




*the European Science-Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*

	<b>MINUTES</b> <b>Alternet Council meeting</b> <b>Hybrid – 23-24 February 2023</b>
<b>Venue</b>	INBO, Brussels
<b>Minutes</b>	Tyler Kulfan

#### **Participants**

**In person:** Maurice Hoffmann (INBO, Council chair), Jiska van Dijk (NINA, Management Board chair), Ben Delbaere (DC), Mart Kùlvik (IAES), Ulf Grandin (SLU), Tyler Kulfan (Alternet)

**Virtual:** Adriana Cliville Morato (CREAF), Alison Hester (Hutton), Allan Watt (UK-CEH, MB Vice-chair), Ana Lillebo (CESAM, Council Vice-chair), Benedetto Rugani (LIST), Chris Short (CCRI), Davide Geneletti (DICAM), Diana Hummel (ISOE), Eeva Primmer (SYKE), Eszter Kelemen (ESSRG), Jacques Berlo (Peiresc), Joan Pino (CREAF), Johannes Peterseil (EAA), Jorgen Rosvold (NINA), Kerry Waylen (Hutton), Kinga Krauze (ERCE), Lukas Egarter (Eurac), Marie Vandewalle (UFZ), Mihai Adamescu (Unibuc), Miklos Kertesz (MTA-OK), Nicholas Dendoncker (ILEE), Sibylle Schroer (IGB), Thierry Caquet (INRAE)

Abbreviations of topics - INFO: information topic; DECI: decision topic; DISC: discussion topic

## **Thursday 23<sup>nd</sup> February 2023**

### **1. INFO: Welcome and start meeting**

All those present were welcomed to the 2023 Council meeting, hosted by INBO. Permission was granted to record the meeting for the purpose of the minutes.

### **2. DECI: Approval of the agenda DOC00**

The agenda was shared to all Council members prior to the beginning of the meeting. Unanimous approval of the agenda was granted.

### **3. INFO: Roundtable intros**



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Roundtable introductions were given by all those present, with brief introductions to personnel and associated institutes. Special attention was given to the representatives of the two new member institutes. A new council representative is needed for NIVA.

#### **4. DECI: Minutes of the council meeting of 02-03 Feb 2022 DOC01**

The 2022 Council meeting was held 2-3 Feb 2022. Comments were received and integrated and the final draft was shared prior to the present meeting.

**Decision:** The 2022 minutes are officially approved and will be published on the Alternet website.

#### **5. DISC/DECI/INFO: Follow-up of the minutes of 02-03 Feb 2022**

##### **7. DECI: Election of Council chair, Council vice-chair and MB-chair**

DECI: it is suggested that due to the retirement of Maurice Hoffmann at INBO (foreseen on 1st October 2023), that the function of AC-chair of Maurice is taken over by Jiska van Dijk from that date onwards, and that Maurice takes up the role of MB-chair for the remaining period of their first mandate period as chair of both governance structures until the AC-meeting of 2025. Then, a new election needs to be organized. Both vice chairs (Ana Lillebo and Allan Watt, respectively) keep their present function until the same AC-meeting in 2025.

The prior appointment of JvD and MH was for three years. They presently recommend a swap of roles and titles beginning 1st of October 2023. A request for approval of this change or nominations for new members was put to the Council. It was suggested this decision could be decided immediately. Current appointments are until February 2025.

**Decision:** It was unanimously decided that JvD will serve as Council chair and MH will serve as MB chair beginning 1 October 2023.

##### **8. INFO: Appointment of new MB members**

It was noted that after the AC-Meeting of last year, UK-CEH recommended Lisa Norton to take part in the MB, which she has done since the last MB meetings in 2022 and 2023. Hence, she is officially appointed as a member of the MB.

##### **9-13: DECI: New members & 27.2 Alternet-Peyresq communication platform**

During the presentation of the five new members of 2021, the suggestion was made 1. to discuss communication platform issues, and 2. e-DNA activities. Unfortunately, no attention was given to these ideas so far; it is



asked whether these suggestions are best to be taken up, and if so, in what way.

