



ALTER-Net Council meeting

Draft minutes

24-25 May 2016

Venue	INBO – Research Institute for Nature and Forest Kliniekstraat 25, BE-1070 Brussels, Belgium
Contact	tessa.vansanten@inbo.be NC: network council representative; MB: management board member
Attendance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maurice Hoffmann (INBO; council chair) NC 2. Györgyi Bela (ESSRG; council vice-chair) NC 3. Allan Watt (CEH – Chair MB) MB 4. Jiska van Dijk (NINA, vice-chair MB) MB 5. Tessa Van Santen (INBO) secretariat 6. Mihai Adamescu (UNIBUC) NC 7. Petri Ahlroth (SYKE) NC 8. Marta Dobrovodská (ILE-SAS) NC 9. Veronika Gaube (SEC) NC 10. Ulf Grandin (SLU) NC 11. Tor Heggberget (NINA) NC 12. Diana Hummel (ISOE) NC 13. Sonja Jähnig (IGB) NC 14. Miki Kertesz (MTA) NC 15. Carsten Nesshöver (UFZ) MB/NC 16. Julius Oszlanyi (ILE-SAS) NC 17. Joan Pino (CREAF) NC 18. Philip Roche (Irstea) MB/C 19. Olga Roig (CREAF) NC 20. Andy Sier (CEH) MB 21. Petteri Vihervaara (SYKE) MB 22. Keimpe Wieringa (PBL) NC
Skype attendance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Allison Hester (JHI) NC 24. Kinga Krauze (ERCE) NC 25. Mart Külvik (EMU) NC
Absent with notification	<p>Eeva Furman (SYKE) NC Klement Tockner (IGB) NC Stefan Klotz (UFZ) NC Rob Wolters (ECNC) NC Ben Delbaere (ECNC) MB Jesper Fredshavn (DCE) NC Marion Mehring (ISOE) NC Jean-Marc Callois (Irstea) NC Christoph Görg (SEC) NC Christoph Plutzar (SEC) NC Dominique Joly (CNRS) NC Angheluta Vadineanu (UNIBUC) NC Michael Mirtl (EAA) MB/NC</p>
No notification	Ivo Svejkský (HBU-CAS) NC

Tuesday 24 May 2016

1. Welcome and start meeting

2. Introduction of new partner ISOE by Diana Hummel

ISOE:

- Expertise in trans disciplinary and socio-ecological research.
- One of the leading institutes in Germany for sustainability research and social ecology. Deals with societal and scientific aspects of nature.
- Also academic teaching.
- Finance through grants for tender. Few projects funded by the commission, also funding from the state of Hessen.
- Research approach is problem oriented, water and land management, also mobility, integrates scientific and nonscientific knowledge from stakeholders. Stakeholders are also seen as knowledge holder.
- Also in the EKLIPSE project.

3. Horizon scanning, and the ALTER-Net niche herein

3.1. Introduction by Martin Sharman

You can find the PPT on the ALTER-Net website: <http://www.alter-net.info/files/Presentations/msharman-horizon-scanning/view>

Summary:

Temperature is rising, arctic ice volume is declining, will be irreversible
In the near future, there will be huge changes and challenges in ecology and biodiversity, they will come very rapidly. The ecology of lots of things will be changing very rapidly.

What is missing at the moment? A “new” science, we need to invent this and look at the way that human relates to nature, ...

Institutes: need for people that are specialist and bring in their specialism to multidisciplinary research.

We need to realize that our understanding of ecology is built on “old stuff”.

Conclusions:

- What we know of ecology will not survive in the new regime of our planet, will not be useful anymore tomorrow.
- ALTER-Net managed to stay together after funding ended. The network itself depends on each other, what’s the probable future, we need each other to understand this, we need to divert in a way where we think clearly how each organization fit in this puzzle.
- Whatever horizon scanning might be, there are new horizons.
- Go for the best understanding possible, know what you are good in.
- We make our own futures, influence the type of science that is funded, if we want to change them, we need to put our stamp on this... Thinking about what kind of

research needs to be funded and start lobbying for them. Get your voice heard, do not just keep silent and complain.

3.2. Workshops on future issues that needs research attention

- Ecological research – under the lead Philip Roche
- Science policy interaction – under the lead of Carsten Nesshöver
- Socio-ecological research – under the lead of Jiska van Dijk
- Innovation and technology – under the lead of Andy Sier

4. Plenary discussion and conclusion of the horizon scanning exercise

4.1. Workshop on ecological research – Philip Roche

Pattern of change in relation to drivers

- Delayed responses, lags
- Thresholds and tipping points
- Expected patterns of changes
- Long term sites and data sets for tracking changes
- Planet boundaries
- Reference conditions, what does that mean in a changing world?

