

	<p>Draft Minutes</p> <p>Alternet Management Board Meeting</p> <p>Brussels, Belgium – 3-4 November 2021</p>
<p>Host</p>	<p>INBO, Belgium</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>tscottkulfan@gmail.com</p>

Participants (in-person):

1. Jiska van Dijk, MB Chair, NINA
2. Maurice Hoffmann, Council Chair, INBO
3. Adriana Cliville Morato, CREAM
4. Floris van den Broeck, INBO
5. Philip Roche, INRAE
6. Mart Kulvik, IAES
7. Joan Pino, CREAM
8. Tyler Kulfan, Alternet

Participants (virtual)

9. Allan Watt, Vice-Chair MB, UK-CEH
10. Marie Vandewalle, UFZ
11. Juliette Young, UK-CEH
12. Sonja Jaehnig, IGB
13. Riikka Paloniemi, SYKE

1. Introduction

Chair Jiska van Dijk opened the meeting at 13:15 and thanked those in attendance for their participation. The agenda was previously shared with those in attendance and there were no objections to the agenda as communicated. Additional items were proposed by the Chair and approved by the MB.

2. Minutes

April 2021 Meeting: Unanimous approval for the minutes was expressed. These will be added to the website under a new members section.

3. Budget

The budget was shared by Jiska. The budget was compiled with great assistance from Tessa Van Santen of INBO, and appreciation for her service was expressed.

Projections from the Council's in-between meeting were shared. Income of 45,000 is anticipated; this contrasts with the needed 71,000 of income. The individual expenses and incomes of Alternet were reviewed. Missing membership fees will need to be immediately pursued. Summer School student payments are yet to be incoming. Maurice clarified the amount of overtime done by Tyler and suggested that a revised contract should be presented to the Council (the contract is presently 50%).

4. AHIA

Philip Roche introduced the matters of the AHIA projects. Thibault Datry has presented all planned deliverables and the annual payment to support this project was approved. The 2019 project of Bede West has presented more issues, as this project began around the time of the pandemic. Conditions of the project were updated several times. Bede West has left CEH and no longer could lead the project, so leadership by Nico Dendoncker was proposed. Budget complications are still withstanding, however. Currently, the MB is to decide if the project can transition in leadership from West to Dendoncker and how the project can transition overall. The contract from CEH was never returned to Tessa.

There is no contract, so beginning a new contract was proposed as the most sensible solution. A new, updated budget has been received by Philip. It should be clarified if expenses were made prior to the establishment of a formal contract. Marie stated that significant progress is being made by the AHIA group and that she is not aware of any expenses made to date. 14,500 maximum spending can be reserved for next year. Philip will request an updated deadline and list of deliverables.

There will be a new AHIA call in 2023 and MSR call in 2024, per the Council's decision. Both activities were considered valuable. Expectations on deliverables from MSR and AHIA should be distinguished. Philip stated that AHIA doesn't use new data; while MSR involves acquisition of new field data. The budget for three-year contracts is not available. The one-year AHIA (15k) interspersed with a one-year MSR (15k) was proposed as an alternative. Maurice stated that the collection of new data from the wide geographical areas that Alternet represents is the key characteristic of MSR, and that its budget should be understood as seed money (although, historically it was used as supplementary money for ongoing projects and produced minimal Alternet recognition). AHIA is about review and analysis, delivering a high-impact publication, and producing a layman's overview. MSR, by contrast, is not about meta-analysis.

Riikka suggested that communication improvement in terms of guidance is needed, in order to ensure better acknowledgement of Alternet's supporting role; Mart expressed agreement. Jiska noted that the contracts for both AHIA and MSR clarify the expectations of deliverables and acknowledgment. Juliette suggested focusing on early-career researchers, which would

enhance engagement and make the money go farther. The projects could be platformed from the Summer School, in this case. Marie noted a general need for better recognition of Alternet. Allan expressed agreement, and pointed to Bede West's project and current collaboration among 2021 students as a great example. Allan proposed more involvement of junior staff at the summer school. Jiska agreed, but noted limitations in the time budgets of junior staff.

