Net contributes to via an AHIA action.

Council asked the Management Board to draft new text on AHIA.

#### **6.4. Alter-Net Multi-Site Research Action – goals and conditions (MSR)**

MM tabled a new text on this, noting the proposed focus on LTER and change from MSE to MSR (“experiments” to “research”). EF proposed that solution-orientated research be specified as an option for this activity. It should be question-focused (SK) and not exclude basic research but promote innovation and address emerging topics and should promote network activity/cooperation.

Council asked the Management Board to revise the text and launch a call in mid 2017

The Management Board will decide who will lead this Activity (Sonja Jähnig, MK or JP). The help of Andy Sier to promote this Activity will be requested, noting his involvement also in LTER ‘remote access’).

#### **6.5. List of benefits of ALTER-Net needed to show to directors**

A draft was prepared by MH. Ben Delbaere also previously produced a (shorter) document on benefits.

Council agreed that the latter is updated with links to latest outputs.

#### **6.6. A renewed secretariat.**

MH summarised the need for increased support for a Secretarial, including improved communication (working with Andy Sier) with the cost raised from €10,000 to €20,000. Council members supported the need for an increased Secretariat and that the Secretariat should continue to be co-located with the chair.

Council agreed the proposal for an increased budget for the Secretariat.

A new MoU will be circulated in March and Council members are asked to present it to their directors and invite them to the 2017 conference.

### **7. State of affairs network activities**

#### **7.1. ALTER-Net conference 2017, “Nature and Society: synergies, conflicts, trade-offs”**

ALTER-Net conference 2017 introduced by JvD who asked that:

- Member institutes support Andy Sier with communication
- Help to increase the involvement of the EC via e.g. project officers and other contacts in the DGs.
- Members advertise the conference within their institutes and associated networks.
- Members ensure that their researchers are encouraged and supported to attend.

MK suggested that a more active involvement of members/directors/chief executives is encouraged. EF suggested that a conference panel could include EC representatives such as Sofie Vanderwoestijne and a representative of the SAM. EF proposed MH for the panel and maximum of 4-5, including Sofie. KK noted that directors would need some advantage to attend and AW proposed inviting someone senior in DG R&I. EF suggests Birgit de Boissezon. CP suggests Helmut Haberl and KK suggests her director. EF suggest Raol Mille from IRSTEA. Council agrees that a panel should be included in the conference and asks JVD and the organizing committee to consider the proposal. JVD welcomed further suggestions

from members (by email) and will include them in future planning. MH will officially invite specific directors.

#### **7.2. AHIA**

Proposals not supported previously are eligible for resubmission.

Council agreed to launch a call in the second half of 2017.

#### **7.3. MSR**

Council agreed a new call in the second half of 2017.

#### **7.4. LTER – Infrastructure.**

MM presented two papers and an update on LTER in Europe which has three layers.

- Network of 26 national networks
- eLTER H2020 project with 21 countries
- LTER ESFRI initiative with 11 initiating countries.

The goal is a distributed network of benchmark ecosystems with baseline observations, interactions with other (site) infrastructures and contributing to the global LTER network. This is intended to be a more strategic process with an infrastructure supporting a range of conceptual frameworks dealing with three core challenges. These elements are included in the draft MoU. MM presented examples of research questions and ELTER ESFRI process targets. MM also presented an update on LTER Europe and its activities in the global context including DEIMS as an official partner in GEO. MM notes that biodiversity was a dominant theme at the last ILTER meeting. MM also presented the latest version of the infrastructure requirements paper.

Council agreed to adopt this version after being posted on the website for comments for one month of comments. This will be a living document revised as necessary in the future.

Council also agreed to support the LTER ESFRI initiative a support letter for the MoU.

Signatories are institutions but support letters are required from networks. MM will draft such a letter for signing by ALTER-Net.

Council approved continued development of DEIMS (using previously agreed funding).

#### **7.5. Science-policy interface.**

MM presented paper published on Nature-Based Solutions partly funded by ALTER-Net. AW outlines the purpose of this activity and the specific opportunities that Oppla and EKLIPSE offer now and in the future.

#### **7.6. Summer Schools**

AW outlined the role of the summer school as first a training opportunity for students including staff from the network institutes, Second it acts as a networking opportunity for ALTER-Net's staff (as students and lecturers). Third it serves to promote ALTER-Net by making it visible to students from e.g. (last year) Chile, the US, China and, most frequently, students from across Europe. SK argued for its importance as a trans-European exchange, which is particularly needed at this time: it would give the wrong signal to stop it now.

Council noted the previous decision to support the 2017 summer school and agreed to support the 2018 summer school.

Council agreed in principle that the Management Board explored opportunities for external funding for the summer school but asked that approval be given only after any costs are presented.

## **8. Refreshing existing activities**

### **8.1. Brainstorming on potential new activities**

All existing activities were supported at the last Council meeting.

Council agreed to consider new activities in a workshop setting at the next Council meeting.

### **8.2. Alter-net at the Joint Annual Meeting of BES-NecoV-GFO-EEF (Dec 2017, Ghent)**

MM asks members to consider organizing a workshop at the BES-NecoV-GFO-EEF event. MH also raised the possibility of involvement of ALTER-Net in EEF meeting on the UN SDGs in 2014 and KK reminded Council about a meeting on ecohydrology and the circular economy at ERCE Lodz with possibly half-day session involving ALTER-Net, perhaps on NBS and the society-nature interface. Dates are 26-28 September 2017. MH will circulate information to all again.

## **9. Any other business**

There was no other business.

## **10. Next Council Meeting, where and when?**

Offers were made to hold future Council meeting in Prague (BHBV – CAS) and Budapest (jointly hosted by MTA and ESSRG). Agreed to hold next one in Budapest and the one after in Prague.

MH on behalf of Council thanked Ulf Grandin for the excellent facilities offered and the kind welcome received, and closed the meeting.