



Minutes of the 19th General Assembly held in Basel, Switzerland on 27 April 2012

Chair: Jan Karel Mak (President)

Venue: Museum Kleines Klingental, Unterer Rheinweg 26, 4058 Basel, Switzerland

Participants (see Appendix 1):

- 19 delegates, representing 13 member associations in 8 countries
- no observers

NO.	ITEM	ACTION
<u>1.</u>	<u>WELCOME</u>	
1.1.	Jan Karel Mak, ENEP President, welcomed all to the 19 th General Assembly. He thanked Jean-Pierre Biber and ASEP for a wonderful venue and great organisation.	
1.2.	Each participant introduced him- or herself to the General Assembly.	
<u>2.</u>	<u>APPROVAL OF NEW MEMBERS</u>	
2.1.	One new member was presented for approval – VMx (organisation of the Flemish Environmental Managers and Consultants) from Belgium – which was represented by Jochen De Smet and Filip Raymaekers.	
2.2.	The organisation's members include large corporations, and also individuals from government and private consultancy. In the past it has been active mainly in organising seminars for members, however over the last 2 years it has tried to also influence policy and legislation and also to become more international.	
2.3.	VMx was approved as a new member. The Co-ordinator will arrange for them to be added to the website and relevant mailing lists.	Jason
<u>3.</u>	<u>APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS GENERAL ASSEMBLY</u>	
3.1.	The minutes of the previous General Assembly were approved without amendment and signed by the President.	
<u>4.</u>	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</u>	
4.1.	Elisa repeated her plea for all members to join the ENEP Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanNetworkofEnvironmentalProfessionals) and also that local secretariats provide a contact point for students to her (elisa.vignaga@environmentalprofessionals.org).	All
4.2.	Any local secretariats that do have a code of ethics (or equivalent) but have not yet forwarded this to Tinus Pulles (tinus@pulles.eu) should do so as soon as possible.	All
<u>5.</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS</u>	
5.1.	Jan Karel Mak presented ENEP's activities and achievements (see Appendix 2).	

5.2. It was noted that the recent Secretariats Meeting had been very useful, and that it should be repeated every 2 years or so.

6. BUSINESS PLAN

6.1. Jim Thompson, the ENEP Treasurer, introduced the proposed Business Plan and its supporting documents.

6.2. It was suggested that the discussion start internally on how ENEP can increase its exposure and strengthen the ties with its individual members. Tinus suggested joint events with members and workshops on the style of EFCA, possibly generating income from these activities.

6.3. It was agreed that a matrix of activities be put together that would show members against their current activities (e.g. projects, special interest groups, geographic spread of work, etc.). Elisa Vignaga and Tinus Pulles agreed to work on this. Once complete it would be added to the website. Tinus, Elisa

6.4. It was noted that the Risk Register needed to be updated on a few points that had been carried over from the original template. Also, the Register needs definitions of high, medium and low risks. Jim

6.5. Jim Thompson gave a presentation prepared by Kristof De Smet (see Appendix 3).

6.6. Discussion moved onto the involvement of the local secretariats and how it might be possible to make it more “natural” for them to be become involved. It was agreed that a list of member benefits be added to the website and then to ask the local secretariats to link their own websites to this page. Jason

6.7. The President underlined that: 1) ENEP role is to facilitate ideas of member associations and this is not well understood by all; 2) there are communications difficulties to be solved; 3) ENEP is a group of associations and that without the associations there is no ENEP, therefore if the member associations want different services then these need to be brought forward. The role of the ExCo was stated is to find an equilibrium among projects coming from members, knowledge exchange and presence in the EU.

6.8. Matthias Friebel suggested an alternative framework for ENEP, which involved asking the members to govern and control activities, and to use the decentralised strengths of each member association, such that ENEP does not control activities but rather only supports and co-ordinates.

6.9. The bottom-up concept was brought forward again and some GA representatives stated that this works in their own associations, with individual members organizing events successfully. This was agreed that it could be difficult to achieve in an association as vast as ENEP but could work. Some other members suggested using the strength of the individual members: this could increase the activities of the working groups.

6.10. It was noted that the Working Groups were set up as a way to encourage greater member participation, but that other activities are probably required too. It was also noted that ENEP does already facilitate member activities in Brussels through, for example, the Project Officer setting up meetings with EC officials.

6.11. There was a general call for any member association with a plan or proposal for an activity to bring it forward so ENEP can look into how it can help to deliver the activity (e.g. sources of information, finding speakers, providing a venue in Brussels, etc.). All

6.12. A discussion was brought forward on how the Environmental Professional is perceived in the various countries. In the Netherlands and in Switzerland it is well established, whereas in the UK and Italy is not as well recognised.