Such a communication platform has not yet been further explored and advanced in the Management Board; it is asked to the participants whether this type of activity should be further explored, and if so, who would be willing to take the lead in this.

The representatives of Peiresc Foundation and LIST-ERIN were not yet present, so decisions regarding these proposals were postponed.

#### **25. Call exchange**

Eeva (Primmer) suggested using the Call Exchange platform for comments of Alternet on initiatives of the European Commission, etc. Jiska suggested it could also be used for Horizon Scanning relevant to call texts. We invite participants to further comment on these suggestions and whether actions were taken up according to these suggestions

Mart noted that no initial action had been taken but that it's worth further planning and discussing. He suggested coordination between himself and Eeva Primmer to develop plans on this proposal.

#### **27.1 Alternet science lecture series**

As far as known by the daily management, no concrete Alternet actions were taken so far on this activity. It should though be easy to organize such activity simply by flagging institutional actions of the kind with the Alternet logo (as far as contributing to the Alternet general aims); it is asked to the participants whether this type of activity should be further explored, and if so, who would be willing to take the lead in this.

As Jacques was not yet present, MH suggested that he could take this issue up with him at a later time personally. All agreed that MH may proceed accordingly.

#### **27.3. Collaboration with third parties**

It is asked to the participants if concrete suggestions of networking should be explored and, if so, who would be willing to take the lead in this.

Collaboration with Biodiversa+ on the summer school has begun. This is to date the only newly active collaboration partnership with a third party.



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Networking collaborations that are developed in the future will be communicated and added to the Collaborations webpage. A new MoU with LTER is currently a work in progress. Collaboration with third parties was noted as of interest for conference organization, noting that a webinar is being held next week jointly with SER-E.

Formalization of partnerships are to be established via MoU's (e.g. PEER) or individual collaboration agreements (e.g. Biodiversa+). Eeva Primmer suggested a potential partnership opportunity:  
<https://epanet.eea.europa.eu/>.

#### **6. INFO: New member: CCRI ... DOC02, presentation CCRI**

The Countryside and Community Research Institute - CCRI (Gloucester, UK) has been added to Alternet as a new partner institute following a unanimously positive vote by mail. CCRI was recruited thanks to the initiative of colleagues at Hutton. An introduction to CCRI was given by Chris Short and a warm general welcome to the Alternet community was given. It was noted that CCRI wishes to maintain close partnerships with the European research community and wanted to take action to preserve those key bonds and further develop synergies with the partners of Alternet.

#### **7. INFO: New member: EURAC DOC03, presentation EURAC**

Eurac (Bolzano, IT) likewise was added to Alternet as a new partner institute following a unanimously positive vote by mail. A letter of endorsement was provided by DICAM. An introductory presentation was provided by Lukas of Eurac. Special thanks were extended to Summer School convener Uta Fritsch and alum Sebastian Candiago who enthusiastically encouraged Eurac to join Alternet. It was also noted that the differing expertises of Eurac and CCRI demonstrates the range and diversity of Alternet.

#### **8. DECI: Potential adjustments of the Alternet Statutes**

Some potential changes in the statutes were discussed. These concern rephrasing of the daily management conditions, website addresses of Alternet and Eklipse, etc.

The addresses of Eklipse and Alternet need to be adjusted and corrected. The structure of the council and MB along with the daily management of Alternet was raised. It was proposed that the Council and MB leadership (Maurice Hoffmann, Jiska van Dijk, Allan Watt, Ana Lillebo) are granted the authority to make day-to-day operational decision making and to adjust the statutes accordingly. The hiring of an accounting firm was given as one such example. It was questioned how this pertained to budgetary decision making. Allocations of the budget are made by the Council but operational decisions on using the allocated budget are proposed to be made by the mandate of the leadership personnel. Consultation with the council is suggested to be performed by email as needed on an ad hoc basis.