5. MSR

Joan Pino presented updates from the latest MSR projects, led by BC-CAS and INBO. The BC-CAS project was granted 10k for a third year by the Council; a third year of funding for the INBO project was not granted. A project extension was approved, due to the Covid crisis. A request to transfer funds from the previous year to the upcoming year was made by the BC-CAS team, and it was proposed that they would conclude their funded project by the end of 2021 or give the money back. Joan noted highly interesting and valuable deliverables are being produced by this project, and that Alternet funding is acknowledged in all of these deliverables.

It was agreed that an extension approval would be reasonable. The participants should not only acknowledge Alternet but be fully informed of what Alternet is and why the funding is being given. This needs to be made clear to the coordinator. The idea of "hot topic" call subjects being made was proposed by Maurice. Jiska stated that it is the duty of the coordinator to ensure that publication on their website, etc. is accomplished as a deliverable; ensurance and tracking of communication could be added to the tasks of Tyler. Maurice stated that deliverables are the top consideration of Alternet--not how they are realized--and suggested more leniency in how the money is spent. The issue of personnel costs was discussed.

For future projects, do we allow flexibility in how money is used, assuming the coordinator gives clear outlining and justification of spending (for example, for personnel costs)? It was agreed that this question should be raised to the Council. A draft version of the call text will be presented to the Council assuming approval of this proposal. The 2022 MSR call will be launched immediately following the Council meeting (early Spring).

According to the contracts, only the deadline is being extended; no additional funding in either project will be made. 5k of the Tanja MSR project is still to be paid. A new call text will be made in January for the next MSR project.

Juliette proposed having mentors who are well-connected and informed about Alternet to assist in the coordination of MSR/AHIA projects. Motivation for the mentor would be name recognition in papers and outputs. Marie suggested an updated/revised communications strategy and increased investment in communications. Maurice noted that each institute has designated communications contact persons. A committed scientist for every activity in every institute would be a potential idea. Individualized communication is advisable for maximal engagement and feedback.

Jiska suggested calls for mentors distributed to the Alternet community, noting that joining will yield recognition in a new publication. It could be left open in the case of AHIA. Mentors could better report on and promote the rolling progress and activities of the projects. Stimulating social scientists was again stressed as a priority. One thing that has worked is communication from Maurice and Jiska.

6. Call Exchange

Tyler and Mart reviewed progress on the Call Exchange activity. The primary progress of 2021 was the construction of the new CE platform on the new Alternet website. Mart reviewed the breakdown of institutional engagement and use of this platform. Presently, Tyler is primarily conducting reactive outreach when three or more partners express interest in a call; but proactive sharing of particular calls is likely a way to increase broad engagement.

Sonja noted that old calls should be removed in a timely method. Marie suggested adding to the webpage a recognition of Alternet's consortium building (for example, displaying projects that were funded). She also suggested making a statement on the cbd report saying that if more than six partners of Alternet are involved then Alternet is technically involved as an NGO. Jiska stated that this depends heavily on the nature of the call itself, pointing to the science service as an example.

Proactive outreach for interest in calls is recommended by Maurice. The internal rule of consortium building communication methods should be explicitly displayed on the website; as should the method for determining calls of high interest that merit universal outreach to contact persons. Jiska suggested saying that after the deadline is finished, Tyler should reach out for voluntary disclosure on whether anything came of it; feedback is needed. Juliette suggested a short text explaining three mechanisms--the three or more consortium communication rules; the individual outreach of researchers to Alternet; and the active outreach on specific calls of high interest. It's crucial for institutes to understand what will be required; and following up on calls is likewise crucial. For example, it's important to show all the participants who participated in the science service rather than just those who actively expressed interest in the CE.

Advertising successful proposals on the website is broadly supported. Marie suggested more broad promotion of Alternet's general success stories. She recommended a second page of CE showing involvement and successes. She also advised changing the method to reaching out anytime there are two people of interest. She also suggested automatic email generation and interactive accounts for users. Mart suggested dropping the term "clearing house mechanism." All those present agreed.

