

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Minutes</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">ALTER-Net Council meeting</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Prague – 17-18 December 2018</p>
Venue	Universitat Carolina (Ovocný trh 560/5. 116 36 Praha)
Contact	tessa.vansanten@inbo.be tscottkulfan@gmail.com
Attendance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maurice Hoffmann (INBO; council chair) NC, MB [MH] 2. Mihai Adamescu (Unibuc), NC [MA] 3. Gyorgyi Bela (ESSRG), NC [GB] 4. Ben Delbaere (Delbaere Consulting), NC [BD] 5. Nicolas Dendoncker (ILEE), NC [ND] 6. Jan Frouz (BC CAS), NC [JF] 7. Eeva Furman (SYKE), NC [EF] 8. Ulf Grandin (SLU), NC [UG] 9. Alison Hester (JHI), NC [AH] 10. Sonja Jähnig, NC, MB [SJ] 11. Robert Kanka (ILE SAS), NC [RK] 12. Kinga Krauze (ICE-PAS), NC [KK] 13. Tyler Kulfan (ALTER-Net), Secretariat [TK] 14. Mart Külvik (EMU), NC, MB [MK] 15. Ana Lillebo (CESAM), NC [AL] 16. Raoul Mille, Irstea [RM] 17. Lisa Norton (CEH) [LN] 18. Johannes Peterseil, EAA [JP] 19. Trine Setsaas (NINA), NC [TS] 20. Marie Vandewalle (UFZ), NC, MB [MV] 21. Jiska van Dijk (NINA; MB chair), MB [JVD] <p style="margin-top: 10px;">NC: network council representative; MB: management board member</p>
Absent with notification	<p>Bridget Emmet (CEH), NC Jesper Fredshavn, NC Diana Hummel (ISOE), NC Miki Kertesz (MTA OK) Stefan Klotz (UFZ) Joan Pino (CREAF), NC, MB Michael Mirtl (EAA), NC Keimpe Wieringa (PBL), NC</p>
Absent without notification	Lawrence Jones-Walters (Alterra) NC
Minutes	Tyler Kulfan (Alter-Net Secretariat); tscottkulfan@gmail.com

Day 1 (Monday, 17 December)

1. Welcome and Start Meeting

The Council meeting commenced at 13.00. Chair (MH) opened meeting and introduced Jan Frouz, who welcomed all those in attendance to Prague.

2. Roundtable Introductions and Introduction of New Members: UNamur, Delbaere Consulting

Each Council member and representative offered a brief self-introduction and introduction of their respective institute. Short presentations were made by the representatives of two new ALTER-Net partner institutes: UNamur (presented by ND) and Delbaere Consulting (presented by BD). Because AL was not yet present, the introductory presentation of new partner institute CESAM was moved to Tuesday.

3. Minutes of Council Meeting in Budapest, November 2017

The draft minutes of the November 2017 ALTER-Net Council meeting in Budapest were presented for final review. No opposition to minutes as shared with council was voiced.

Decision: Unanimous approval of minutes from Budapest meeting. Secretariat will officially publish minutes on ALTER-Net website.

4. Introduction by Council Chair

Chair provided a brief introduction to Council matters to be addressed at this meeting, noting the robust activities of the Management Board (MB). One alteration to planned agenda was announced: TS will lead discussion of ALTER-Net supplementary activities as part of Tuesday's agenda.

5. Management Board Work 2018 [MB doc 1; MB doc 2]

Management Board Chair (JVD) presented a review of MB activities and matters. Each of the nine activities of MB were reviewed; the nine respective MB members were named, along with supportive figures Janine Van Vesseem, Tessa Van Santen, Secretariat TK, and the Scientific Committee (which is spearheading the 2019 ALTER-Net Conference).

JVD introduced two two key issues for discussion: the problem of non-paying ALTER-Net members and the legal structure of ALTER-Net.

6. Non-Paying Members

As of Council meeting, Tessa Van Santen has conferred with all members that have not paid their in-kind contributions. SEC-IFF of Vienna has withdrawn membership in line with memorandum of understanding and two additional partners (WENR and ERCE) have standing payment issues. WENR (formerly Alterra) has ceased payment of fees in the past two years. A 2/3 majority vote can decide that WENR should be dismissed as an ALTER-Net member.