6.13. It was agreed that the ENEP Platform will not be audited at this time, but will be included in the next LIFE+ funding application. Simon

- 6.14. It was agreed that ENEP needs a Communications Strategy. Jochen De Smet and Elisa Vignaga agreed to start work on this. A paper will be presented to the next General Assembly. Jochen, Elisa
- 6.15. It was noted that there are other sources of funding in Europe, but also that ENEP now has experience of LIFE+ and that the initial application was only just short of receiving funding. Feedback on the application from the EC was also mostly positive and encouraging.
- 6.16. There was a brief discussion on holding only one General Assembly per year. It was however noted that this would involve a significant change to the way that ENEP operates and would then also require member associations and the Working Groups to be very much more proactive than they currently are. It was therefore agreed to keep two General Assemblies per year.
- 6.17. There was a discussion on an increase to the membership fee, which has not changed since 2002, and some associations had concerns about this scenario. It was suggested that an alternative way to look at this could be to ask the members directly what they want from ENEP, how they want to be involved, and then charge them a corresponding fee.
- 6.18. It was proposed that a membership fee increase be discussed at the next General Assembly, which would be in addition to applying for LIFE+ funding. ExCo
- 6.19. The Business Plan was agreed without modifications other than in the risk register.

7. FORTHCOMING GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

- 7.1. There was discussion concerning attendance at the next General Assembly, planning to take place in Helsinki, Finland in September 2012. After further discussion and asking each member association present to say if they would be attending the Finland General Assembly it was found that the meeting would very likely not be quorate¹ and so the meeting would have no power to make decisions. Only 6 members indicated that they would definitely attend. The main reason put forward by those members indicating that they would not attend was the cost of getting to Finland.
- 7.2. It was agreed that the September 2012 General Assembly be moved from Helsinki to Brussels. The Co-ordinator will inform the Finnish member, FAEP, of the decision and also make arrangements for Brussels. Jason
- 7.3. It was further agreed that a General Assembly in Finland must not be seen as impossible for the future, but that it is now unlikely for the next year or so.
- 7.4. It was agreed that the spring 2013 General Assembly would be held on 21-22 March 2013 and not be in Brussels, but rather it would preferably be held somewhere relatively cheap and easy to get to. Suggestions included asking COAMB to help organise the meeting in Barcelona, Spain or the VDI in Düsseldorf, Germany. ExCo, Jason

8. HORIZON SCANNING AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 8.1. Simon Pascoe gave a presentation on his work as Project Officer (see Appendix 4), in which he particularly reiterated the importance of ENEP's engagement with the EU institutions. He also asked for feedback on the topics presented in the Newsflash and asked to send him new ideas.
- 8.2. There was a brief discussion on whether a recent graduate or post-graduate student would be able to help support the work of the Project Officer. Simon will look into how this might help him and, if found to be useful, circulate a job specification to all member associations. Simon
- 8.3. Simon repeated that he is able to make rapid links into EU institutions if member

¹ To be quorate a minimum of 50% of voting members need to be present, which would be 11 members (or more) currently.

associations need these.

- 8.4. Regarding the LIFE+ funding application, Simon said that ENEP would be able to apply for up to a maximum of €198,000 in this coming round of applications. He also restated that ENEP would need to be able to provide 30% of the total funding.
- 8.5. Matthias Friebel asked about the risks involved in applying for a grant. Kristof Desmet, Simon Pascoe and Jan Karel Mak explained that:
- to an ENEP member participating in the tender there is no risk at all, because it is all about an activity that the member is doing anyway, and only the financing of it has an altered administrative base, amounting to member money being administrated as part of the ENEP budget but being repaid to the member;
 - to ENEP as a whole there are two risks:
 1. Getting funding for a programme item, not carrying out the agreed activities, and then being summoned to pay back the funding while this money may have been spent on other things in the meantime;
 2. Using the funding to build something that will keep costing money in the following year, when the grant may not be renewed.Risk 1 is minimised by diligent, strict project management. Risk 2 is excluded by not proposing anything that will go beyond one year; e.g., ENEP will not hire any staff.
- 8.6. Regarding Green Week 2012, Simon reminded those present that if they are interested in attending they should contact him, and that they will need to register themselves online.
- 8.7. Simon ended his presentation with a call for input from members: All
- What are the top three things you would like to do in the next 6 months?
 - Please get involved at Green Week 2012
 - Contribute to resubmission of LIFE+ application (the call for submissions will be in September, and the deadline for submissions will be the end of November).
 - Contribute to the response to the Green Paper on Green Infrastructure