Be more complex:

- Understanding functional diversity role for ecosystem functioning
- Links and connectivity within and between ecosystems
- Soil and below ground
- Interaction between systems (ex. Water/Terrestrial)
- Integrative ecosystem research – do more ecosystems and less species specific research

Think ecosystems outside natural areas

- Ecosystem functioning in agrosystems
- Ecology in urban
- Human as part of the ecosystem

Biocultural heritage ecosystems ALTER-Net should

- Disseminate up to date ecosystem research outcomes and thinking
- Put forward the role of soils
- Promote integrative ecosystem research
- Provide best examples of NBS for ecosystems for greening gray systems

Comments:

Mihai: maybe too conservative thinking, too conservative research, we need also some disruptive ideas, based on the presentation of Martin Sharman.

Jiska: keep in mind ALTER-Net and the structure of existing activities.

4.2. Workshop on socio-ecological research – Jiska van Dijk

Outcome of the discussion around the challenges:

- Socio-ecological research is very complex
- It includes different spatial scales and time scales, e.g. cultural changes but also (inter-)generational changes, changes regarding human migrations and demographic processes
- Perspectives are changing over time and different perspectives exist at different places. How should we deal with that? How do we see nature?
- The issues of social justice, equity, but also human well-being and health are getting more and more important.
- How to create stability against inherently unsustainable behavior?
- What is the baseline we take into account, what do we understand by sustainability, what is our goal and how do the winning conditions look like?

What ALTER-Net should do:

- We need to discuss and define what the winning conditions are and what the baselines are.
- Provide key messages and repeat them again and again. Use the experience and expertise we have in our member institutes
- Take DPSIR model (Drivers, Pressures, States, Impacts and Responses) into account and work on methods to monitor progress
- Work on mainstreaming of methods, models and incorporation of different results obtained by different partner institutes
- Be pro-active as mediator between science and society (e.g. through setting up science shops), and
- Democratize our researchers with creating possibilities for open access of their results and create transparency
- Work further on the operationalization of the interdisciplinary capacity of ALTER-Net (e.g. through round table events, interdisciplinary workshops) Work further on the operationalization of the transdisciplinary expertise and participatory processes within ALTER-Net (e.g. exchange meetings on participatory processes).

Comments:

Maurice: is this interdisciplinary character of ALTER-Net really true? Are we really doing interdisciplinary work?

Carsten: linking our ecological work into the societal process, emphasis on our projects to keep the other disciplines involved, so project thinking should form the base for the operationalization of the interdisciplinary potential of ALTER-Net.

Keimpe: PBL has lots of discussion with policy makers. Two main questions from their side: (1) involve social scientist and work both interdisciplinary - transdisciplinary, and (2) include participatory processes.

Martin: a conference theme could be 'the new world' and get some good speakers, people from lots of different disciplines. Also bring in other people/expertise then you would normally think of.

4.3. Workshop on innovation and technology – Andy Sier

Challenge:

- thinking in an innovative way, is not easy for everyone. There are people who do more basic research and others who do more applied research. Not everyone can think in that novel kind of way.
- working with industries on innovative solutions to problems.
- industry partners come often with raw ideas and ecologists need to work on these ideas to come to real innovations.
- different technologies can change the influence.
- Responsible research and innovation, there is some expertise already in the network.
- Hard to predict what the impact of an innovative solution can be.
- Technology: a lot of work in remote sensing, environmental genomic data, lots of potential but lack of capacity.

ALTER-Net should do:

- Help with knowledge generation, explaining to each other what the potential impacts are. We need knowledge sharing!
- Can have a pilot project on developing solutions (maybe joint proposal or internal project).
- Help partners understand RRI (=Responsible Research and Innovation).
- Identify innovative topics and get funding for this.
- Do we have RRI experts in the network or do we need to bring that in from outside?
- What are the potentials to use the datasets?
- Ecology needs big science, but challenge is to get support and funds, needed a fully global network of sites (LTER, ICOS, NEON, ...) All doing the same things in the same way (cfr. ICP forests), is there a role for ALTER-Net to build this?

Comments:

Carsten: interesting leaflet from RRI-tools, they are having many training courses this year

Ann: different view on “big science”, rather invest into one site or one ecosystem type, and then measure on the same way. Always a problem to integrate this kind of things.

Mihai: too many voices, after 20 years we still have the same discussions. Know the limits of the network, we will discuss the same thing that were discussed the last 20 years, we already have sites selected in LTER, Lifewatch,... The real need is that we need to point out a vision.

Martin: guts are needed...

Maurice: H2020 is not funding what we think is relevant, we need to find out what is needed, should have the courage to point out that there are other themes that are important.

Mihai: you need a vision for funding for 20 years, Europe is not thinking sustainable.

Maurice: you need to convince the first that it is important, we need to pro-actively come up with ideas.

