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|  | <p>MINUTES</p> <p>ALTER-Net ‘in between’ meeting with MB and Council</p> <p>Barcelona - 8 November 2016</p> |
| Venue | Institute for Catalan Studies, Carrer del Carme, 47; 08001 Barcelona |
| Contact | tessa.vansanten@inbo.be NC: network council representative; MB: management board member |
| Attendance | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maurice Hoffmann (INBO; council chair) NC 2. Györgyi Bela (ESSRG; council vice-chair) NC 3. Allan Watt (CEH – Chair MB) MB 4. Jiska van Dijk (NINA, vice-chair MB) MB 5. Corina Basnou (CREAF) NC 6. Jean-Marc Callois (Irstea) NC 7. Marta Dobrovodská (ILE-SAS) NC 8. Eeva Furman (SYKE) NC 9. Jesper Fredshavn (DCE) NC 10. Christoph Görg (SEC) NC 11. Ulf Grandin (SLU) NC 12. Tor Heggberget (NINA) NC 13. Allison Hester (JHI) NC 14. Diana Hummel (ISOE) NC 15. Sonja Jähnig (IGB) NC 16. Lawrence Jones-Walters (Alterra) NC 17. Stefan Klotz (UFZ) NC 18. Kinga Krauze (ERCE) NC 19. Mart Külvik (EMU) NC 20. Ann Milbau (INBO) MB 21. Joan Pino (CREAF) NC 22. Olga Roig (CREAF) NC 23. Angheluta Vadineanu (UNIBUC) NC 24. Petteri Vihervaara (SYKE) MB 25. Rob Wolters (ECNC) NC |
| Skype attendance | 26. Andy Sier (CEH) MB – on 9th of November -> did not work! |
| Absent with notification | Tessa Van Santen (INBO) Secretariat ALTER-Net Carsten Nesshöver (UFZ) MB Julius Oszlanyi (ILE-SAS) NC Philip Roche (Irstea) MB Ben Delbaere (ECNC) MB Michael Mirtl (EAA) MB/NC Mihai Adamescu (UNIBUC) NC Keimpe Wieringa (PBL) NC Marion Mehring (ISOE) NC Tomas Mozga (HBU-CAS) NC |
| No notification | Christoph Plutzar (SEC) NC Veronika Gaube (SEC) NC Miki Kertesz (MTA) NC Dominique Joly (CNRS) NC Jan Frouz (HBU-CAS) NC |

1. Welcome and start of the meeting

Welcome by Professor Ros

Welcome by Maurice Hoffmann

2. Approval of minutes Council meeting in Brussels May 2016 – Doc 01

No comments on the minutes – a great appreciation to Tessa for the very good and detailed minutes from last meeting!

3. Follow-up of Minutes Council meeting May 2016

- Maurice mentions that there were several suggestions for side events to the conference in the minutes. Any suggestions for follow up? -> no response.
- Lawrence is welcomed as representative of ALTERRA, that has decided to stay in the network.
- 2 vacancies in the MB: Ann Milbau (INBO) and Sonja Jähnig (IGB) will join the MB.
- No further comments regarding the follow-up.

4. State of affairs budget – Doc 02

- The budget looks healthy; 96500 EUR is expected for the year 2016-2017
- Eeva: What about the credit balance? Shouldn't we do things? Spend the money?
- Maurice: It is up to the council to decide if we spend more money than the yearly income. Maybe add some money to the conference for a serious follow-up of the conference? Would be a great added value.
- The budget for the summer school is missing. It was however decided that it would be supported in 2017.
- MSR was only 5000 instead of the budgeted 20000 EUR.
- More money for AHIA? 40000 instead of 20000? -> will be decided later on agenda item 5 (see further)

5. State of affairs network activities

Overview of ongoing activities in ALTER-Net

Video presentation of 1st AHIA proposal on citizen science (Györgyi Bela)

- High-impact paper published in Conservation Biology.
- Next to HI-paper, a short video about the benefits of citizen science for professional scientists (and thus not the citizens) was produced and shown during this meeting.
- Please, all **share this video**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20D1Ni72jbY>
- Maurice thanks all ALTER-Net partners who were involved in the paper.
- Now Timo Assmuth is working on a paper related to NBS (Nature and human health) -> paper by the end of 2017. Timo should have contacted all ALTERNet partners to participate. Not sure if everyone received an invitation -> **needs to be checked!**

AHIA: 5 proposals received in last call (summer 2016) (Maurice Hoffmann)

- New call launched after the meeting in May 2016.
- 5 proposals received.