All MB members agreed that the method should change to outreach whenever there are two persons of interest. The method for determining a call of high interest for Alternet will be to decide case-by-case. This could be coordinated by the assigned contact persons to generate identification of calls of high interest.

Marie suggested linkage with the Horizon Europe call exchange; but Maurice noted that this would in some sense eliminate the need for an Alternet-specific call exchange. Riikka suggested emphasizing science service type calls that would benefit from broad Alternet participation. All MB members agreed to keep an eye on potential calls of high interest and to inform Tyler about them.

7. Communications

Adriana presented the progress and ongoing communications activities of Alternet. In the past year, the quarterly newsletters have been relaunched. Adriana wishes to establish better, direct contact with communications specialists/contact persons at each institute and wishes to enhance the newsletter with more dynamic features, layout, and testimonials. She has also helped oversee a press release for the AHIA project led by INRAE. Other important activities have included the publication of the new website, the finalization of the new Call Exchange platform, and the production of rolling web content and social media content. Tyler conducted video interviews and produced footage for promotional video content from the summer school. These will be used to make a longer promotional video for the website and shorter clips for social media. Adriana will use the international journalist database and promote ad hoc from Alternet. A procedure for future press releases should be established. Newsletters will be given a new page on the website.

The infrastructure video will be published and shared on the website. For future activities, an estimate has been received on costs for a new design of the newsletter. Adriana will also be overseeing a social media strategy review. The SPI One-Stop-Shop will be the next major web development project. Entry points for external partners should also be utilized for communications, newsletters, and outreach. These contacts should be forwarded to Adriana and Tyler. This way, news from Alternet will be distributed to a broader, high-impact audience. Ariana also suggested trying to share Alternet communications in the newsletters, etc. of Ipbes. Communications materials will need to be updated for the upcoming conference in Ghent.

Maurice asked about the connection between Alternet communications and the Network of Networks of Eclipse. Marie suggested highlighting the ENoN via Alternet and sharing the activities of Alternet with the ENoN. Interesting news items relevant to the SPI should be shared with the ENoN email so that it can be distributed accordingly. Maurice advised caution concerning the press release and advised that a person who can respond to press (i.e. Sonja) be assigned. Adriana will be in touch with the communications department of INRAE. This press release will be approached as a learning method. Maurice suggested explicitly including in AHIA/MSR calls that Alternet can produce press releases on projects. Procedures need to be clearly established on what Alternet can do in terms of press releases and promotion related to AHIA, MSR, and conferences. Sonja will compile some bullet points for procedures.

8. Conference

Philip presented on the upcoming 2022 conference. A meeting was held the previous week. The week of 13-17th June was reserved at the Augustinian Kloster in Ghent. The topic "Biodiversity and Health: Time for Transformative Change?" was maintained, but the exact title is not final.

The subtopics were shared, as were the people in charge.

There will be side-events, such as summer school alumni, Alternet community meetings, AHIA/MSR, etc. A call for sessions is to be shortly made. A draft for the presentation text and concept note has been produced. By the end of the week, a final text should be ready to be shared. The question of counting on Tessa's support for the conference was raised. Maurice will check with Tessa herself, but assumes that she and the INBO team will be able to offer support. A clear view of the type of support that will be needed should be determined. Philip expects it will be a similar workload as previous conferences. The scientific committee has been established (Juliette will be added); an organizing committee needs to be established next. Registration fees, etc. need to be determined, with an aim on organizing a self-sustaining conference. Consideration also needs to be given to the new statutes of Alternet as an iNGO. Communications will soon commence. Maurice stated that the decision to not involve the European Commission has been made, based off of past experience. They will be invited but not directly involved. Alternet now needs to fill the 200 participants but cannot exceed it; full participation is crucial for self-sustaining status.

Philip shared the google doc for open suggestions and comment contribution (within the confines of the topic) with the MB. All MB members are encouraged to try to bring in as many participants from their networks as possible.