Petteri: a colleague calls ALTER-Net the “paper-tiger”, we need to point out the crucial points of ALTER-NET to be monitored, perspectives for ALTER-Net.

Maurice: genome data → lots of small groups, they should come together, we don't know from one another.

4.4. Workshop on Science Policy Interface (SPI) – Carsten Nesshöver

Challenges:

- Governance systems are changing, decision making is going partly away from governments, and partly changes towards addressing more complex issues >>> *partly the target groups, and partly the way knowledge needs to be provided change.*
- Division between the (way we) knowledge is produced (often still very specialized knowledge), and the way it needs to be communicated today (even less information, clear messaging, visuals, digital pathways) is rather increasing than decreasing >>> *new ways of communication (with policy and society) need to be strengthened, not only about outcomes of research, but also about needs for new research.*
- Accordingly, the share of inter/trans-disciplinary research is still too low to address complex issues (yet, programmes like Future Earth aim to overcome this), and finding the balance between specialized, specific research needs and broader approaches addressing complex issues will remain a topic (example of where the links between research and complex needs seem to function better is the climate-energy nexus).
- Thus, it is equally important that proper processes are in place to reflect on research needs, and that findings from them are properly communicated into the funding arena.
- In this context also the reflection of the individual roles of each scientist and his/her engagement in interactions is crucial >>> *capacity building need.*
- For science-policy interactions, we need impact and quality criteria, to account for the investment, but also to acknowledge the resources put into them by institutions and individuals. This includes a better understanding on the methods of interactions

ALTER-Net should do:

- Need to change the format of interaction, open up even more to dialogue-oriented formats; the (dialogue-)processes might then prove to be more important than the output itself >>> *check our formats into this direction.*
- This includes the active promotion of open processes, including critiques.
- Raise the awareness in the institutes and the individuals about the role of SP-interactions >>> *provide support in training and information about SPI, help develop impact indicators (the latter being a challenge across the whole science arena).*
- >>> *Bring together experts from our institutes on social media, infographics, videos, etc. in a workshop to think about joint activities on communication methods.*
- Formulate visions, research needs a link up with the policy process, really having a strategy for lobbying >>> *engage actively with the new activities of EPBRS and help to promote results (towards EU and governments/funders).*
- *Capacity building on SPI: Already happening at summerschool (one day there, and as context throughout the school), could be further broadened towards institutes and projects.*

Comments:

Mihai: we want to affect the community, but we lack the support, we as a community cannot reply on this; come up with a message that could very easily put forward, when we have 20 different ideas, then the message cannot be distributed that easily

Joan: for the communication and dissemination of a message, we need some training workshops.

Carsten: in EKLIPSE revive the connection with EPBRS, and big challenge is indeed to have a clear and simple message.

Martin: marine communities have to share infrastructure so they have to collaborate, because very expensive, the terrestrial community needs an ice breaker mentality, people need to work together, share data, ...

[note: later, Carsten introduced the ALTER-Net based project EKLIPSE (www.eklipse-mechanism.eu), led by CEH, UFZ and RBINS, that will develop a new policy support mechanism on biodiversity in the EU – EKLIPSE is the proper tool to address some of the points made above and ALTER-Net could get actively engaged in it]

5. ALTER-Net conference 2017: Conflicts and trade-offs (doc 04)

- Introduction (Jiska van Dijk)
- Discussion on organizing committee, scientific committee, venue, structure, ...

Lessons learned from previous conferences?

Tor: there should be something organized what has come out of the previous conferences, have a summary with important lessons, ...

→ Jiska is planning a skype meeting on this with the key-people of the previous conferences

Carsten: you need to include the follow up process already in the planning phase.

Keimpe: What is the background to come to the subject?

Jiska had a very brief dialogue with DG ENV, the discussion went quickly into tradeoffs, initial idea was to work on conflicts, it is logic to combine these two.

Tor: in Norway much research money for conflicts.

Martin suggests to adapt the title 'biodiversity and ecosystem services' and change it into 'human relationships to nature'.

6. Reflection on ALTER-Net achievements: successes and failures (doc13)

Presentation by Maurice on ALTER-Net goals, partners, definition, core activities, ...

6.1. Inter-partner networking: Jiska van Dijk

- Lots of talks about exchange and working together with each other.
- Mobility fund: opportunity to visit other ALTER-net institutes → not often used within ALTER-Net
- See PPT
- Discussion:
 - Do not bring in sufficiently the entire community, often those who are active in MB
 - With who and how do you communicate about ALTER-Net within your institute?
 - Allan: via intranet

- Andy: problem with time, lots of other things to do, but we could share information, when particular activities are surrounding, we do well, but in between times are quiet...