MH raised option of dismissal of WENR to the Council. EF considered benefits of downgrading WENR to associate membership on account of meaningful contributions they have made in the past and in the interest of positive rhetoric. Memorandum of understanding would need to be changed in order to recognize current non-paying members as associate members. KK explained that financial constraints have prevented ERCE institute from making payments for the past two years; she plans to discuss payment for 2018 and notice concerning payment will be made ASAP.

RM requests that final decision on non-paying members is delayed until second day of Council Meeting so that he can make contact with Alterra. **Final decision will be made during “Any Other Business” agenda point on Tuesday.**

7. ALTER-Net Legal Structure

Consideration was given to the establishment of a new official legal structure for ALTER-Net. At present, ALTER-Net contains no legal structure.

MH noted that lack of legal structure has greatly constrained ALTER-Net, pointing to the inability to hire TK as a proper employee of ALTER-Net, lack of financial independence, calls for proposals, and website maintenance with CEH. Legal structure must likewise be considered in light of EKLIPSE absorption proposal. MH proposed non-profit or not-for-profit (both of which would enable needed fundraising) as the best legal structure options for ALTER-Net; abstracts concerning these structures were distributed. MH states that paid legal advice is needed if Council supports movement for legal structure and opened issue up for discussion.

AH and KK noted that conference with top-level individuals at member institutes must be made, making it difficult to reach a decision by tomorrow as requested. TS stated that support will be contingent upon freedom of ALTER-Net partners to participate in non-ALTER-Net calls under new structure. UG maintained that a new MOU is needed if a new legal structure is to be established. It was broadly noted that clear written structure is needed that can be presented and decided upon. General positive attitude among Council to idea was detected by Chair.

Decision: The Council supports exploration of a legal structure for ALTER-Net.

8. State of Affairs: Budget

Chair presented ALTER-Net budget and proposed allocations. The credit balance as of Upsala, Budapest, and present meeting were shown, and it was stated that if all proposals are accepted, €145,250.00 will be needed. Assuming that all members pay, only €48,250.00 will be available. It was noted that past budgets have never been reached (ALTER-Net activities have consistently been significantly under budget). An overview of invoices is shared to show what has been spent. Several errors in budget allocated are noted; these will be corrected prior to a vote on budget allocation tomorrow, at which time Council will determine final support of proposed.

It was suggested by RM that council members should send correct address to which invoices should be sent to Tessa Van Santen; this might be the cause of the neglected payments.

9. State of Affairs: Network Activities

9.1. Mobility Fund

JVD presented the first of the MB activities in question: the Mobility Fund. The previously allocated budget for this activity was €10,000; only one applicant used this fund (for a total of €750). Average usage in the past has varied between 4-6 applicants and €2,000-€4,000 spent. A budget of €10,000 was likewise proposed for this year, and it was noted that the Mobility Fund is considered a valuable asset by the Management Board. JVD encouraged ALTER-Net members to promote the fund more vocally within their institutes.

Support for the Mobility Fund was widely voiced. Several Council members presented suggestions to enhance use, promotion, and value. MV suggested that Mobility Fund promotion should specifically target young researchers, which would simultaneously help to raise profile of ALTER-Net among the next generation of scientists. TS and EF expressed support for opening up Mobility Fund to different types of activities (including external activities, such as IPBES plenary attendance and conferences). AH agreed that support for such activities was important, but suggested that funding for external activities could be connected to the SPI activity (or a separate activity) and that the original structure and purpose of the Mobility Fund should be retained. It was lastly suggested that further elaboration of relevant and present expertise of alter-net partner institutes should be conducted.

Decision: The Council unanimously agreed to retain and support the Mobility Fund with full allocation of requested funds. The original structure and usage of the Mobility Fund will be maintained.

9.2. Communication – Proposal to Council [Comm doc 1; Comm doc 2]

TK reviewed the ongoing communications work at ALTER-Net and presented the MB communication proposal. €4,000 was allocated for communications in the past year, most of which went unused. The Council is requested to carry that amount forward and to allocate an additional €7,500 for printed communications materials, website redesign/future-proofing, and Call Exchange training (TK) at a Tender Support Unit.

Council members noted that communications work has strongly supported such projects as the summer school, call exchange, and research collaboration facilitation. General agreement that expanded budget is necessary as a reflection of the expanded work and successes of communications was voiced. TK presented idea of regular newsletter with focal feature write-ups on individual institutes in alignment with efforts to better elaborate institute expertise and suggested establishing a list of contact persons to identify expertise.