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**Decision:** A principle agreement establishing that an article is to be developed mandating day-to-day operational authority to the leadership personnel of Alternet is granted; this agreement will be drafted and decided upon by email decision upon completion.

#### **9. DECI: Approval of Annual accounts 2020, 2021 ACCT2020, ACCT2021**

The annual accounts are to be shared for approval annually with the members of the Council as an official procedure under Belgian law. Jiska van Dijk shared the account of 2021, provided by Floris van den Broeck, and provided an overview of the expenses featured. In the future, such accounts will be provided by the accounting firm. An official approval of the ACCT2021 was requested of the Council. It was requested that English translations be provided in the future for the purposes of the council.

It was noted that the iNGO Alternet was founded in late 2020; a few months of accounting will be shared from 2020 with the Council for approval by email. Approval will likewise be needed by the Council for the accounting year 2022 as soon as it becomes available.

A great deal of work is foreseen reviewing whitewashing to confirm that Alternet is not engaged in any such practice. Another task foreseen for this firm is tax rule compliance.

**Decision:** The 2021 Accounts are presently officially approved by the Council.

#### **10. INFO: Overall Financial situation 2022 DOC04**

Jiska van Dijk shared the 2022 budget document and gave an overview of the overall financial situation of 2022. An amount of €75,000 was expected in partner contribution income. €58,500 was received instead. Fees have not been paid by WENR. Other incomes included those of the summer school (including the contribution of 12,000€ from Biodiversa+), conference, and income to iNGO Alternet from Eklipse requesters; actual incomes differed at times from expectation. Costs, including general operational costs, recurring program expenses, and incidental expenses, were reviewed. A separate sheet covered the expenses and incomes of Eklipse. Collectively, a balance of 106,476€ remained at 01.01.2023; the balance of the previous year (01.01.2022) was 145,085€. The budget of 2023 is to be discussed at a later point in the meeting.

The issue of non-paying members was raised; according to the statutes, the council may vote on the expulsion of non-paying members. This is not presently on the agenda, and a final outreach is intended to be made to non-paying members.

20,000€ of expected income is missing because of years of recurrent non-payment. Maurice Hoffmann and Jiska van Dijk will make a final outreach effort, and it will be addressed via an email vote whether expulsion should be activated if there is not a positive response from the non-paying member. A timeline ultimatum is to be established, with the intention to be resolved before 01.04.2023.



A general reminder was issued that all member institutes are committed to providing cash and in-kind contributions. It was noted that there is no instrument at the moment for enforcing in-kind contributions. Mart Kùlvik proposed delegating a task of developing and implementing in-kind monitoring and enforcement (either to the MB or other personnel). Allan Watt expressed support for the MB managing the issue of in-kind. Jiska van Dijk suggested registration of in-kind that would be publicly displayed. Eeva Primmer noted that Syke has an internal mechanism for in-kind requesting and reporting that may be used as a model. Ben Delbaere additionally recommended direct requests of relevant institutes for specific tasks.

It was decided to delegate the task of in-kind oversight and consideration of potential solutions to the MB.

**11. INFO: MB meeting Jan 2023 on how to get a more balanced yearly budget & proposal new activity plan DOC05 - presentation JvD**

It was noted that even if all membership fees are paid, Alternet is nevertheless spending more than the amount of income received. A buffer balance of 80,000€ has been agreed upon, and when the balance diminishes to this amount, activities whose costs would breach this amount must be halted or altered accordingly.

An overview of Alternet's financial history, current situation, and presently proposed (more balanced) budget plan was presented by Jiska van Dijk on behalf of the Management Board. SWOTs were conducted and prioritization voting results were shared.