- 3 council members (not involved in any submission) and 2 board members judged the 5 proposals.
- the ranking showed that two proposals were standing out (Sandra Luque (IRSTEA) and Kerry Waylen (James Hutton Institute).
- the council decided to **grant both proposals** (to the maximum amount suggested in the proposals).
- the original budget was ca. 20 000 EUR for traveling, lodging, workshops, etc (not personnel costs); it will thus become ca. 40 000 EUR.
- Eeva suggests to grant a third proposal (the one by Dr. Haaze) but after some discussion it is decided to not fund more than the top two: they were objectively graded by a jury and clearly having a higher quality than the other three proposals.
- It is suggested that proposals can be resubmitted in the next call.
- It is suggested to give more feedback on how to improve the proposal in the future; What did they do well? What could be improved?
- There is some discussion on whether a journal paper should be the main target for the AHIA action.
- Maurice suggests that we all re-read the guidelines of the AHIA action. One of the main reasons for focusing on a journal paper is that (1) we are a research network and (2) that a high-impact journal paper should attract the interest of the researchers at our institutes. Next to the high-impact paper also something that is attractive to the general public should be produced.

Summer school 2016 (Allan Watt)

- Last summer school was in September 2016.
- 31 students from Chile to China, Mexico to Australia -> global interest.
- 19 or 20 teachers, mostly from ALTER-Net; a few new speakers.
- a lot of networking between the students, between the teachers, and between students and teachers.
- Last year of OPERAs and OPENNESS projects: teachers and students from both projects.
- Traditional teaching and outdoors discussions and field trips.
- 11 years -> over 300 students -> they are advocates, ambassadors of ALTER-Net.
- Thanks to all the speakers, teachers, organizers.

MSR: 1 proposal granted (and only 1 received) during last call 2016 (Ann Milbau)

- Call earlier this year.
- Proposal from Hjalmar Laudon (SLU, Umea) on the effects of climate and the home field advantage on litter decomposition.
- Good and sound proposal.
- Both interesting from a scientific perspective and from a societal perspective (it includes citizen science).
- The proposal has been granted.
- It is mentioned that it is unfortunate that no more proposals are sent in, especially since MSE is changed into MSR to allow participation of socio-ecological projects.
- Maybe it could be stressed in the future that it will be an advantage for MSR-projects to work in LT(S)ER sites?
- Maybe TA money from LTER could be combined with MSR funding? Or AHIA money with MSR money?
- Maybe we should include a communication part in the MRS procedure?
- **Clear strengths and weaknesses from the current MSR calls should be evaluated.**

Conference 2017 (Jiska van Dijk)

Jiska is coordinating the conference.

- 2-5 May 2017 in Ghent (Belgium)
- Title: Nature & society: synergies, conflicts, trade-offs .
- scientific committee: 18 people, many from ALTER-Net.
- Organizing committee: Jiska, Tessa, Andy.
- Programme framework and sessions = work in progress.
- **Lots of input needed!! -> please engage!**
 - o Communication (flyers, website, brochures)
 - o Knowledge brookers/communicators (3)
 - 1 for scientific arena
 - 1 for policy arena
 - 1 for practinioners
 - o Facilitators for the debates (2) – good help from SYKE in 2015.
 - o Side events: 2 people (1 council + 1 MB) per side event:
 - Project market place -> Petteri.
 - Summer school alumni meeting.
 - Round table on new horizon.
 - Interaction between networks (see last council meeting).
 - Training sessions (see last council meeting).
- **See PPT-presentation for more info**
- Rob Wolters: Science, policy, practisioners as stakeholders -> is classical way: should we include other groups? (elderly, youth, Mayors, local people ...; all the people that get into contact with nature). Bring in new elements? Working with local communities; discussions about paradigms of nature conservation ; work with new models; Commission not supported much by the people anymore. Briefly: **Make it innovative!**
- Allan Watt: Make it as innovative as possible. Get as many ALTERNET people there as possible.
- Lawrence: the original objectives should guide what kind of content you want. Be careful with what you wish for. Potentially bring in some young scientists / alumni form the summer school.
- Eeva: Check with the EC people what they like? -> the pillars are still from FP7, thus the old stuff -> Is that still OK?
- Maurice: The Ecology of the Future as a side event?
- Eeva: Why don't we use the opportunity here to use the communicators from our institutes? As moderators etc. Show we have that type of capacity...
- Some people question if we really need four days?

