



the European Science-Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Internal rules of the Alternet Association

A. BACKGROUND

Historically, Alternet refers to “**A Long-Term Biodiversity, Ecosystem, and Ecosystem Services Research and Awareness Network**”. It is a network principally comprising research organizations. It aimed to promote, develop and present long-term, European-scale, inter- and transdisciplinary research and knowledge integration on biodiversity, ecosystems, ecosystem services, including the interplay between environments and people. Its supplementary aim was to make scientific information as widely available and accessible as possible to any person or organization that deals with issues concerning biodiversity, ecosystems, ecosystem services and societal and economic involvement in these topics.

The present Alternet Association is the legal successor of the Alternet Consortium that was the independent, internally managed and financed successor of the “Network of Excellence” developed as part of the European Commission’s VIth Framework Programme. After this initial six-year period (2004-2009), the Alternet Consortium was further developed by its members as a network, financially independent of external funding bodies.

The Alternet Association has the capacity to fulfil its goals through its unique combined pan-European expertise in ecology, natural history, social sciences, economics, information management, and knowledge transfer. The Network has access to pan-European research infrastructure, including Long-term Ecosystem Research (LTER) sites and Socio-Ecological Research Platforms (LTSER). It has close links with many existing research and science-policy networks.

B. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Within the framework of Article 6 of the Statutes a new member is expected to

- bring significant new expertise and/or research capacity to the Network;
- contribute potentially to strategic biodiversity, ecosystem and ecosystem services research and/or communication;
- contribute to the pan-European character of the Association.

An Associate Member will automatically evolve into Effective membership after one year of Associate membership, meaning that they shall also meet the conditions for Effective membership concerning cash contribution.



C. MEMBERSHIP FEES IN CASH AND IN KIND

According to Article 7 of the Statutes, each effective member shall pay membership fees in cash and/or in kind, according to the number of employees, whether researcher, technician or alike that is working on the issues within the scope of the Association (we distinguish very large, large, medium or small organisations), with the exception of the Founding Members, who shall not pay cash contributions and are not obliged to contribute in kind.

The classification of members is based on the number of employees, whether researcher, technician or alike that is working on the issues within the scope of the Association as mentioned in Article 3 of the Statutes and according to the following table:

Classification of the organization	The number of employees working on topics mentioned in Article 3 of the Statutes ¹	minimum yearly cash-contribution
Very large	>100 employees	5000 €
Large	50-100 employees	4000 €
Medium	10-50 employees	2000 €
Small	<10 employees	500 €

Cash contributions

Founding Members

Founding members are not obliged to pay any cash contribution.

Effective Membership

- a. For very large-sized organizations, the minimum yearly cash contribution is 5.000 € per year.
- b. For large-sized organizations, the minimum yearly cash contribution is 4.000 € per year
- c. For medium-sized organizations, the minimum yearly cash contribution is 2.000 € per year.
- d. For small-sized organizations, the minimum yearly cash contribution is 500 € per year.

Every Effective Member will receive a membership fee invoice in January.

Associate Membership

Associate members are not obliged to pay a cash contribution. The status of Associated members can only last for one year. After that the Associate member becomes an Effective member, and will be invoiced accordingly.

In-kind contributions

¹ At the beginning of the membership, every member institute will be explicitly asked to inform the secretariat on the size of their institute as far as the disciplines indicated in this table are concerned. After that, it is assumed that the size of the member institute remains stable, unless explicitly indicated otherwise by the member to the AC-chair.



Effective as well as Associate Members are expected to contribute with person-days per year as an in-kind contribution to fulfil the objectives of the Association. In-kind contributions are defined as such only if they are related to the core activities of the Association (as defined in the annual work plan), and which hence directly contribute to the on-going activities of the Association. The Association assumes that the quantity of in-kind contributions will more or less match with the size of the member institute, but the number of contributed person days is not predefined.

D. MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS AND BENEFITS

1. Membership commitments

Each Member commits to:

- a. fund its own participation in the meetings of the AC;
- b. funds its own participation in the Association's activities, according to the budget arrangements decided upon for each activity; a limited budget can be allocated however by the AC to support the activities of the MB and the daily management; this budget does not necessarily cover all costs of participation in these bodies;
- c. pay membership fees through in cash and in kind contributions according to Article 7 of the Statutes and Article C of these internal rules;
- d. respond appropriately to communications from the Association's corporate bodies;
- e. facilitate active promotion and communication about the Association's goals and activities within its own organization;
- f. contribute actively to the outreach and promotion of the Association's activities.

Each Effective member:

- a. is expected to actively participate in the meetings and supplementary activities of the AC.
- b. is responsible for internal communication of all Alternet matters and activities in their own organization and vice versa.
- c. is responsible to reply on behalf of their organization on requests by the AC-chairman, the Secretariat and/or the MB.
- d. When specifically asked by the MB, is expected to supply the Secretariat with information on affiliated scientists, scientists' expertise, on Alternet database input, and on communication in order to maximize the Alternet outreach within its member organizations.

