

	<p><b>Minutes</b></p> <p><b>Alternet Management Board meeting</b></p> <p><b>Virtual – 18 January 2021</b></p>
<p><b>Venue</b></p>	<p>Virtual</p>
<p><b>Contact</b></p>	<p><a href="mailto:tscottkulfan@gmail.com">tscottkulfan@gmail.com</a></p>

<p><b>Council Participants</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jiska van Dijk, MB Chair, NINA</li> <li>2. Allan Watt, MB Vice-Chair, UK-CEH</li> <li>3. Maurice Hoffmann, Council Chair, INBO</li> <li>4. Mart Kulvik, IAES</li> <li>5. Joan Pino, CREAM</li> <li>6. Adriana Cliville Morato, CREAM</li> <li>7. Floris Van den Broeck, INBO</li> <li>8. Marie Vandewalle, UFZ</li> <li>9. Juliette Young, INRAE</li> <li>10. Riikka Paloniemi, SYKE</li> <li>11. Tyler Kulfan, Secretariat</li> </ol>
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The first meeting of the Alternet Management Board (MB) in 2021 opened at 13.00 on 18 January 2021. Chair Jiska Van Dijk welcomed all those present.

**1. Approval minutes MB meeting October 2020**

Jiska raised the first issue: formal approval of Secretariat Tyler’s minutes from the previous meeting. No objections were made.

Decision: The minutes of the October 2020 meeting were officially approved.

**2. Round table and introduction of Floris and Riikka**

New MB members Floris Van den Broeck (treasurer, INBO) and Riikka Paloniemi (infrastructure, SYKE) were introduced; and roundtable introductions of all MB members were briefly provided. It was noted that Juliette Young is now associated with INRAE rather than UK-CEH. Riikka expressed particular interest in improving the use of infrastructure in the context of social and transformative change.

**3. iNGO status, present government, approval of continuation Chairs and co-chairs, new MB members (Maurice)**

The iNGO statutes and governance were discussed during the first component of the Alternet Council meeting in December 2020. The statutes establishing the transition from consortium to NGO were presented and approved of. The overall governance structure is roughly the same; for practical reasons, the Association was founded by four persons (Maurice, Jiska, Allan, Philip). It was proposed that the present governance structures and figures (including MB members) should be retained until the next general assembly in 2022; and this proposal was approved. The MB personnel is decided by the Council, but how work of the MB is organized is decided internally. It is still possible for MB members to step down and be replaced as needed.

Jiska additionally noted that the transition to a legal entity required the addition of a treasurer and that bookkeeping of Alternet finances must be shared at the end of the year for approval by relevant firms. As such, changes within the MB concerning incomes and expenditures will be needed.

**4. Redivision of tasks/involvement among others: ‘Alternet/PEER’, ‘horizon scanning’, ‘calls for consultations’, ‘Alternet/Eclipse integration’, ‘Scientific Committee Conference’ (Jiska)**

The Alternet-PEER relationship MoU was presented at the Alternet Council meeting. There was a clear wish from the Council that Alternet would be more active in moving the MoU forward and that its intentions would be actively realized. The representatives of INRAE, WENR, and SYKE wished to serve as Alternet representatives at PEER to build bridges.

Jiska asked if a MB representative should also serve in this small group. Allan stated that he thinks MB representation is important; Marie voiced agreement. Maurice asked about the level of potential involvement of Eeva Furman and posed the question of whether Eeva can be singularly entrusted with this responsibility. Jiska will contact Eeva pending the input of the MB. Jiska asked if it would be more appropriate to have a non-peer institute representative involved on Alternet’s behalf. Juliette recommended having an MB person involved for an interim period and then revisiting the necessity after a year. Marie volunteered to represent Alternet in PEER meetings. This will be explored alongside Eeva Furman. Sonja also potentially volunteered herself as needed.

Jiska now only has 10 person days (as opposed to 20) available for Alternet work due to a decision of NINA. Jiska wishes to step down from the scientific committee of the conference and her role concerning transformation. Juliette will take over this responsibility on the SC. Maurice also noted that there is a lot of external interest in SC involvement, in case the MB feels too overburdened.

Horizon calls are being uploaded to the Call Exchange. Calls for consultation would

need MB involvement for organization. Jiska, Maurice, and Tyler had a meeting with ECMC last week and further Council and MB participation will be needed concerning the EU Strategy, Invasive Species, and Restoration Consultations. Jiska suggested that a new structured and proactive method for consultation engagement is needed. Riika suggested a meeting to strategize and plan on consultation structuring methods; and Maurice emphasized the value of such activity in raising the profile of Alternet. At present, consultation engagement is organized ad hoc by Jiska, Maurice, and Tyler. Allan suggested the appointment of an MB member with the specific responsibility of overseeing this activity of Alternet.