Mobility Fund (Jiska van Dijk)

After the last CM it was advertised on the website again but thus far no requests at all. Maybe use the money for participation in the conference?

Science Policy Interface – Eklipse (Allan Watt)

See PPT presentation on EKLIPSE!

- 4 main elements/goals:
 - Synthesizing available knowledge
 - Jointly identifying research needs
 - Building the network of networks
 - Science for everyone

- Main question to us: **our involvement**
- For instance, we could **participate in the upcoming events in Brussels**
 - Science-policy-society conference 7-8 Dec
 - EKLIPSE/EPBRRS/BiodivERSA foresight workshop in Brussels 6-7 Dec on Societal Innovation and Nature-Based Solutions
- Eeva: ALTER-Net should try to position itself in the network (before the 4-yr funding is over). The ALTER-Net network should be engaged.
- Stefan Klotz: How to combine this with IPBES?

Oppla (Rob Wolters)

- Virtual hub where you find the latest thinking on NBS and outreach activities. Created by OPERA and OPENNESS.
- It can be used to:
 - Ask questions
 - Marketplace
 - Portal
- **Register at www.oppla.eu**
- **See PPT for more info**
- Maurice: What about all these networks? What after the funding stops? Maybe we need a better overview of all the existing networks and their exact focus.
- Eeva: ALTER-Net should be visible in Oppla, but it should start from the ALTER-Net side. Add cases to the case studies. Become experts for answering the questions. Build links with existing networks, etc.

Infrastructure activities (Stefan Klotz)

Short overview on the current situation of LTER Europe:

- iLTER meeting in South Africa in September 2016.
- next meeting in 3 years (2019) in Germany.
- eLTER: combination of the European sites: start with existing facilities (bottom up).
- Advance_eLTER: funding to complete a new ESFRI-proposal to get on the ESFRI road map.
- Contact ICOS: many ICOS sites are LTER sites -> combine infrastructures.
- Lifewatch connection (data portals and IT issues).
- Critical Zone Observatories (soil scientists).
- GEO / GEO BON (biodiversity observation network): also close collaboration.

6. Questionnaire, results

What about ALTER-Net IV?

The situation of the different institutes was discussed

IRSTEA:

- in discussion
- financial situation currently unclear
- re-thinking all the networks they are in
- Wait until their next budget

JHI:

- **Brief list of benefits of ALTER-Net needed to show to decision makers**
- Competition with agricultural people

- Maurice: we could make a short systematic list instead of the MoU

NINA:

- NINA wants to continue
- We should use the answers from the questionnaire to decide what to put less attention on

SEC:

- Depends on major topics that ALTER-Net wants to support
- For the institute three main important issues
 - o LTER -> more effort needed to put S in there (socio versus ecological)
 - o Historical data are important for them
 - o How will ALTER-Net respond to the changed situation of Horizon 2020? Lobbying? Is ALTER-Net successful in that?
- Trade-offs with the budget
- Maurice: We are becoming critical/competitive to what we created ourselves!
- The role of having impact on future calls is a difficult issue – several people in the network have influence on it, but not always visible as ALTER-Net

EMU

- Internal cooperation is one of the best ways to advance
- The jointly financed projects are the best way to do this (EU and other funding)
- His colleagues are feeling that there are not enough possibilities to get engaged into joint fund raising within the ALTER-Net consortium. The attempts seem to fail.
- Maurice: What about MSR, AHIA, mobility fund? Develop training workshops?

ALTERRA

- Writing proposals together doesn't seem to work -> that seems to be over for them
- They need to find other benefits out of it e.g. high-level strategy
- Summer school currently not relevant for ALTERRA, but they would like to become involved
- Maurice notes that students from Wageningen are attending the summer school

SYKE

- They always have/had to justify participation – at the moment the director is very positive; SYKE will thus normally participate
- ALTER-Net has evolved from developing projects together to new things like AHIA, MSR, conference, etc
- Conferences are where we do horizon scanning -> the discussions that are held with the commission is what is important (more than a letter)
- Mobility fund is also important
- Summer school not directly important for them, but it has its value as a flagship for ALTER-Net (training for personnel)

CEH

- Comment on Allison: a list of benefits is a good idea
- We should **think about what ALTER-Net can be**
- It is a voice for ecosystem research, or a special type of it
- Summer school is very important
- CEH will talk to Lawrence about the EKLIPSE proposal (and what went wrong)