2. Membership benefits

Members benefit from their membership as follows (non-exhaustive list):

- a. Unique opportunities of networking on any of the issues within the scope of the association and beyond;





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- b. direct access and involvement in a leading European research network aimed at bringing science to the policy making at international up to regional level, concerning issues with regard to biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services, and societal involvement herein;
- c. first-hand information on upcoming research calls of relevance to Europe's biodiversity field of interest;
- d. privileged partner in proposal building following calls by external funding bodies;
- e. potential expert partner in temporary knowledge networks (e.g. expert working groups) answering requests on issues scoped within the Association's objective, in the so-called Eklipse mechanism²;
- f. participate in a unique mechanism to bring their scientific insights to policy and to contribute to evidence-based policies;
- g. priority access to Alternet events and project opportunities;
- h. publicity for the organization through the Alternet outreach tools and events and inclusion in Alternet's communication channels;
- i. priority access to Alternet information dissemination channels, publications database and joint research facilities;
- j. priority access to Alternet's high impact actions;
- k. participation of one member of senior staff in the Alternet Council and right to vote (Effective members only);
- l. participation in the MB after appointment by the AC.

3. Core activities on which cash and in-kind contributions are potentially spent

- a. Organization of Science-Policy Interface activities, including a Biodiversity Knowledge System for Europe, further elaborated in the EKLIPSE Mechanism;
- b. Development of an Alternet Research Strategy, including contributing to research and exchange proposals called upon by external funding bodies, collaboration, exchange and networking;
- c. Communication and outreach activities;
- d. Development of a Common Training Programme and organization/facilitation of training events, including a Summer School on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services or any other topic within the Alternet mission;
- e. Organization and/or facilitation of events such as workshops, dialogue/exchange meetings, conferences and research horizon scanning within the scope of the Alternet mission;

² The EKLIPSE mechanism (www.Eklipse-mechanism.eu) is an innovative, light, self-sustainable European support mechanism for evidence-based policy on biodiversity and ecosystems services open to all relevant knowledge holders and users; it will be financed by the EU-Horizon 2020 until mid 2020, and was then taken over by Alternet as part of its major and growing priority of Science-Policy-Society Interface. Activities are not necessarily limited to European policy support, stakeholders can also come from member state up to regional policy representatives and other decision-makers such as business, NGOs, etc.





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- f. Support of secretariat functions for the general Alternet day-to-day functioning and the Eklipse mechanism functioning.
- g. (Financial) support of research and research integration projects, including Multi-Site Research projects using the pan-European structure of Alternet and LTER-Europe, and the AHIA-projects;
- h. Organization and/or facilitation of proposal building for international research and outreach activities;
- i. Fundraising activities to obtain external financial support for Alternet activities;
- j. Work on joint research initiatives with use of the LTER-Europe Network;
- k. Work on joint research initiatives with regard to Alternet High Impact Actions (AHIA) and Multi-Site Research.

4. Alternet and project consortium building

All Partners will be encouraged to engage in collaborative projects under the Alternet brand, Alternet can but is not necessarily the legal body that takes contractual engagements. Alternet will facilitate partner identification and consortium building and may – though it is not obliged to - take the lead in the process of proposal-writing and coordination of the project after project approval.

All Partners are invited to keep the Alternet secretariat informed of progress on collaborative projects, subject only to any overriding considerations of intellectual property rights or commercial considerations.

However, every member organization evidently has the liberty to take project proposal initiatives by themselves, without any legal obligations to Alternet.

E. ANNUAL WORK PLAN

The annual work plan will be based on a set of activities, agreed by the AC and largely prepared by the MB. It describes the main working areas of the Association. This set of activities contains working documents which may be amended, added or removed through a decision of the AC.

F. ACTIVITIES DETERMINATION AND REVIEWING

Activities supported or funded by the Association will be determined and reviewed annually by the AC according to priorities set by the AC and the funding available from partners or external sources.

G. FUNDING CYCLE

The Association will operate on a three-year funding cycle with an overall review every three years for continuation. In-between reviews and adjustments are organized on a yearly basis.





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H. DEPOSITS

All funds of the Association shall upon receipt be deposited on behalf of the Association with such banks, trust companies or other depositories as may be selected by or under the authority of a resolution of the EC.

I. GIFTS AND DONATIONS

On behalf of the Association, the daily management shall be authorized to accept and receive contributions and donations from any and all sources. Acceptance of any grant or gift restricted or unrestricted does not imply endorsement by Alternet of the source, its services, products or policies, nor does it imply any past, present or future benefit to be granted by Alternet. Acceptance of any contract does not imply any endorsement, benefit or product beyond the deliverable services and products expressly contained in the contract. It will be the general policy of Alternet to accept unrestricted contributions and restricted grants from any source. However, Alternet retains the right to refuse any gift or grant if the EC judges the reputation or perceived image of the grantor, or the conditions of the grant are inconsistent with the Network's mission, goals and activities.

J. LOANS

No loans shall be contracted on behalf of Alternet and no evidence of such indebtedness shall be issued in its name unless authorized by or under the authority of a resolution of the EC, and approved by the AC. Such authorization may be general or confined to specific instances.