It was suggested that a legal institute could join Alternet and provide services on legal issues. It was conversely suggested that many member institutes have legal departments and could provide these services in-kind. Presently, a firm is being paid to deal with these legal issues that extend beyond the content of Alternet. Eeva Primmer stated that the administrative legal issues should be sorted in Belgium, as Alternet operates under Belgian law. The contracts with the EU should not be very complex; she noted that for Syke they are mostly dealt with without legal experts. Maurice Hoffmann emphasized that the service provided by the hired firm appears to be the most cost-efficient and practical option at this time.

**12. INFO: BioAgora, COOP4CBD, Eco-Ready - 3 short presentations**

The decision by Alternet to transition into a legal non-profit association has enabled Alternet to participate in European projects and hire persons, including Tyler Kulfan (general support) and Christine Frison (COOP4CB project). The three projects Alternet is currently involved in are BioAgora, Coop4CBD, and Eco-Ready.

Eeva Primmer presented on the BioAgora project, which is coordinated by Syke and of which Alternet is a partner. Of 22 partners in BioAgora, 18 are Alternet members. It was emphasized that there is cascade funding available for participation in capacity building development in



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BioAgora; as such, there will be calls and outreach for contribution to Alternet partners who are not independent members of the BioAgora consortium.

Maurice Hoffmann and Jiska van Dijk introduced the COOP4CBD project, a support mechanism for the European Commission to advance the implementation of the CBD in which Alternet is involved as a full partner and is leading four work package tasks. A legal scientist, Christine Frison, was recently hired by Alternet to contribute to this project. Outreach to and engagement from Alternet experts will be key to the success of this project. There will also be linkage to the BioAgora science service.

The third project in which Alternet is officially involved is Eco-Ready; this project was initiated under the initiative of Marie Vandewalle and Eklipse. Marie presented on the Eco-Ready project, which officially began on 01.12.2022 and is focused on European agricultural and food security and drivers of change. It was noted that Syke leads a similar project in Finland, and would be happy to share lessons learned.

The floor was opened for questions on these projects and initiatives. Mart Klvik questioned the rationale in participation in projects as Alternet itself versus as individual member institutes of Alternet. Eeva Primmer questioned who is in charge of Alternet personnel hires for various projects (the council? the council chair? etc.). It was clarified that in the case of COOP4CBD Alternet was directly approached to participate as a network. Christine Frison was hired (based at INBO in Brussels) by Alternet to bring in the expertise within the Alternet network. There was consultation of Alternet partners at the prior Council meeting about participation in the CBD project.

It was noted that this is Alternet's first experience participating in projects and that protocol for such participations can still be discussed and developed. Marie Vandewalle noted that all three projects are aimed at developing self-sustaining mechanisms, and that BioAgora and Eco-Ready both included Eklipse as a knowledge-brokering mechanism. Ben Delbaere suggested that grant agreements are preceded by direct communication with all partners with explanation of potential contribution and cooperation. There was general support for this recommendation. The self-sustaining status of Alternet was also recognized.

### **Activities 2022 and Activity plan 2023**

#### **13. INFO: Short overview Alternet activities 2022 and activity plan 2023 - NO DOC, incl Short presentation Alternet Conference 2022 DOC19 and proposal 2024 DOC20**

Jiska van Dijk provided a short overview of the Alternet 2022 Conference which was held in Ghent and was entitled "Transformative Changes for Biodiversity and Health."

This conference had a total attendance of 108 with 17 Alternet institutes represented; it included a poster session with a call exchange side event, ten sessions, and six keynote speeches. The income was 22,838€, the expenses were €35,554, and total cost was €12,716. The outcome of



the conference was presented at a Dialogue Event organized by Biodiversa+ and the French Ministry of Ecological Transition. A discussion paper was also produced for a Biodiversity and Conservation special issue. Lessons learned (including results from an Evaluation Questionnaire) from the conference were discussed. Alison Hester stressed that this conference should not be treated as a broadly representative conference considering the covid situation at the time.