6.2. ALTER-Net role in Ecosystem (Services) Research: Philip Roche

- Explanation of the different thematic changes that occurred the last 12 years
- Shift from seminars, workshops towards big projects that we could label as ALTER-Net because lots of institutes were in it (Biodiversity Knowledge, BESAFE, PEER – MAES, Openness, Spiral). We have lots of discussions about ALTER-Net should help building proposals etc., but we cannot make projects with ALTER-Net institutes only.
- Summer school is a good instrument for the item of interdisciplinarity.
- Social sciences in ALTER-Net: from zero to top
- List with 5 highlights on social sciences (see PPT)

6.3. Communication – Andy Sier

Successes:

- Key events: summer school and conferences
- More use of social media during last years
- Mindset needed (our website, our newsletter)
- We need to keep each other better posted, also need a better internal communication.
- Andy makes an appeal to every council member/communication person to send more news items to him that could be posted on the ALTER-Net website

6.4. Proposal building – Petteri

- Research and innovation action important in H2020 calls, strong need for collaboration with smaller institutes
- Big question: how do go forward with proposal building within ALTER-Net?
- For 2017 calls: maybe too late, mostly, consortia are already built.
- We need some new strategy, how to get most benefit out of ALTER-Net collaboration?
- Maybe some increase needed in training in good proposal writing, it could be a good idea to have a session on this at the next conference
- Discussion:
 - Philip: Biodiversity and ES research is less present in H2020, so press forward our visions on the people writing the calls. F.e. the PEER network does that, we can certainly pushing it forward to the commission.
 - Allan: hope that EPBRS is start to function again strongly

6.5. Summer school – Allan Watt

- PPT of Marie and Allan on the Summer school
- Comments:
 - Ann: teachers coming earlier or staying longer to have some interaction on a certain topic, maybe an option to consider in the future
 - Allan wants to thank Marie for all her efforts regarding the Summer School

6.6. Science Policy interface – Carsten NessHöver

Presentation on EKLIPSE

- One of the projects that comes from the work that ALTER-Net and her partners have done for all over the years...
- Many partners involved, consortium has a facilitative role, 10 partners in it (CEH, UFZ, ISOE, ESSRG, ...). Half of the budget is put aside for the coordination action.
- Preparing communication and promote the model, now catching up with partners.
- Website has been set up.
- Oppla, now webplatform, joint initiative of Opennes and Operas, interest platform on ES.
- Launch of calls.
- First conference on 8 December 2016
- Half of the budget is going to the networking work
- First request from the policy side: “develop an impact evaluation framework”
- How to get engaged?
 - o Identifying the interests, provide some space for dissemination and learning on SPI
 - o Experts for specific thematic calls
 - o Get involved in the Knowledge Coordination body
 - o Actively support the development of a business plan
 - o Actively invite ALTER-Net partners to participate
- Discussion:
 - o Allan: opportunity for ALTER-Net to take its knowledge into the policy arena
 - o It is a 4 year project
 - o Seen as an important mechanism for European policy
 - o Not clear who will run this mechanism
 - o How does ALTER-Net wants to behave in turn of this mechanism?

6.7. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research Infrastructure – Michael Mirtl

- Proposition for funding the LTER functioning
- A lot of interaction between LTER and ALTER-Net

6.8. ALTER-Net High Impact Action (AHIA)

- Reviewing on major topics on research done within and outside the institutes
- 2 calls approved. Paper on citizen science approved by Conservation Biology. Will be put in open access. There will be some kind of presentation to distribute on the website. Show this within your institute.
- Second call: on Onehealth and Ecohealth, involving at least 6 ALTER-Net partners.
- New call will be launched (has been launched already in June 2016 – Deadline for proposals was September 1st 2016)

6.9. Multisite Research projects – Maurice Hoffmann

- To have the same kind of research done at different locations in Europe
- First three projects: classical ecological projects

- Rephrasing this, not only about field experiments but also possibilities on social scientific research, using the surplus of ALTER-Net being Pan-European in different regions geographically and economically.
- A new call will be launched (has been launched, closing date on the Multi Site Research activity was 1 August 2016 – see website)

6.10. Conferences – Maurice Hoffmann

- Larger events, but also need to mention the larger workshops.

7. ALTER-Net perspectives

- o Overview ALTER-Net activities (doc 11)

Proposal building:

- Mihai: Maybe use TA (transnational access in LTER) → why not use this in ALTER-Net, good opportunity to work on this with ALTER-Net

AHIA-papers: have meetings and bring our data and start writing, no more than 5 or 6 days, and they have prepared before that, for one single meeting, it could come from different sites.

- Maurice, this will perfectly fit into the AHIA-procedure, meta-analysis will fit perfectly well in the new call that will be launched.

Tor: last year of ALTER-Net III, now several important actions will be taken. For future members, we need to be more specific about the added value of being a member. Maybe organize a taskforce on this and have more specific documentation on the added value of being member. NINA would appreciate the possibility to organize something on this during the conference.

Carsten: SPI – getting stronger again to convince national departments.