BD proposed shifting communications targeting away from general public and advocated for a focus on interdisciplinary research. TS voiced agreement and further proposed that focus should be aimed at partners, potential partners, science and policy targets, and larger institutes. Should aim likewise at large institutes. MH notes that EKLIPSE activity is aimed at general public and that nature conservation and nature management figures are presently included as a target audience. Several practical suggestions were made, including the addition of institute links to static map

on ALTER-Net website (AH) and using budget to find social sciences trainee interested in networks.

Decision: Communication proposal will be supported as requested; website migration, commercial printing, and exchange visit (TK) are all supported. Supplementary comments on communication strategy should be submitted by 15 January 2019.

9.3. Clearing House Mechanism – Proposal to Council [[CHM doc 1](#); [CHM doc 2](#)]

JVD, MK, and TK presented the Clearing House Mechanism proposal and a brief progress review concerning the ALTER-Net Call Exchange. Up to €6,000 were requested to enhance the user-friendliness of the Call Exchange and a general request was made to the Council for more input and involvement.

A review of interface usage was presented by MK. At present, 127 calls have been listed since initial implementation. MK proposed advanced feature of webpage to further support this mechanism. SJ expressed that UFZ has reservations about effectiveness of Call Exchange platform for linking calls; RM, MA, and TS conversely maintained that an information exchange (of this type or another format) is essential within any network. AH stated that secretariat role is more important than a sleek interface, while JF expressed that a sophisticated system capable of proactive screening would be beneficial. EF suggested a rolling evaluation of exchange and network function as well as activities would be useful.

Decision: The call exchange initiative is supported and should be further developed. However, budget will be derived from 10k allocated for communications budget rather than its own 6k. Additional positive suggestions on how to improve this mechanism are welcome and will be considered.

9.4. Cost Action Proposal

MK proposed to renew the previously approved COST action workshop. €4,000 was allocated for this purpose; this action was ultimately never conducted and funds were never used. The MB and MK proposed retaining these funds to support a COST action workshop in 2019. MH noted that sessions of conference in June should be alter-net specific. As such, MK could organize this workshop as one such designated session.

Decision: The COST action workshop will be supported by ALTER-Net. A budget is not needed for this action; the action will be included in the alter-net conference, thus eliminating the need for an independent budget.

9.5. Position Paper: Research Issues

At most recent June conference, there was a strong feeling that ALTER-Net should address research issues concerning the biodiversity strategy. RM suggested the production of an associated position paper (one page discussing top issues as perceived by ALTER-Net) by 15 January. MV suggested a compilation of ALTER-Net outputs would also be valuable, as well as output on research needs.

Chair questioned Council concerning interest in forming a short-form task force on research needs relevant to ALTER-Net Conference. MH will take initiative on this proposed document; and SJ, MV, EF, and BD will give feedback on first draft. The first meeting will be held in January.

Decision: A document will be produced in association with the upcoming ALTER-Net Conference, representing an update of ALTER-Net ideas on research needs concerning its biodiversity and ecosystem research network, aimed at a European level.

9.6. **Summer school 2018 – Proposal to Council [SS doc 1]**

MV reviewed the activities and successes of the 2018 ALTER-Net Summer School. The Council was reminded that support for the 2019 Summer School was already approved. General agreement was expressed that the Summer School is among the most successful activities of ALTER-Net and is deserving of full support.

Decision: The Summer School proposal for 2020 is fully supported by the Council. Funds will be allocated accordingly.

9.7. **Data Infrastructure [DI doc 1; DI doc 2]**

The proposal regarding data infrastructure prepared by Petteri Vihervaara was presented by JVD. Three networks relevant to ALTER-Net (Copernicus programme, GEO BON, and LTER network) were highlighted. Information concerning these three key infrastructures and the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) will be included on the ALTER-Net website for the benefit of researchers. Apart from this work no other Data Infrastructure activities are planned; the Council was invited by the MB to discuss any need for additional activities.

A memorandum of cooperation with LTER Europe was proposed by JP, noting the value of aligning and partnering with functional, long-term European research infrastructure. AH maintained that the benefits of an MOU would be limited benefit and suggested an infrastructure feature of conference which expresses ALTER-Net support and elevates these initiatives.

Decision: It is decided that a conference feature concerning research infrastructure will be pursued.