9. Better Profiling of Alternet

Jiska welcomed suggestions for improving and increasing the profile of Alternet. Individual brainstorming was requested. These will be further discussed tomorrow.

Maurice advised everyone to closely read the email of Claire Brown and consider it for further discussion during the second day of the meeting. The meeting will continue tomorrow at 08.30.

The first day of the MB meeting concluded at 17.00.

MB Meeting Day 2: Thursday, 4 November

Day 2 commenced at 8:30. The chair opened the meeting and welcomed all.

It was decided that the Council meeting should be held in January or February of 2022. Aveiro was suggested as a location and Maurice will reach out to Ana Lillebo about this possibility.

10. Summer School

Allan Watt presented on the Summer School activity. This was the first summer school since 2019 and, in spite of serious challenges, it was held with great success. Many prior speakers returned, three new speakers were brought in, and hybrid talks were given for the first time. Allan reviewed the activities and experiences of this year's summer school programme. It was noted again that the Peyresq Foundation is seeking to become a member of Alternet. Appreciation was expressed for the conveners, Peyresq Foundation personnel, and administrators.

For 2022, the same format for the summer school is proposed; but hybrid is preferable to avoid for the sake of in-person discussions. Emilie Cruzat is to be added as a convener. 28 students is proposed as the cap at 900 euros/student with a budget of 40,000 from Alternet. The Council has already approved the 2022 Summer School; for 2023, we should propose support and organization of another summer school to the Council. Allan stressed the importance of Alternet branding for the Summer School. The promotional video should focus on networking and branding. Joan noted the need for stronger promotion of the summer school within Alternet institutes and suggested coordination with the communications teams. Juliette stressed that the student fee should be framed not as tuition but as a student contribution. She also stated that the smaller number of students was beneficial and that 27-28 students would be a good target.

On the issue of promotion, Maurice noted that there is typically no shortage of applicants. He also questioned if more annual summer schools are needed. Marie noted that there have always been a sufficient number of excellent applications. Promotion should stress promotion of Alternet. Mart questioned how specifically the Summer School can help secure the Alternet brand and identity. Allan stated that having students return and become involved as conveners/tutors helps establish the brand. Alumni activities are also key, and Allan suggested resource allocation for contact and feedback from former students. Marie suggested a survey of appreciation for the summer school from alumni. Sonja suggested an alumni group on LinkedIn or ResearchGate. Maurice noted that it would be good for the income of the Summer School to increase from the students; this should be considered. Allan noted that more students generally means more costs for Alternet--the overall budget is more important than the student fee income streams.

11. Science-Policy Interface

Juliette introduced the topic of SPI activities, focusing on the SPI seminar. There was interest in running a seminar from SYKE and several other institutes. After outreach from Juliette, it fell to the wayside as the science service became prioritized---but now there is active planning again by Eeva Primmer and a framework for a webinar seminar is being established with early December (10th or 15th) as the target timeframe to host it. It would be an excellent opportunity for Alternet promotion. A small programme has been devised by the SYKE team. Representing a wide range of sectors is proposed. The webinar should last two hours. Active planning and

engagement is needed right away. Advertising needs to be considered. Responses to the preferred date email inquiry are requested. Riikka suggested postponing until the end of January or early February; Marie supported this idea, noting that there will be new actors in the SPI landscape and high interest at this time. Maurice suggested a possible joint council meeting held alongside the webinar, depending on timing.

The one-stop-shop was raised as an issue; this will be commenced in upcoming months by Tyler.

12. Eklipse

Marie presented an overview of SPI-Eklipse activities in the last year, as well as ongoing requests and activities in the upcoming months. Eklipse will shortly be launching promotion of year-round request submission (a permanent open call for requests) at the end of the year. Thirteen requests have been processed to date. She drew attention to the publication of the NbS framework. She additionally talked about the role of Eklipse in the evolving SPI landscape; this includes an agreement supporting Biodiversa+ for knowledge-synthesis needs (1-2 annual requests), use of Eklipse mechanisms for the science service, and close collaboration with KCBD via a workshop. From established collaborations, Eklipse should be guaranteed 3-4 requests per year. It was requested that Marie shares her presentation with the MB following the meeting.