See PPT slide with a clear overview what ALTER-Net can mean for possible partners and other institutes.

Wednesday 25 May 2016

8. Follow up Meeting 2015

8.1. Approval of minutes 2016 (doc 1)

No extra comments were made during the council meeting. The minutes of the council meeting of 21 May 2015 are approved.

8.2. Follow-up minutes 2016 (doc 1)

- A comment that was made during last year council meeting: too little discussion during the meeting. We tried to meet these wishes by having some workshops and more open discussions on topics that partners want to stress out.
- List of stakeholders, we are aware who are our main stakeholders. Carsten mentions that in the EKLPISE project a list of stakeholders might be developed in the running of the project.
- Discussion on IPBES last year: two groups: (1) we were convinced that ALTER-Net hasn't a real part in it, (2) Others wanted to play a bigger role. You will receive a questionnaire of people who are involved in IPBES at your institute and which role they play. Carsten will give some more information for partners who are not involved much, so they can have a look how national platforms organize themselves. He will provide an information package that can be sent around within the institutes. 80% of the representatives must be appointed by government.
- Maurice still needs to take contact with the new director of Alterra.
- Partnership strategy: Andy still needs to put the adapted document on the website. We also concluded to not try to convince new partners on this moment.

9. Partnership issues

9.1. Proposition of MoU amendment

Maurice clarifies some changes he wants to bring into the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

- Full membership partners have one vote in the council.
- Associated membership partners are partners who cannot pay their yearly contribution. They are still a partner but have no seat in the council.

In order to reach maximum involvement of partner institutes, it is suggested to amend Art. 9 as follows:

Art. 9. Institutions that sign this MoU and pay their financial contribution obtain full consortium partnership of ALTER-Net and have one seat in the Council held by a representative of the institute. The institute representative has the right to vote in Council, take active part in setting the agenda, and has a voice in priority-setting of ALTER-Net strategy and activities. *An institute is allowed to send more than one delegate to the council meetings, but every full partner institute will have only one vote.*

According to the Memorandum, every institute only have one seat, so we need an adaption on this issue.

➔ accepted.

It is suggested to change article 2 of the Appendix of the MoU, dealing with “Policy new Partners, full and associate consortium partners, partnership fee and intended activities”, second paragraph, i.e. to replace ‘seat’ by ‘vote’

→ accepted.

9.2. Associate membership

Associate membership so far meant an institute did not have a seat in the council. If an institute is not able to pay the yearly fee, it can go into associate membership, but it also needs to make extra efforts for in kind contribution.

→ There is a consensus on this.

9.3. Vacancy in the MB

Fraucke Ecke resigned from the MB. So there is one vacancy on Multi Site Research
There is one candidate from INBO: Ann Milbau

The suggestion was made that everyone can go to their institute to propose other candidates. In meanwhile, a mail has been sent around to see if there are objections on the selection of Ann Milbau. If not, she will become the new MB-member for MSR.

Update: also Sonja Jähnig (IGB) was proposed by her institute to be part of the MB. It needs further discussion who will take up the responsibility for the MSR and the AHIA- activity.

9.4. Platform memberships

Would it be a good idea to have other platforms associated with ALTER-Net, f.e. BBP (Belgian Biodiversity Platform, Marbev,...)?

The question is: on which activity can they apply? Maybe also a link possible with the EEF.

Maurice: We will not force a decision on this. If it is agreed, we will elaborate it and put it on the agenda for next year.

Miki: good idea to invite certain people, so they will be informed on our activities. Should this kind of things be formalized?

Allan likes the principle, but is not sure how this will work in practice.

Miki: maybe include a session on this in the conference

Conclusion:

- More open to networks
- Organize a session on this on the conference (interaction between networks)

9.5. Partnership issues

There is a decision needed on partners who do not react, did not sign the MoU and/or did not pay their yearly contribution → a proposal will be prepared by the secretariat (please, check your membership fee status 2015-16 in doc12)