Chair proposed a revised contract of €10,000, with €5,000 spent on promotion of research infrastructure; positive suggestions for specific initiatives and ideas (re: promotion) are invited. EF suggests an accessible video explaining research infrastructure in an entertaining format.

Decision: €10,000 will be allocated for funding of LTER and €5,000 will be allocated for promotional purposes. Secretariat will contact SJ, JP, MA, and Petteri Vihervaara on developing research infrastructure promotion.

9.8. **AHIA – Proposal to Council [AHIA doc 1; AHIA doc 2; AHIA doc 3]**

The AHIA proposal prepared by Phillip Roche was presented to the Council by JVD. An allocation of €20,000 was requested for the launching of a new AHIA call in

January 2019.

BD noted that only scientific papers have been listed among AHIA outputs in the past. It was ensured that all outputs will be shared on the ALTER-Net website. It was further suggested that presentation of deliverables be made to relevant policy makers. The need for clarity concerning the target audience of high-impact activities was further stressed by KK and MA.

The need for an external evaluation of the effectiveness of ALTER-Net activities (such as AHIA) was expressed; and it was noted that past internal evaluations have proven ineffective and insufficient. Chair proposed consideration of external review of ALTER-Net activities, i.e. AHIA, but noted that this will not be immediately taken up by MB, which already has a heavy workload.

Decision: ALTER-Net will continue funding AHIA as requested for new January 2019 call. Additional idea on deliverable presentation to relevant policy makers (as proposed by BD) will be included.

9.9. **MSR – 2018-2019 Call (Proposals Received) and Proposal to Council [MSR doc 1; MSR doc 2]**

Previously approved MSR projects were listed by JVD. Support for ongoing MSR projects will be maintained. The question is raised as to whether or not ALTER-Net should continue with distribution of new calls or if MSR activity should be limited to the continued support of previously approved projects.

It was noted that MSR funding has been primarily used for large, ongoing research projects and that very few proposals have been received in the past. For these reasons, the MB questioned whether these funds would be better used elsewhere and proposed to change the target of the activity toward post-doc researchers and to reformulate the MSR call to specifically ask for small projects coordinated by this target group. JVD additionally two additional options: combination of MSR with AHIA in a single call; or discontinuation of MSR call and redistribution of funds to other activities. MH advised continued funding for already-started MSR projects, but no distribution of new call in 2019.

Decision: ALTER-Net will continue funding current MSR projects. No funds will be allocated for the distribution of new calls. The Council will reconsider whether or not to launch a new call in 2020.

Day 1 closed at 18.00.

DAY 2 (Tuesday, 18 December)

10. Opening of Day 2

Day two opens at 8:30. Chair welcomes Ann Milbau (AM), who has arrived for second

day of Council meeting.

11. State of Affairs: Network Activities – part 2

11.1. **SDG Activity** [[SDG doc 1](#)]

JVD presented to the Council on progress and activity related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) initiative. €15,000 was allocated during the 2017 Council meeting for SDG activities. JVD had previously agreed to oversee a NINA report, which is likely to be completed in January. EF is likewise working on SDG oversight; she announced that a UN website with links to all published SDG reports will be released in September 2019 with the ALTER-Net report included. It was noted that apart from the work on the background report and the scientific paper, no other SDG activity is planned. The MB questioned the council if there may be a need for additional activities.

MH noted that a minimal amount of budget was used from sdg allocation last year (mostly for travel). It was recommended that allocation remains open for present activities unless there are novel initiative ideas related to this subject.

Decision: It is agreed that the SDG initiative will be promoted by ALTER-Net scientists. No new funds will be allocated for this purpose and current remaining funds of allocated €15,000 will remain open for SDG initiative purposes.

11.2. **SPI – Proposal to Council: Seminars** [[SPI doc 1](#); [SPI doc 2](#)]

Marie presented concerning ALTER-Net and the science-policy interface. A proposal was made to participate in some form with a planned series of SPI capacity-building events hosted by UFZ. Four options for ALTER-Net participation in this initiative were presented:

1. Individual SPI seminars hosted in rotation by each ALTER-Net institute
2. Sharing of recorded version of UFZ seminar on the alternet website. UFZ has budget of 2 hours of recording; ALTER-Net would have to pay for additional 1.5 hours per seminar.
3. Livestreaming of UFZ seminar
4. Formation of a small ALTER-Net SPI team to set up series of seminars which would be spearheaded by different institutes (with all ALTER-Net members invited). Mobility fund could be used for these events.