It is proposed that clear leadership is established for each future conference, including the possibility of an Alternet institute taking responsibility for the hosting. The proposal for 2024 was shared by Jiska van Dijk, with discussion of the location (historically, conferences have been held in Ghent), leadership, format, theme, etc. A final MB decision on location and venue booking is to be made in summer 2023. 6,000€ is proposed to allocate for 2023 and 2024 respectively (to provide a total allocated budget of €12,000 for the 2024 conference).

It was recommended that finalization of elements of the conference should be arranged on a sooner timeline (e.g. theme decision by August 2023). Eeva Primmer suggested natural capital and financing biodiversity conservation as a potential theme; or triple crisis: biodiversity, climate, pollution. Maurice Hoffmann stressed that a leader is presently needed. Eeva Primmer could potentially offer Syke to lead the conference. Alison Hester suggested that decisions about its elements should be made six months (minimum) prior to the conference. Allan Watt questioned if there should be one clear theme or if it should simply be an Alternet conference with variety by session and day. It was noted that good themes attract participants. The opportunity to bring outsiders into the community was noted.

**14. INFO: Communication - DOC06 slides 2022 and DOC07 proposal 2023**

Tyler Kulfan presented on the 2022 communications activity of Alternet, the proposed activity plan for 2023 (see DOC06), and the proposed budget for 2023 (€3,000). The in-kind support of Creaf was recognized.

**15. INFO: MSR, AHIA and Mobility fund, Alternet-LTER MoU-; DOC10 AlumniReport2022; DOC11**

The activities and outputs of AHIA, MSR, and the Mobility fund in 2022 were reviewed. Moving forward, a grouped flexible funding for collaborative activities is proposed to replace these activities. Nicolas Dendoncker gave an update on the status of the AHIA project; the first payment was received. The paper is close to submission readiness. Because of funding already being provided to the ongoing AHIA project and a mobility funding application from an alumni group, the open release of funding for grouped collaborative activities replacement would be, at the soonest, 2024. Council members are requested to review its proposal and give it due consideration.

**16. INFO: Call Exchange - DOC12 slides 2022; DOC13 questionnaire; DOC14 proposal 2023**

Mart Klvik presented on the Call Exchange, sharing a review of activity and the results of a questionnaire on usage. Funded project reports were listed. Suggestions for advancement had been received, and were taken into account in Tyler Kulfan's revamping of the platform.





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In 2022, Tyler Kulfan developed and implemented a new system that allows individual partner researchers to indicate their interest directly via linked forms (rather than depending upon contact persons). Review of the efficacy of this system will be overseen in 2023.

It was decided that Mart would send an email to stimulate dissemination from contact persons to share the current status of the call exchange platform and the information that researchers can engage directly. As such, the most important role of the contact persons is to proactively scan for and share opportunities.

#### **17. INFO: SPI Webinars and One-Stop Shop - DOC15 slides 2022; DOC16 proposal 2023**

Juliette Young presented briefly on the activity conducted in 2022 concerning science-policy society interface. Three SPI webinars were held in 2022 (hosted by Syke, ESSRG, and CESAM respectively). Gratitude was extended to the organizers of these webinars, those who helped in dissemination, and those who joined. In 2023 webinars will be hosted by INBO (27 Feb) and Hutton (May)--and other institutes are encouraged to volunteer to host additional webinars.

The other main SPI activity of 2022 was the development and launch of the SPI one-stop-shop on the Alternet website, which serves as an SPI resource repository and now is in a stable maintenance state. It is recommended to share SPI-relevant opportunities and events with Tyler to share on the OSS webpage.

#### **18. INFO: Summer School - DOC17 slides 2022 and DOC18 proposal 2023**

Allan Watt shared an overview of the 2022 Alternet Summer School, which was held in Peyresq, France in September of 2022. 27 students participated, comprising 18 nationalities and 13 countries of residence. It was the first year of partnership with Biodiversa+, which financially supported the summer school with a provision of €12,000, participation (2 student attendees, 1 speaker: Hilde Eggermont) and support in organization. The summer school programme maintained its traditional format.