- i. Dismissal of **CSIC**, not paying its fees since the start of the self-supporting ALTER-Net consortium in 2009; due to a negative response on repeated calls in 2015, suggestion of withdrawal
→ Council agrees.
- ii. Reminder of dismissal potential of full partnership of **CNRS**, not paying its fees for at least two years; suggestion to contact once more the new representative of the institute to consider full partnership
→ They were very active in the past, try to convince them once again. Also because the strong link with Wolfgang Cramer who contributed much in the past.
→ Maurice will contact with Dominique Joly.
- iii. Reminder of dismissal potential of full partnership of **Alterra**, not paying its fees for at least two years; suggestions to contact again the present management of Alterra to consider full partnership
→ Maurice will contact the new director, they were active for a longer period than CSIC and CNRS.
→ *Update: in mean while they committed themselves to remain partner. No signed MoU yet.*
- iv. Maintenance of **ECNC** as associate partner despite non-payment of partnership fee; suggestion to accept associate partnership, given the significant in-kind contribution of Ben Delbaere and Rob Wolters (MB and NC), and with continuation of participation to the council without voting rights
→ Suggest them to be an associate partner, no vote in the council, only a seat.
- v. Maintenance of **ERCE** as associate partner; suggestion to accept associate membership, given the important connection with LTER-Europe (secretariat) and in-kind through that channel, and with continuation of participation to the council without voting rights
→ Represented by Kinga, same problem with cash possibilities. So council agrees to suggest them an associate membership
- vi. Maintenance of **HBI-CAS** as full partner; suggestion to contact once more and make new agreement on fees due
→ Maurice will remind, for the moment still maintain them as full partner.
- vii. Maintenance of **DCE** as full partner, under the condition that they sign the MoU and pledge and pay the 2015 fee
→ They signed the MoU, but did not pay the fee, secretariat will send a reminder.

Conclusion:

- Dismissal of CSIC

- Keep the other partners on board (eventually as associated partner), also a reminder should be sent to those partners who did not pay their fee yet.
- Maurice will contact partners that are in a 'hesitative' phase.

10. ALTER-Net activities report and budget

10.1. ALTER-Net Summer school (doc 2)

There is a consensus to support this year summer school, council agreed also to the planning of the 2017 Summer School (=SS).

Discussion on the subject of the SS:

- 2016: emphasis on natural capital and ecosystem services, because last year of both Openness and Operas projects.
- In 2017 the subject will be more biological/conservational oriented. We need to start to vary the topic a little bit more every year.
 - o Philip is very glad with the new focus for next year.
 - o Mihai would like to see the logos of Openness and Operas on the summer school website, he also suggests to involve the Esmeralda project in this.
 - o Carsten: indeed important to move the topics slightly, and to open it up to other parts of science.
 - o Maurice reminds everyone to the presentation of Martin to focus more on the future. Miki agrees with this. Nature protection is changing very fast.
 - o Petri: new methods of nature conservation and including new partners like industry lies very much in the scope of SYKE.
 - o Mihai: transdisciplinarity should also be one of the topics, and bring together different views.
 - o Philip says this transdisciplinarity is interesting to discuss on, not necessarily to be a learning issue, but more a discussion topic.
 - o Mihai: difference between transdisciplinarity (f.e. also involve local people) and interdisciplinarity (where you have views of a food specialist, architect,... on a certain issue).

Total budget of SS is 55.000€: Budget request to the council of 35.000€, the extra 20.000€ comes from the fees.

Conclusion:

- Council agrees on the budget request of 35.000€ for organizing the SS.
- Council thinks it is a good idea to open up the topic to other parts of science
- Allan wants to thank explicitly Marie VDW and the tutors and speakers. This could be done in the future by sending 'thank you' letters after the SS.

10.2. Communication (doc 3)

Andy asked for people to help with communication issues. He also requests some more active participation in maintaining the website. Therefore he needs some more input (f.e.

interesting seminars, congresses, reports, relevant news items from you institute) from the institutes itself to put on the website.

Maurice stresses out that he wants to see ALTER-Net mentioned on every institute website (“the closer to the homepage, the better”).

CREAF says they could offer help for disseminate specific messages into the platforms, website, mailing lists,...

Andy has a list of communication contact persons, that might need some update.

Mihai asks if we considered already to work with a communication company. He knows a Bulgarian company that takes care of the communication of all the H2020 projects and which is also responsible of disseminating the data. Maurice answers that ALTER-Net has always done the communication of the platform by itself, some institutes do this task as their in kind contribution. We need to face the fact that the budget is also very limited.

Carsten says that we first need to have something to disseminate, so we need to give more input to Andy and be more active ourselves.

Allan confirms what Carsten says, we need to be more active, and should motivate our staff to contact Andy with items that could be distributed.

Conclusion / To do's:

- Be more active in offering news items and other relevant items to Andy to publish on the ALTER-Net website
- Check if ALTER-Net (logo and the phrase ‘Europe’s Ecosystem Research Network’) is mentioned on your institutional website.
- inform Andy on 15rganization15l changes within your institute, and check the <http://www.alter-net.info/> website on the information given on your institute (it should be as accurate as possible)
- indicate a communication contact person in your 15rganization, with whom Andy can directly communicate on communication issues in both directions (please keep in mind that Andy uses a list of communication contact persons, but it needs up-dating)

Communication budget

Budget asked for is a max. of 7.500€.

Philip makes the remark that the producing of the AHIA video is budgeted twice (once in the communication budget and once in the granted budget of AHIA).

Maurice confirms that we should not budget something twice. So we can limit the communication budget to 2.500€. Concerning the conference also, the means for communication should be budgeted within the conference budget and not within the communication budget.

