

ALTER-Net Management Board Remote Meeting (Skype), 5 February 2018

Attendance: Alan Watt (AW), Jiska van Dijk (JVD), Sonja Jähnig (SJ), Petteri Vihervaara (PV), Andrew Sier (AS), Marie Vandewalle (MV), Joan Pino (JP), Maurice Hoffmann (MH), Tyler Kulfan (TK)

Absent with notice: Mart Kùlvik, Tessa van Santen, Philip Roche

Board Meeting commenced at 13:00.

1. Introductions

Short, general introductions were made for the benefit of new board member Marie Vandewalle and Secretariat Tyler Kulfan

- AW noted his movement toward expanded involvement in EKLIPSE
- SJ noted her current involvement in Horizon Scanning
- JP noted his current work in MSR together with MH
- PV noted his former focus on Biodiversity 2020 and current investment in expanding research infrastructure

2. Call for Proposals - MSR

The Board agreed to launch a new multi-site research goal in February and to distribute the new call based on the October text. Mining proposal is to receive first priority.

In regards to the previously submitted research proposal, more LTER sites are needed. Notice was sent to applicant on December 5th; applicant will be specifically notified that MSR call was launched with a reminder of needed alterations.

MH expressed that call should be launched asap. JVD confirms that call should be launched ASAP and emphasized that a proposal with a number of ALTER-Net partners involved is top preference. It was agreed that the previous call distribution was insufficient; hence, proactive notice to EBONE/Copernicus/LTSER networks.

3. AHIA

ALTER-Net has received three AHIA proposals. Making a short list of total proposals was determined to be unnecessary due to the small number of submissions.

JVD raised the possibility of relaunching call; she expressed that, as the call has already been relaunched once, her opinion is that call should not be relaunched and focus should be kept on the three submitted proposals. It was noted that only one can be funded; MH stated that if none of the three are sufficient, funding should not be given.

PR will organize a committee to consider proposals and make an ultimate decision regarding funding; AW will assist PR.

4. Communication

Online place for MB and Council issues/documents, as part of ALTER-Net website

The matter of shared cloud space for uploading documents from meetings for sharing was discussed. AS raised two possible solutions: creating an area on our own website using a shared password for access; or use a cloud service such as Google Drive or Dropbox.

JVD expressed favor of shared account on website. MH suggested waiting for a concrete example for a sharing cloud interface that is then pitched to the Council and suspending decision until that time. The general Board opinion was that sharing platform shouldn't be open to public but that minutes should be available to Council members by password; it can then be disseminated through institutes by council members. MH stated that is unnecessary to use the website or a cloud in order to have minutes approved retroactively; rather, they should be shared (via Drive or a similar interface), approved by an established date, then publicly shared.

Secretariat will independently determine how to carry out public sharing.

Possible redesign of current ALTER-Net website (First part of 2018)

This matter will be handled independently by AS and TK.

Clearing House Mechanism regarding collaboration upcoming calls (Mart)

This project will be managed by MK, AS, and TK. AS has previously suggested (as a simple solution) a table chart for sharing of calls; a more sophisticated system can then be designed in the future if needed. MV suggested the addition of a section where applicants add the reason for their interest, their backgrounds, field, etc. to table chart; MH agreed that this would bring added value; JVD noted that this addition could give a better indication of the type of data they will bring in, what they will contribute to ALTER-Net's goals. AS raised concern of featuring too much text, but suggested space for important research interest keywords, data types, etc.

5. Summer School

It was announced that the ALTER-Net Summer School will take place from 22nd of August through 1st of September.

An immediate public announcement was suggested, noting students' need for time to prepare their schedules accordingly. MV announced intent to finish key preparatory processes during upcoming weekend, after which an announcement can be made. By the end of February, ALTER-Net will be fully promoting the Summer School.

AW noted that the school program was discussed last week and speaker invitations are currently being distributed, but more are being sought in biodiversity, ecosystem services area; it was requested that potential speaker ideas should be raised to MV or AW. Luke Brander was recommended as a potential candidate.

6. Horizon Scanning Event

It was announced that the topic of the Horizon Scanning Event will be focused on biodiversity, ecosystem services, and related issues. The event will be held in Peyresq, back to back with the ALTER-Net Summer School.

The general sentiment was expressed that audience and participants should have heavy ALTER-Net partner involvement, though the final topic development will affect participation. The possibility of having a neutral, external facilitator was raised.

The next steps in development process will include further work on an opinion paper, idea exchanges, and further engagement with social scientists by SJ. The Board agreed to continue working on drafting this event and clarify the way forward.

7. ALTER-Net Science-Policy Interface & EKLIPSE

The matter of EKLIPSE involvement in 2019 Summer School was raised. The general opinion of the Board was that science-policy interface activity is interwoven with conferences and other ALTER-Net events, as well as policy briefs, participation of European Commission in Summer School, and possibility of alignment with EKLIPSE; there is thus no one single event that focuses on this element. AW stated that science-policy interface is the most important thing that ALTER-Net does; JVD and MH expressed shared opinion that all ALTER-Net activities are in some way focused on this goal of science-policy interface.

8. SDG Initiative

The SDG Initiative is currently being developed under the leadership of JVD; she is currently composing a framework for the ALTER-Net SDG Initiative paper. SYKE has expressed interest in assisting with SDG organization.

9. ALTER-Net 2019 Conference

Council roles in the 2019 Conference organization process (January 2018)

It was expressed that membership partner involvement will be needed to support organization process. TK will send out a notice to all council members concerning this.

Discussion & recommendation of Conference theme

It was suggested by the Council to combine the new Biodiversity Strategy with the SDG work. The European Commission has previously expressed preference for Biodiversity Strategy as central ALTER-Net council Theme. An additional option raised by the Board is to focus on SDGs and contributions of biodiversity research to these goals.

The importance of attracting both social and biodiversity scientists was stressed, emphasizing that the Conference should be a networking activity with as much diverse ALTER-Net member institute participation as possible. As such, the theme should be relevant to both the goals of the Commission and science-policy interface objectives.

AS noted the need for ALTER-Net members to step up in organization process and for whoever takes a lead to help determine what the theme is; he suggested inviting interested persons to propose their own ideas to ensure that theme is relevant to their interests. MH suggested making a call to ALTER-Net members on their conference topical preference and the question of leadership.

Conference topic ideas should be sent to JVD. It was stressed that ideas should be sexy.

10. Additional Discussions

New ALTER-Net memberships were discussed. SJ announced that a marine center has made an application for membership; she will be discussing this possibility with MV this week. MH announced the expressed interest of a small Belgian research group, a Portuguese group, an Irish group, and an Italian group have all expressed interest.

Board Meeting concluded at 14:45.