The 2023 budget proposal for the summer school is for €20,000, supported by Biodiversa+'s repeat contribution, the support of the secretariat, and the in-kind support of the conveners. 28 students are to be invited with a fee of €1,000 and the intention of a Ukrainian student attending for free. It is also proposed in principle to hold and begin the organization of the 2024 summer school.

**Day one concluded at 18:20.**

## **Day 2: Friday 24th of February 2023**



## **Activities 2022 and Activity plan 2023 - continuation**

### **19. INFO: Eklipse - DOC21 slides 2022**

Marie Vandewalle presented on the activity and progress of Eklipse in 2022, reviewing ongoing requests and its evolving place in the European SPI landscape. Congratulations were expressed on the high success rate of Eklipse activity and its self-sustaining status. It was noted that the call for KCB members is presently open, and that a call for members of the Methods Expert Group would be released in April.

### **20. DECI: Proposal ethical committee**

Marie Vandewalle presented on the motivation for her proposal to introduce an Alternet ethics committee. She proposes to find a fairer and more cost-effective solution for ethical approval processes which are presently used by Eklipse through member institutes. She suggested either to set up an Alternet ethical approval committee; to ask one of the Alternet partner institute's ethical committee to volunteer to support this need; or for Eklipse to select a Method Expert Group member whose institution would be ready to offer access to its ethical approval process. It was noted that such a committee could be useful not only for Eklipse but also for other Alternet activities and member institutes.

**Decision:** There was general agreement that it would be relevant and valuable to pursue the development of an Alternet ethical committee under the initiative and leadership of Marie Vandewalle. Council members can support this effort by connecting Marie with the ethics committees of their institutes (if they have such committees).

### **21. INFO: Alternet/Biodiversa+/SER-E European Nature Restoration Law Knowledge Hub**

Under the leadership of Biodiversa+, it has been proposed to create (in cooperation with several other organizations) a European Nature Restoration Law Knowledge Hub. Info on this proposal is still incoming. It has been recommended to take proactive action on this law, which has not yet been voted on. Informally, Alternet has been approached for cooperation on such a project. There was general agreement that Alternet should further explore and engage with this proposal and what it shall mean precisely for Alternet.

### **22. INFO: Recap of proposals activity plan 2023 incl. budget**

Jiska van Dijk provided a recap of the activities slated for 2023 and the budget plan for Alternet. All associated proposals were listed. It is expected that the credit balance of Alternet will reach its 80,000€ limit instituted by the Council in 2024 under the proposed activity plan. It was noted that the rate at which the credit balance is being reduced means that activities cannot continue as status quo in 2024. Conversely, the negative effect that a greatly reduced activity programme would have on the added value of membership was stressed. Prioritization of activities, outreach for new members, external funding, and opportunities for new or increased income are thus



needed.

### **23. DECI: Secretariat and running costs Alternet**

The first funding decision was on the proposed secretariat and running costs of Alternet. These comprise the costs of executive members including accounting (€4,500), the accountancy firm (€2,750), operating costs and MB meetings (€3,000), communication (€3,000), and the secretariat (€35,000).

The issue of salary indexing was raised. A 4% indexing of the present €35,000 is proposed for 2024. It is intended for Tyler Kulfan to work 60% for Alternet secretariat and the remaining 40% consisting of Horizon Europe project work.

**Decision:** The proposed budget for secretariat and running costs of Alternet are approved.

### **24. DECI: Summer School**

The funding of the 2023 Summer School and organization of the 2024 Summer School were formally raised. Student fees are to be set at €1,000; Biodiversa+ has pledged support for 2023, and there is an expectation of Biodiversa+ support for 2024. It was noted that such partnerships are only desirable from like-minded organizations, and that the partnership with Biodiversa+ has been of great mutual advantage as it supports the Summer School as is. Suggestions for other potential organizations that could support the Summer School are welcome. It is recommended that Allan Watt and the co-conveners prepare a message to Alternet partners requesting co-funding suggestions for the Summer School.