Conclusion:

- Council agrees with a budget of 2.500€ for communication activities.

10.3. ALTER-Net conference 2015 and 2017 (doc 4)

Maurice makes the remark that the expenditures of this budget will mostly be made during 2017.

There was a suggestion made to increase the budget from 27.500 up to 35.000€ because there will be some budget needed for follow up activities. In this 35.000€ there is no budget foreseen for communication. Carsten wants to add 2.500€ here for specific communication activities concerning the conference.

Concerning the conference fees, these will be lower fees for participants of ALTER-Net institutes. We should also considerate a lower fee for SS alumni and students.

Maurice makes an appeal for candidates for the scientific and organizational committee for the conference.

Some people stress out that there will be some follow up needed on this conference. Also DG ENV and DG Research should be included again.

Add an extra (half a) day to the conference to have some training sessions, f.e. a session on science policy interface, on specific calls, other training sessions, on networks to present themselves, ...

Conclusions:

- Let jiska.van.dijk@nina.no know if there are candidates within your institute that would like to participate in the scientific and/or organizational committee.
- Preliminary title of the conference is "Conflicts and trade-offs about human relationships and nature". This might need some further thought to make it more straightforward and appealing.
- There will be some budget available from the mobility fund (5.000€) for travelling to meetings of the scientific committee
- Most meetings will be held through video conferencing or skype.
- Budget of the conference is increased up to 37.500€ (extra is for communication and follow up activities, proceedings, ...)
- Timing: 2-5 May 2017 in Augustinian monastery in Ghent (Belgium)
- Extra (half a) day will be foreseen for some training sessions, ...

10.4. AHIA (doc 5) (doc5bis)

Doc 5 bis shows the state of the art of the paper on citizen science. Maurice congratulates the group to get this paper in a high awarded scientific journal

The new proposal from Timo Assmuth on the relation of Nature based solutions and human health was already approved by council. Budget agreed on was 19.500€.

Last year we allocated 40.000€ for the AHIA , in the end we have selected only one project. The suggestion was made to work with a yearly budget. So another call for AHIA with the rest of the budget (20.500€) will be launched soon (will be done during June 2016, deadline will be 1st of September).

Conclusion:

- New AHIA call 2016 will be launched in June 2016 (done, deadline for applying 1 Sept. 2016)

10.5. MSR (doc 6)

This ALTER-Net activity was called 'Multi Site Experiment' (MSE) before. The purpose was to have the same experiment all over some places.

There was some discussion in the past if we should continue with this or not. A task force was installed (Maurice, Stefan Klotz and Terry Parr) to clear out the procedure and rewrite a bit the goals of this kind of research. Within the task force, there is a consensus about the new text. Now, also sociological questions and socio-economic research is possible.

Maurice indicates that we would like to restart this kind of project and a new call will be launched in 2016. We foresee max. 20.000€ per year for this, and a project can last for max. 3 years.

Conclusion:

- Council agrees to start a new MSR-call in 2016 (done, deadline for applying is 1 Aug. 2016)
- *Update: one proposal received and granted for 5.000€ - Tea time for ALTER-Net*

10.6. Mobility Fund (doc 7)

The goal of this Mobility fund is to have individual researchers to connect and meet with each other within the themes of ALTER-net. The fund takes care of part of travel and lodging costs. Each request is evaluated by some people of the Management Board (Allan Watt, Philip Roche and Jiska van Dijk). It may not be used to attend conferences. The annual budget is 15.000€

There was a suggestion made to limit it to 10.000€ for that goal and the other 5.000€ for other purposes, f.e. willingness to represent ALTER-Net at conferences and for taking part in the science committee for the conference. We think it might stimulate people to get involved in the conferences scientific committee.

Carsten stresses out that every partner should communicate about this in your institute, so that your colleagues should engage with other institutes.

Conclusion:

- 10.000€ for employees of partner institutes to meet each other in person
- 5.000€ for scientific committee meetings in the scope of the next year ALTER-Net conference and representation of ALTER-Net at certain conferences.

10.7. ALTER-Net and EU-projects, including Horizon 2020, collaboration, exchange and networking (doc 8)

It would be appropriate to have some basic funding to get people together to think about designing a proposal. Petteri asks for 10.000€, this is not meant for travel and lodging, but for organizational cost for the partner who organizes this proposal writing.

So institutes that take a lead in organizing a workshop or in proposal writing can make an appeal to this funding.

Miki thinks the current system is good (sending around the spreadsheet with interests), we just need a little bit more updating. Petteri has the experience that this doesn't work.

Lot of the partners are in ALTER-Net because of this activity. The Council agreed on before that we cannot spend ALTER-Net money for travel etc., because the spin-off is for the institute and not at ALTER-Net level.