Maurice noted that Jiska, Marie, and himself meet regularly. He asked if there is any need to address the 35k Alternet buffer budget established for Eklipse. Marie doesn't foresee the need for 35k in the future, but a buffer budget is beneficial (for example, in the case of request payment delays, etc.). Marie requests that this buffer is maintained as a safety net for now. No immediate need for lifting the budget is felt. The Council will have interest in the business plan of Eklipse following the end of the project extension (end of 2022). The 10% overhead covering Floris, Tessa, and Tyler was raised. UFZ issues concerning overhead for the EMB were likewise raised. Currently, Alternet handles contracts and moves the money to UFZ. Biodiversa+ and Science Service (if approved) would ensure regular income. It is not possible to include 10% overhead in the Science Service. Juliette stated that the Eklipse project business plan is coming into its own, and that this is a very positive thing.

For the Council, we need to decide if the 15k buffer for 2022 that was agreed upon should be maintained. If not used, it can be rolled over to the next year. It is not a budget allocated to be spent, but to provide a safety net.

Marie raised the proposed request from the PEER network, who contacted Eklipse about a request in June. There were indications of issues and misunderstanding between PEER and Alternet (i.e. why would PEER pay Alternet for a request? etc.). Maurice noted that PEER's request is of high interest; but failed to see why PEER didn't directly approach Alternet with this issue. It was stressed that we don't want to pay for Eklipse service via Alternet in-kind work (hence the overheads). The request could potentially strengthen the link between Alternet,

PEER, and Eklipse. Juliette perceives a lack of understanding of the nature of the Eklipse mechanism by PEER. An informal meeting between Alternet and PEER on the subject of Eklipse could be organized. Allan clarified the distinction between Alternet's focus on SPI versus the PEER focus on research. Maurice plans to contact Eeva Furman to clarify on this issue and to question what could be gained by cooperation between PEER and Alternet.

13. Science Service

There was initiation from January onwards of consortium building for the science service mechanism. SYKE stepped forward as the lead partner, and other partners indicated interest to SYKE. On the 6th of October, a proposal was submitted on the EC portal. There was a core team of SYKE and UFZ and partners in France in charge of administration. The core team decided on a number of Alternet members to be included in the consortium. The proposal represents the only proposal made on this call. If approved, a DoW will commence quickly. Other possibilities are an expression of willingness to work with Alternet on an altered proposal, and rejection.

The core team decided that Alternet should be a third partner, which only allows us to apply for 200,000 euros. The work done by Eklipse could come directly from the UFZ funding, however. A lot of budget had to be included by Jiska under NINA. Marie, who has been centrally involved, stressed that the Science Service is a major opportunity for Alternet and Eklipse. A decision is pending, but the decision will have a huge impact on MB activities. There are other exciting opportunities opening up, such as Biodiversa+.

Thirteen partners of Alternet are recognized within the proposal. One partner institute wanted to participate as an Alternet member (Hutton) and the others wished to participate as individual institutes. This raises the question of how we should approach proposal building and consortium building in the future. Sonja stated that for IGB-Berlin, it depends on the level of involvement (for example, with the science service it was clear that involvement required participation as an individual institute).

This activity can be understood as an action of the Call Exchange.

Maurice raised the opportunity shared by Claire Brown of WCMC: "A key component of the call is to build capacity of researchers to engage with the CBD process and it has been suggested that Alternet might be interested in joining a consortium and would be beneficial given its extensive network of researchers." Sonja noted that Claire is also involved in the science service. As such, discussion of the network of researchers involved (that she is expecting) is needed. Marie raised the question of in-kind contributions within such a project.

Allan expressed that it's a good opportunity for funding the Alternet secretariat and projects, and noted that Claire Brown has strong familiarity with Alternet. He stressed that WCMC

approaching Alternet is a very positive sign. Per principle agreement, Alternet will respond to her inquiry and ask about the exact nature and expectations of this possibility.