UFZ

- Wants to remain in the consortium
- ALTER-Net reached a lot over the history
- Summer school is big success (colleagues and students are involved)

- ALTER-Net was birthplace of LTER Europe -> now this network is also a success -> on the way to become an ESFRI infrastructure (due to close collaboration between ALTER-Net and LTER)
- Possibility to establish smaller fast-track projects: ALTER-Net built the bridge between lobbying for our science and political issues
- Is there an alternative to ALTER-Net? He doesn't see it. We need a strong network in these difficult times. We should save ALTER-Net and develop it further in difficult financial times.

UNIBUC

- ALTER-Net should build infrastructure and support policy. It should be the institutional infrastructure able to support the integrated science dealing with social-ecological systems (support the sustainable development goals at national levels, etc.)
- The institute agrees to be partner in ALTER-Net
- ALTER-Net will become stronger and stronger
- Get different disciplines together; develop a common language; develop a common institutional research ...

ERCE

- They learned a lot from ALTER-Net
- They want the focus on interdisciplinarity -> learn from each other
- Policy interaction (through conferences, etc.) is fantastic, but difficult to argue about this to their directors
- Common projects are important for them, but none of the common projects now originates from the ALTER-Net network
- They have difficulties to explain why to pay if they get the info/help from LTER, ...
- Still a yes, but needs to be clearer why

CREAF

- Wants to go on, full support
- Important for interdisciplinarity, etc.
- They would like to have strong consortia starting in ALTER-Net

ISOE

- Want to continue in the next phase
- Want more focus on transdisciplinarity; and more focus in general
- Benefits need to become clearer

ESSRG

- Appreciate democratic way of leadership
- They want to continue
- Summer school: 2 young fellows participated
- Good opportunity to work together with other ALTER-Net partners
- Inspiring to develop new ideas

ILE-SAS

- Happy with the network
- Want to continue

SLU

- ALTER-Net is seen as international outreach
- SLU is engaged in a large international network
- List with benefits would be useful
- Next meeting in Uppsala is strategic move (to new management)

IGB

- They currently have an interim director
- Clear communication would be helpful
- Communication within IGB has not been very clear because several people have been involved in attending the ALTER-Net meetings
- She thinks it is a YES, but they will have to improve their internal communication
- She will present ALTER-Net at the science day of the institute

DCE

- People who have been successful in the network from the institute saw it as a benefit
- A list with benefits would be helpful
- Yes for the next period
- They hope to get something out of it

ECNC

- Reflections: ALTER-Net managed to stay alive -> quite an achievement
- Thinks summer school and conferences are important
- AHIA sounds good, but not sure if it has high impact
- Think about competition -> find the right niche
- The European spirit is very important
- Include some countries further east (and south?)
- Also disappointed after the EKLIPSE issue
- Wants to continue
- Interdisciplinary approaches; new stakeholder approaches; include new countries
- Re-consider the ALTER-Net activities -> maybe change the focus?

INBO

- Positive, continue
- Sometimes we forget about the initial goals (integration of the institutions originally involved)
- List of benefits needed; but hard to express benefits in EUROS
- The benefits are to his opinion huge
- The networking as such is extremely important but difficult to express in money
- Eeva: **story lines** are very useful **to illustrate the benefits!!**

NINA

- The “New ALTER-Net” instead of “ALTER-Net IV” to express that we are changing and looking into the future?
- The networking opportunity is very important

7. Alter-net IV, to be or not to be

YES!

List with benefits will be produced

8. Council and MB election (Alter-net IV)

Council

- People were asked to come up with nominations, but no one did
- **Maurice / INBO will keep on chairing**
- Györgyi will remain vice-chair

Management Board

- This is where the action is -> be active if you are included!
- Allan especially thanks Jiska, Ben, Andy and Maurice
- No limitation on the number of MB members
- Sonja and Ann: new nominations (decided in May)
- Jiska, Allan, Carsten, Philip, Petteri want to continue
- **Jiska will become the new chair; Allan the vice-chair**
- Should we think of a geographical balance? Gender balance?
- Potential new candidates:
 - o ALTERRA
 - o UNIBUC
 - o EMU
 - o CREAM
- Communication officer at SLU is interested to help Andy with the communication. Will be decided soon!
- Tor appreciates the work that is being done by the MB. He suggests reconsidering the financial support. We should discuss allocating some money for the time used for the chair – vice-chair
- Eeva also suggests to allocate some of the extra budget to the active partners
- **We should consider financing some of the (in kind) traveling contributions of MB members**

9. Memorandum of Understanding and pledge

- Decided changes on last council meeting (marked green - see Doc 03) are approved
- Partnership issues (when partners do not pay their contribution, etc.) and associate memberships should be discussed again
- **We should come up with an amended MoU by the new meeting**

10. Refreshing existing activities

See PPT for an overview!