Allan confirms what Petteri said, the spreadsheet is not working. Petteri now offers to help to organize a meeting about one or more calls (H2020, Biodiversa), there needs to be a principal if this meeting will be open for everyone that will attend. Consortia can only be built with some partners, not everyone can join.

Mihia suggests the name 'project market'.

Olga suggests to organize a general session about several calls and then move into smaller groups which have interest in certain calls.

Tor mentions the low response when the spreadsheet was spread. We must stimulate to people to meet...

Maurice points out to be very careful with this. We cannot use ALTER-Net money for this, when there is competition.

Miki just wants to have the information whom they can join as a smaller institute. Normally institutes are invited for the 'big' calls...

Mihai suggests that every institute should express in the spreadsheet their interest in certain calls, and then also say that there will be a meeting in that period. So work out a new mechanism with of a project market.

Maurice concludes that there is a need for a market or project place. This can be organized back to back with the conference. It works in two ways, you also need to inform Petteri when you see interesting calls.

The discussion arises if there is really 10.000€ needed when it can only be used for organizational costs.

Conclusion:

- Council agrees on the original requested budget of 6.000€
- A kind of 'project market place' should be organized back to back with the conference.
- Every partner is free to have some meetings about certain calls, must be open for everyone and can have some funding for the organizational costs (rooms, catering, ...)

10.8. Science-policy interface (doc 9)

The paper has to be submitted, 17 authors from 11 ALTER-Net institutes worked on this, so it took much more time than anticipated. The paper will be submitted to the journal 'Science of the total Environment'. Open access fee of 2.500€ is asked for this.

EKLIPSE is just starting, important to come up with a new research need. Come up with some activities where ALTER-Net can become a partner.

In autumn there will be a congress with EPBRS, this will be organized by Estelle Ballian. It could be an option to start the collaboration with the EKLISE for ALTER-Net. Labeling it as an ALTER-Net activity is needed/much appreciated.

First meeting EKLIPSE meeting will be held on December 7 and 8 in Brussels.

Conclusion:

- ALTER-Net will fund the open access fee (2.500€ budgeted)

10.9. Infrastructure (doc10)

500 LTER sites which are listed in the DEIMS database (metadata).

Permanent financing of ALTER-Net, 10.000€ was asked for this.

Maurice explains that once someone is granted with funding we (secretariat) make up a new contract with deliverables, we need to be clear on this. When nothing is signed or delivered, the granted budget, cannot be paid out.

Do we agree on continuation of the 10.000€ for this infrastructure? Carsten wants to know in what way ALTER-Net can profit from these LTER database...

Conclusion:

- Council agrees with the continuation of 10.000€

10.10. Common training program (no activities in 2015)

The idea was to organize a workshop, but proposition needs to come from the bottom.

Maurice clears out that this is meant to be held within ALTER-Net, to come together to learn about certain methodologies, certain topics,...This can be seen as a webinar, but could also be a physical meeting

Miki notes that this task has been captured within other projects

Allan would not leave this completely to the SS. Science Policy training could be done during the conference. Carsten confirms this idea to make it back to back with other events.

Conclusion:

- For the moment no budget allocated, but this can still be reconsidered.

11. Spendings and budget: overview (doc12)

Annual secretarial costs budgeted for 10.000€
 Short summary of the presented budget file: the partnership fees added up to 97.500€ in 2015.
 We budgeted last year 190.500€, but only spent around 83.300€

Mihai suggests to have a brainstorming on potential new activities. It would be a good moment to organize this brainstorm on the in between meeting in November 2016.
 Carsten: indeed knowing we have this budget in the back, so we can think about new activities in the meantime. Maybe launch a campaign for biodiversity research in 2020 and beyond.

12. AOB & scheduling next meeting

12.1. Scheduling next meeting

- Date and venue in between meeting aimed to thoroughly discuss the ALTER-Net IV phase (April 2017-March 2020)
 - o Suggestion for Barcelona in November
- Date and venue of the next ‘regular’ council meeting April-May 2017 in Uppsala

13. Actions

What?	Action	Status
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide Andy with relevant news items for the ALTER-Net website - Make ALTER-Net visible on your institutional website - Indicate a communication responsible within your organization with whom Andy can correspond directly - inform Andy on organizational changes within your institute, and check the http://www.alter-net.info/ website on the information given on your institute 	
Partnership	Maurice will contact the director of Alterra.	Alterra will stay partner. Still waiting for the official letter/MoU.
MSR	Launch a new MSR call, deadline 1 st of August 2016	Done. 1 proposal granted
AHIA	Launch a new AHIA call, deadline 1 st of September 2016	Done. 5 proposals received. Still in evaluation
EKLIPSE	Call for expertise – distribute within your institute	
Calls for proposals	Keep Petteri posted on new calls.	
IPBES	Questionnaire on who is involved within your institute	Several answers received, not from

		all partners
Conference 2017	Volunteers needed for scientific committee	OK