The matter of the CGBN work package was introduced by Jiska, which has involvement from a number of Alternet partners (as well as Claire Brown). The possibility of Alternet applying as an official stakeholder for the European Biodiversity Platform was raised; this would require an application before the end of the year. Allan recommended pursuing this opportunity. EPBRS alternatives were discussed; but Allan argued that Alternet has a better case for this role than EPBRS. Marie considered who would make sense in case that the science service is in place, and raised Eklipse as a possible stakeholder. Maurice stated that if Alternet applies, Eklipse would be represented by Alternet. Jiska recommended keeping an eye on this opportunity. Everyone who is presently a stakeholder would need to reapply. Marie and Juliette expressed support.

There is full support towards application for stakeholder status to the EU Biodiversity Platform as Alternet.

14. MB Capacity & 2 Chairs

The statutes state that there will be an election round for Council and MB Chairs at the next Council meeting. Jiska proposes asking for nominations presently. This will also help us navigate the science service matters, assuming there is a positive response. Jiska proposed that Maurice, Tyler, and Ana raise a request for candidates. We could indicate a call for MB candidates as needed. Jiska questioned the continued capacity and willingness of the MB members and whether there is need for new members.

Sonja stated that she is assuming a new responsibility at IGB and will no longer have the capacity to fully participate in her role at Alternet as she would like. She will discuss this and consider options for candidates; she foresees remaining on the Council.

Allan stated that his preferred option for Summer School capacity is to have Tyler support in an administrative role and add a new convener (Emilie).

Philip is presently acting in two roles, due to his leadership of the Conference. Because AHIA will not be launching new activity in 2022, there is no issue with capacity. Riikka could potentially help with the conference; their assistant could also potentially contribute with practical matters.

Joan foresees issues with performing MSR rewrites, as his hands are full in his new role. He could potentially find someone at CREAM to assist with this.

Adriana and Tyler are successfully moving forward with communications; Adriana has requested support for newsletters redesign, using the allocated budget. Joan questioned the need for technical support. Allan stated that everyone should give input to Tyler and Adriana.

Mart stated that he is open to further tasks, as the Call Exchange does not require heavy involvement at this point.

Juliette and Marie are operating well in their roles. Marie will seek to increase involvement in the Call Exchange or could find an alternative person to engage with it.

Jiska stated that the absence of Petteri is felt. Jiska asked how we can better organize in this area. Allan suggested an explicit movement away from data infrastructure to monitoring. He suggests having someone with monitoring expertise (like Gregor Kalinkat) added to the MB.

Maurice will retire from INBO in 2023 and his continued participation thereafter is undetermined.

Jiska noted that she depends upon the continued willingness of NINA to continue in her capacity; this discussion is ongoing at NINA and has not been settled. Jiska recommends raising nominations quickly, as this will help clarify her discussions at NINA. Maurice stated that he and Jiska will not insert themselves into the nomination process so as to allow open nominations to be collected. An open application for chairs and vice chairs should be put in place. It was noted that just enabling the assumption that Jiska and Maurice will continue in their roles indefinitely is not beneficial.

Allan questioned whether the Council or MB select the Chair; Maurice noted from the statutes that the chairperson is determined by the Council, the Vice Chair can be decided by the MB (but will nevertheless follow a nomination procedure in the Council). Jiska will remain on the MB in some capacity in any circumstance.

15. Council Meeting Preparations

Jiska will await the minutes from Tyler to determine financing, and then the templates for proposals to the Council from past years may be used. Proposals will need to be ready in two weeks advance of the meeting and the agenda will be compiled accordingly. A date and location of the meeting will be determined. Ana Lillebo is willing to host the meeting in Aveiro and it will likely be a noon-whole day meeting during the beginning of February, with 1-3 or 2-4 February suggested. Those MB members who wish to participate may, but it is not mandatory. Mart stated that general expectations of contributions from MB members is helpful in preparation for the Council meeting.

16. Conclusion

No additional issues were raised. The Chair thanked all MB members for their contributions and active engagement. **The meeting concluded at 12.00.**