We depart from the questionnaire to discuss the existing activities and possible ameliorations. Comments in addition to what is already in the PPT are mentioned here.

Summer School

- Try to get more ALTER-Net students in the summer school
- Get more ALTER-Net staff in there
- Eye-opener to biology students (-> link to society, ES)
- Important networking activity
- Gyorgyi: Involve the best students in the ALTER-Net network. Recruitment basis? Capacity building program -> exchange program between institutes?

Conferences

- This is the only forum where the members of the participating institutes can meet / come together -> really important!! (Stefan Klotz)
- **Networking within the network** is one of the main aims of the conference (next to the topic)
- The subject should be interesting/broad enough to attract a broad range of researchers
- SYKE: stress importance of informing DG Env
- Tor: **The follow-up of the conference is very important!** Highlighting and recommendations for future research
- Maurice: put more financial means in it?

AHIA

No additional comments

MSR

- **Combine it with LTER/LTSER? -> discuss this in the MB**
- **Advertise the MSR calls at the conference?**

Mobility fund

- STEFAN:
 - Call should be distributed more at our institutes
 - Or are the funds too small?
 - Combine it with research actions? (with AHIA or MSR)
 - Target it more?
- Mart: use it in a more creative way? -> e.g. a task force to measure our outcome
- ERCE: unclear what to use it for exactly
- **Clarify what the mobility fund is about!** (networking within our institutes)
- Maurice: Promote internship of summer school alumni in our institutes?

SPI

- Maurice: a lot of activities do it indirectly (conference, AHIA, ...)
- Maybe not an activity in itself?
- Allan: Bring IPBES aspect into this?

Infrastructure

- Maurice makes the remark that we cannot serve every institute with every activity
- Kinga: we cannot imagine to do science without sites -> very important link between LTER (roots of the network) and ALTER-Net (policy, institutional)
- Allison wonders what we can ask back from LTER? Can we get/use common data? **This should be discussed as a specific topic in the next meeting. Discuss how we can benefit more from the money spent yearly on LTER.**
- Kinga: Use the TA money from LTER? Michael is now representing LTER at GEO BON such that we don't have to be there -> the paying back is starting to happen. Soon ESFRI?

Proposal building

- Kinga: Exchange more information regarding our proposals?
- Maurice: it is extremely difficult -> proposal building is an opportunistic business
- Petteri: It has been frustrating. In H2020 the rules changed, with more emphasis on SME's, NGO's. RIA: very opportunistic. Not spending too much time on consortia building -> seems waste of time
- Kinga: proposals involving cities; real building, etc. -> ERCE is interested in that
- Eeva: We could always communicate via direct e-mails; no formal procedure needed
- Angheluta: take into consideration small partners (as an ALTERNET policy?) -> to cover the heterogeneity in the EU
- Olga: why not present a common interest proposal? Take something that fits our consortium.
- Mart: for instance **Marie Curie**? Fits summer school, etc.
- ALTERRA: Cost of coordinating a proposal: 50 000 EUR: makes it very important to select the "right" partners
- **Take into consideration to provide funding for starting up a proposal in case the topic fits the entire network?** Take this up at the MB?

Communication (internal + external)

- Thanks to Andy -> great job!
- Thanks to Ulf for offering potential new communication help

IPBES

No extra comments

Lobbying and horizon scanning

No extra comments

11. Potential new activities

- No concrete suggestions
- Combine some of the existing activities?
- Organize a brainstorming on potential new activities?

12. Any other business

No

13. Next Council Meeting, Uppsala, date to be decided

- Considering the start of the next ALTER-Net period on April 1st, the next meeting takes preferably place before that
- Second half of March is difficult for Ulf, the organizer (Uppsala); thus it is suggested that that **first half of March** might be the best time
- **A Doodle will be sent around – see <http://doodle.com/poll/tmqv54gdh2r84erz>**