It was noted that a combination of these options is also possible and that quick movement concerning this initiative is needed, as the first UFZ seminar is February 13, 2019. TS expressed concern regarding conflict between February deadline and Horizon 2020 deadline. EF voiced support for initiative and advocated for multiple seminars held at different institutes and livestreamed for non-present partners. BD voiced support for a combined approach, while AH maintained that option 4 is most desirable in principle. It was questioned if webinar modules could be set up; this will be investigated by MV. SJ stated that IGB has an active SPI team and will inquire concerning participation. It was finally suggested that Secretariat could add a full SPI page on the ALTER-Net website where events, etc. could be shared.

Decision: The Council supports moving forward with the proposed SPI agenda. At present, livestreaming with interactive options is considered to be the best mode of presentation. The first UFZ seminar in February will be livestreamed, supported by the ALTER-Net budget. The organization of the seminars will be institutional costs, while the budget for sharing and distribution with partners will be an ALTER-Net cost. These seminars will be interactive and promoted throughout all partner institutes.

11.3. **Horizon Scanning Activity - Peyresq**

MV and MH shared impressions from the Horizon Scanning Activity in Peyresq, held in September 2018. The Horizon scanning approach ultimately was organized with EKLIPSE to consider post-2020 biodiversity strategy conference. The Horizon Scanning activity had budget of €10,000, very little of which was actually spent. Peyresq meeting costs amounted to about €2,000 (travel costs and lodging).

A series of related events and activities are ongoing and planned, including a joint paper calling for building a strong transdisciplinary movement for participation in post-2020 BD strategy development (task force led by PBL). The draft of this paper is intended to be completed by end of the year. Since Peyresq, the Scientific Committee has begun shaping the conference format and content. Conference will be in close cooperation with EKLIPSE. MV noted that 2019 will be a key year for expressing ideas for this strategy. Activities on social engagement and the ALTER-Net Conference itself are planned. The conference will involve sharing of the task force results.

11.4. **ALTER-Net Conference 2019**

MH discussed the status of and preparations for the 2019 ALTER-Net Conference in Ghent. Two requests were made to EKLIPSE by ALTER-Net: a collection of key messages on thematic input from scientific committees and a collection of key questions from the policymakers and society (NGOs). These requests were made leading up to the ALTER-Net Conference, the planned collection of papers for a Special Issue of Sustainable Science, led by Philip Roche of Irstea, and one or more policy briefs dedicated to ensuring uptake of outcomes from conference.

The Scientific Committee is currently engaged in the oversight to ensure the achievement of six criteria concerning the upcoming conference:

1. Significant contribution of science to strategy
2. Significant signals for interdisciplinary research
3. Appealing for ALTER-Net sci community to participate
4. Appealing for policymakers
5. Takes into consideration comment of DG Environment (will independently run a session)
6. Possibility to publish scientific material in journal

The Council engaged in vibrant discussion regarding the format and content of the upcoming conference. Special concern was expressed to ensure unique status of conference (as opposed to simply replicating IPBES, etc.) and a strong emphasis on research-driven input was raised as a possible solution. Chair suggested concerns be written down so that these issues can be adequately addressed; Scientific

Committee will take all suggestions into consideration. JVD additionally notes that for full, active participation, it is essential that all Council members clearly invite their institute researchers to be involved.

11.5. **ALTER-Net & EKLIPSE – Proposal to Council [SPI doc 3]**

JVD reviewed ALTER-Net's SPI (science-policy interface) objectives and added value of SPI to partner institutes. The final work plan proposal for 2019 was then presented to the Council.

It was proposed for ALTER-Net to host the management of a self-sustainable European support mechanism for evidence-informed policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which is currently being developed by the EKLIPSE project. EKLIPSE is funded until the end of 2019, at which time ALTER-Net would have the opportunity to step in in a managerial role. Budget needed can vary from no additional budget to full funding of secretariat. It was stressed by JVD that EKLIPSE fits within and advances the central mission of ALTER-Net and that a well-functioning SPI mechanism is thus of essential value.

Proposal

MV addressed the Council concerning the approach of EKLIPSE and presented a proposal for an official partnership between ALTER-Net and EKLIPSE.