A budget of €20,000 is proposed for 2023. An expected engagement of €20,000 (in principle) for Alternet is planned to be allocated for the Summer School in 2024.

**Decision:** The proposed budget is approved, as is the organization and principle funding of the 2024 Summer School.

### **25. DECI: Conference**

Funding does not presently need to be allocated to the conference because the next conference is planned to be held in 2024. In principle, there is support for the ongoing organization of Alternet conferences. Presently, Alternet institutes are encouraged to consider and volunteer for hosting and organization. It was noted that 2024 is the 20th anniversary of Alternet, which could be recognized at the 2024 conference. The proposed budget is for 2024.

**Decision:** There is a principle agreement for the budget of the 2024 conference, to be revised as needed as planning commences.

### **26. DECI: Gender Equality Plan**



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There is ongoing discussion within the MB about the implementation of a gender equality plan. It is a work in progress, led by Riikka Paloniemi and an MB task force. The council is requested to comment on the proposed plan once it becomes available.

**Decision:** A gender equality plan will be introduced and implemented, following the consultation of the Council.

### **27. DECI: SPI Webinars & One-stop Shop**

There is no budget required for the SPI webinar and one-stop-shop activities. The Council was questioned concerning their support for the current structures and activity plans. Host institutes for SPI webinars are requested, as is relevant information/opportunities to be displayed on the one-stop-shop.

**Decision:** The SPI webinar and one-stop-shop activity proposals for 2023 are accepted.

### **28. DECI: Call Exchange**

The present proposal for the call exchange is to continue this activity as is, with a request for more engagement from contact persons and those with interest and/or information on various calls. No budget is proposed.

**Decision:** The call exchange activity plan for 2023 is accepted.

### **29. DECI: Collaboration Opportunities**

It is proposed that the mobility fund, MSR, and AHIA activities are merged into a collective collaboration opportunities funding activity, beginning in 2024. €10,000 is proposed for 2024.

**Decision:** The implementation of this activity and budget proposal will be considered in 2024; close consideration is requested by the Council members of the Collaboration Opportunities proposal, which has been distributed.

### **30. DECI: MoU Alternet & LTER**

Under the leadership of Mark Frenzel, an updated MoU between Alternet and LTER is being drafted. This is a work in progress. The Council is presently questioned as to whether an updated MoU is desirable.

**Decision:** There is agreement that an updated MoU with LTER is to be drafted; it is to be reviewed by the Council upon completion for comment and final approval.

### **31. DECI: 2023 Budget approval**

The overall proposed budget for 2023 is €78,250. The Council is now questioned if the budget



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allocations as proposed are to be approved for 2023.

**Decision:** The proposed 2023 budget is unanimously approved.

### **32. DECI: Any other business**

Mihai Adamescu proposed for Alternet to share new PhD opportunities for member institute students on a dedicated page of the Alternet website. This would require institutions to send these opportunities to Tyler for posting.

**Decision:** A PhD opportunity sharing platform will be implemented on the Alternet website; Council members are requested to share relevant opportunities with Tyler and to establish contact persons for ongoing informing of such opportunities,

### **33. DECI: Next AC meeting (no doc)**

It was questioned where, how, and when the next Alternet Council meeting would be held. A meeting earlier in the year is preferred. It was also questioned whether the next meeting would be in-person, hybrid, or online. Kerry Waylen suggested hybrid council meetings with a potential in-person in-between meetup at the 2024 conference. Eeva Primmer stated that she believes hybrid should be the standard format moving forward.

Hutton offered to potentially host the 2024 meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland. Lillehammer was suggested by JvD as an alternative; options will be discussed between JvD and Alison Hester.

**Decision:** A hybrid meeting will be held in January of 2024. A date for the meeting will be established long beforehand, as will the location.

**The 2023 Alternet Council meeting concluded at 12:00**