## 5. Budget Allocation

**<<No definite decision at present. This issue will be considered in detail by the MB in preparation for an in-between Council meeting late February or beginning of March 2021. Alternate options and opportunities for funding will be a major point of consideration at the in-between meeting.>> (Jiska, all)**

The budget allocation procedure usually is conducted in-person each October. During the digital meeting in October, the activity plan was produced and budget proposals were made and shared with the Council. In December, the Alternet Council discussion concerning the activity and budget proposals was inconclusive. There was no decision concerning budget allocation, which means planning of activities couldn't formally commence. The Council is performing an activity prioritization exercise and a follow-up Council meeting is planned for 26 February. The MB was tasked with determining that Alternet's activities and budgets are appropriate.

Jiska and Maurice had a meeting with Reinier of WENR during the previous week and resolved some of the confusion surrounding the budget. Under status quo activities, Alternet will be bankrupt in 2022. Using the 130,000€ buffer to make proper investments to secure a sustainable Alternet was proposed by Reinier. The use of buffer allocations was criticized and caused confusion among the Council. Between now and the beginning of February, preparations must be made for the in-between meeting of the Council where a decision concerning budget proposals will be ultimately made.

Maurice noted that Reinier's budget plan covers several years and clarifies the indication of income streams. Projections through 2025 are provided. An increase of income should be sought. Investments made should have an ensured payoff in a certain amount of time. Having a buffer set aside indefinitely for Eklipse, for example, isn't feasible.

New types of income or the skipping of certain activities must be considered. Maurice questioned whether we should prioritize our activities and cut certain ones or invest part of our credit balance in the continuation of all activities while looking into new and increased income streams. Maurice stated that his preference is for the second

option, noting that there are certain activities such as the secretariat which require immediate funding.

Jiska noted some mixed interest in continuing or cutting the MSR activity and Mobility Fund. If there is to be prioritization, Allan suggested that it is the job of the Council and that this creates friction between Council and MB. Jiska recommends drawing a line and not including any more prioritization documents, as we are well past deadline. The yellow columns of the relevant spreadsheet do not represent decisions but rather projections. Marie shared the sentiments of Jiska and Maurice about the confused roles of the Council and MB and expressed positive feelings about the Eklipse prioritizations received. Riika suggested that certain items could be organized every-other-year or occasionally.

**6. Way Forward as proposed by MB (all) – broadly taken.** Details may have to be worked out in smaller group discussions during a set of new meetings.

1. Secretariat & operating posts for running the iNGO
2. Alternate funding options and funding opportunities
3. Communication
4. AHIA/MSR
5. Video research infrastructure
6. Summer School
7. Conference
8. SPI One stop shop webpage, SPI seminars and Call Exchange webpage
9. Eklipse

The intended duration of the meeting was exceeded and Jiska suggested that small group work would be valuable moving forward. Adriana departed; otherwise, the discussion continued.

Juliette questioned whether a different way of working for the MB and Council should be arranged; wherein the MB presents its desired activity/budget plan and the Council simply validates or refuses.

Maurice noted that distinguishing between internal and external activities is important (in the context of funding streams). If we plan to increase the income of membership fees by finding new members or increasing the fee, then we need a strategy for finding new members. Additions to Reinier's exercise are needed prior to the in-between Council meeting. If part of the buffer is to be spent on Eklipse, more details are needed on how it would be spent.

Floris noted that the Alternet Association has a VAT number; all invoices must be registered. This may affect the amount received, as the received 5,000 will

not include the VAT. However, the treatment of VAT between partners of different countries and by national VAT authorities may vary, so actually only the Belgian members are currently guaranteed to receive invoices with Belgian VAT. Either income will decrease or fees must be raised. A best way to minimize financial costs concerning VAT and the Summer School is needed.

Marie suggested establishing working groups around the Summer School, Eclipse, communication and Call Exchange, and MSR and AHIA. The issue of the video needs to be resolved very soon. All of the MB members have seen the video. Tyler has proposed a way forward in terms of finalization: removing the controversial elements that involved discussion of European infrastructures (such as LTER) and instead cutting a shorter version that only includes the partner testimonials demonstrating different infrastructures at partner institutes and clearly expressing that it represents a highlights snapshot of certain partner infrastructure work and not an overview of all Alternet activities or all Alternet partners. Joan stated that the original format was okay, but agreed with Tyler's proposal. Marie stated that there aren't enough institutions represented presently but that it would take too much time and work to get all institutes represented. Scope and scale of project were clarified. Target audience and length were discussed by Riikka, who supported the idea of using this video as the first in a series on Alternet activities.

Smaller working groups will be established and Jiska will be in touch with the MB members. **The meeting closed at 15.00.**