An introduction to work and mechanism of EKLIPSE and how it advances the role and potential of ALTER-Net concerning science policy interface was presented. It was noted that the added value of EKLIPSE is that it is built around a strong infrastructure. Associated costs could include funding of secretariat and expert working groups; it was stressed that these features are anticipated to be cost neutral as funding streams (requesters, EU commission funding, crowdfunding, and decisionmakers) will cover related costs.

The Council was subsequently requested to agree to explore options for future management of the mechanism being developed by EKLIPSE; to form a task force to explore these options and report to council; to provide a letter of commitment between ALTER-Net and EKLIPSE; to arrange a meeting with EKLIPSE co-ordination, starting with a virtual meeting; and to make a final decision no later than six months before end of EKLIPSE project.

MH announced that next priority should be the formation of a task force related to EKLIPSE partnership. A team comprised of MH, MV, JVD, MA, and AL was suggested. The task force will meet at least once to prepare point 5 on the agenda and further elaborate possibilities to ensure self-sustaining financial state of EKLIPSE. It was suggested by EF that a meeting of council could be held back to back with ALTER-Net conference in Ghent or during conference to make next decision concerning this partnership. A letter of commitment must be written prior to 23rd of January.

Decision: The Council unanimously supports moving ahead with exploration of partnership/absorption of EKLIPSE. A letter of commitment will be written and a task

force meeting will be arranged by Secretariat. A final decision concerning official partnership with EKLIPSE will be made in June 2019.

12. Discussion on New Potential Activities: ALTER-Net Beyond 2020 and Added Value of ALTER-Net

TS proposed to share views in roundtable format, exploring the benefits to our institutions from the ALTER-Net partnership. Topical questions included how to identify and communicate indirect benefits, how partners can make better use of benefits, and how partners can contribute in order to make partnership more fruitful.

TS identified great potential for learning from alter-net partners in how added value can be best taken advantage of (i.e. mobility fund, collabs, etc.) and pointed to a need for improved communication across institutes. She suggested external evaluation of how alter-net tools have functioned up until this point and internal success sharing as possible solutions. Several partners expressed a need for greater clarity concerning the vision, mandate, and target audience of ALTER-Net. A targeted task force or meeting were proposed; and EF noted that SYKE would be willing to lead an evaluative task force. MH suggested that any discussion of revised priorities, strategy, etc. should be held jointly with EKLIPSE discussion in June, as EKLIPSE partnership will play a key role in defining the future of ALTER-Net. MA seconded the idea of linking ALTER-Net mission discussion with EKLIPSE discussion and suggested a rolling evaluation of activities; AH stated that this process should likewise be explicitly linked to MOUs. RM proposed separation of compulsory actions from non-compulsory. AH, LN, and BD expressed need for quantification of ALTER-Net's added value

Decision: A task force led by EF, TS, AH, MV, and GB will be formed to evaluate past, present, and future added value of ALTER-Net. This will be performed via a questionnaire to individual institutes. EF/SYKE will lead task force.

13. Budget

Chair presented the final budget allocations of past years and reviewed budget proposals for 2019. €40,000 was allocated for ALTER-Net Conference; at present, nothing has been spent yet. The idea of registration fees to cover conference costs was raised.

Decision: Final ALTER-Net budget proposal is unanimously supported.

14. New Member: CESAM

AL gave a brief presentation on new ALTER-Net member institute Centro de Estudos do Ambiente e do Mar (CESAM), based in Portugal. Chair noted that presence of CESAM helps alter-net to better achieve its goal of pan-european character.

15. Any Other Business

Chair thanked JVD and the MB for their hard work in 2019. New (and highly active) membership of Marie Vandewalle in MB and the work of Secretariat TK were noted. Meeting of PEER directors was mentioned by RM, who noted that no clear decision was made following the meeting with ALTER-Net. It was proposed that MB considers formal agreement with PEER directors. MH agreed that memorandum of agreement should be

made.

16. Next Council Meeting

Next (half-year) Council meeting will be held back-to-back with conference in Ghent. Next annual Council meeting location was discussed. Raoul Mille nominated his home institute of Irstea (France) for Council meeting in late November or early December. RM announced that he will provide an official confirmation concerning Irstea's ability to host the 2019 Council meeting in the near future. CESAM (Portugal) was nominated as a secondary option. A fixed date will be decided far in advance of meeting.

MEETING CONCLUDED at 12:00, 18 December.