9. ACCREDITATION TASK FORCE UPDATE

- 9.1. Tinus Pulles, the Accreditation Task Force chair, opened the discussion. It was noted that “accreditation” means different things to different people and is viewed differently in different countries and different sub-sectors of the environmental profession. It does however have great value for some and could be an added benefit to members.
- 9.2. It was noted that a “heavy” accreditation option (rather than a “light” option) would add more value but that it would involve more work which would have to be done by the local secretariats and so they would need some kind of income from the process. However, Tinus underlined the complexity of the Directive that relates to the “heavy” option and stated that this will entail each member association enforcing the option with regard to their own members and this could be a lengthier and more demanding process.
- 9.3. There was a discussion on what credibility would actually be gained from accreditation and it was noted that an initial threshold of accredited individuals would need to be built up in the first instance. Creditability would also be based on a transparent process and ENEP being able to show that each member association that can bestow the accreditation is up to the same high standard.
- 9.4. The “evolutionary” process of moving from a light to a heavy option was discussed and it was generally accepted that this could work. There was also concern that if ENEP did not take the initiative that another organisation would do this and it would

be a lost opportunity.

9.5. It was however noted that there are some legal issues that need to be looked into for the heavy option. And there was also concern over the amount of “policing” that would need to be done.

9.6. It was agreed that a Code of Conduct will be developed, and that this would be ready for the next General Assembly. The possibility for a heavy option (i.e. accreditation) will be explored (using the Code of Conduct as its basis), and also presented to the next General Assembly, together with financial, operational and legal information.

Accredit.
Task Force²

9.7. Simon Pascoe and Kristof De Smet will look into the possibilities of funding for the “heavy” accreditation option.

Simon,
Kristof

10. CHANGES TO THE BYELAWS

10.1. The proposed changes to the Byelaws were approved without amendment. The Co-ordinator will arrange for the official copy to be amended and posted on the website.

Jason

11. FINANCIAL UPDATE

11.1. Jim Thompson reported that ENEP had ended the last financial year with only a €3,000 deficit, which was better than expected due to an underspend. He also reminded the Working Groups that they also have a budget allocation.

11.2. Jim continued to say that the deficit for 2012 will probably be significantly larger (probably in the region of €15,000).

11.3. The audited statement was approved by the General Assembly and signed by the President.

12. WORKING GROUPS UPDATES

12.1. EMS Working Group

12.1.1. Matthias Friebel (chair) updated the General Assembly on the activities of the group. He reported that the group currently has 6-7 members and is in need of more.

12.1.2. The group last met in March 2012 and has achieved the objectives for which it was set up. It is active at the highest levels of the EU in expert groups and committees concerned with Environmental Management Systems. The group is also part of the ISO14001 technical committees (including 4 sub-committees) and helping to work on the ISO14001 revision.

12.1.3. The group has organised (with input from the Project Officer) the next EMS Forum for 8 May 2012 in Brussels.

12.1.4. Matthias also reported that VNU has now founded “EMS Club Europe”, which met in Brussels in mid-April for the first time. The European Commission has agreed to support the group, but not financially.

12.2. Biodiversity Working Group

12.2.1. Mike Barker (chair) updated the General Assembly on the activities of the group, which had only recently been established and has 4 members.

12.2.2. The group is now working on the EC Green Infrastructure Strategy, and hoping to run an event on this in Brussels once the paper has been adopted (probably autumn 2012).

12.2.3. While the group were waiting for the Green Infrastructure papers to be published they helped with the LIFE+ funding application.

12.2.4. The group also helped to organise the side event attached to this General Assembly, which was very well received with high calibre speakers.

² Accreditation Task Force: Tinus Pulles (chair), Jim Thompson, Matthias Friebel, Adam Donnan

12.2.5. Mike noted that there may be other activities that the group will also get involved with.

13. POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS

13.1. There were no potential members to discuss. It was noted that ENEP needs to continue to look for members in Central and Eastern Europe, and also Scandinavia.

13.2. There was a discussion on the possibility of offering the first year of membership free to help attract new members. This was agreed and the Executive Committee were tasked with updating the Byelaws to allow for this. ExCo

14. CLOSE AND DEPART

14.1. Jean-Pierre Biber and ASEP were thanked for hosting the General Assembly and for all of their efforts in its preparation. As small token of thanks was presented.

14.2. Jan Karel Mak thanked everyone for their participation and wished them a safe journey home.

14.3. The General Assembly closed at 15:45.

APPENDICES:

1. List of Participants
2. Activities and Achievements
3. Business Plan presentation
4. Project Officer Report

*Jason M. Reeves (ENEP Co-ordinator)
Elisa Vignaga (ENEP General Secretary)
May 2012*