



## **ENEP General Assembly 12 April 2013, Brussels, Belgium**

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENDA PAPER**

#### **8. THE ENEP OF TOMORROW**

As discussed at the end of the latest ENEP General Assembly, your Executive Committee holds the view that ENEP in its current form is unable to fulfill the goals set. Two mutually interacting conditions for this are not fulfilled: ENEP is not a really active network (we lack 'connectivity'), and ENEP lacks the means to be operationally successful (we have no 'executive power'). Throughout ENEP's existence there has not been enough of a strong, cohesive volunteer basis to guarantee a sound activity level, and there is no money to bring in enough professional resources to do so.

#### ***Our Resources***

Currently ENEP uses the services of:

- Simon Pascoe as our Project Officer. He officially works for ENEP 1 day a week, in reality he spends at least 1.5 day a week on average throughout the year; for this ENEP pays €1,500 a month. He is based in Brussels and interacts with many other NGO's who deal with the EC and the EP.
- Jason Reeves as our Coordinator. He officially works for ENEP 0.5 day a week , in reality he spends about 1 day a week throughout the year; for this ENEP pays €450 per month.
- ExCo members (Jim Thompson, Elisa Vignaga, Bruno Weinzaepfel, Kristof Desmet and Jan Karel Mak). They spend varying amounts of time on ENEP (the President, e.g., about 20 days and €1,500 per year; our Vice-President Kristof about 20 days as well, our Treasurer at least 30, our General Secretary in the same region, and our Vice-President Bruno in total a little less but with very busy periods). None of them ever charge anything to ENEP in time or travel/hotel cost.
- A volunteer (currently Alice Goodbrook) paid by the Leonardo Programme (receiving €3,300 for three months); three times this year but ending in the near future.
- AIAT members who manage the ENEP IT services (web hosting, e-mail accounts, mailing-lists, ENEP Platform, LinkedIn group). AIAT charged for this €4,000 per year in 2012.

## ***Our Current Activities***

What our members see and can use from ENEP is the following:

- The Bulletin (4 times a year)
- The Newsflash (10 times a year)
- Setting up of contacts, funding efforts, supporting working groups, engagement in high-level events, attendance of relevant conferences, seeking opportunities for members – by Simon
- The Platform, with 2,000 registered members
- General Assemblies and side events

This current level of activities is not sustainable: ENEP is losing money annually and eating up its reserves. Even without the cost of preparing funding proposals for the Life+ Programme, our expenses exceed our income.

## ***Our Ambitions***

If we summarise our business plan very briefly, we find three top priorities, each of which will receive a different liking from each member association:

1. Increase internal contacts among professionals; to that end improve/develop a truly interactive, functional, simply entered internet communication tool (→ strategy goal: develop ENEP as a true network of professionals).
2. Develop a professional accreditation process and system (→ strategy goal: increase recognition and acknowledgement of Environmental Professionals in Europe; secondary benefit: increase ENEP income).
3. Gain influence in EC environmental decision making (→ strategy goal: help improve EU environmental policy).

In trying to address each of these priorities (to cater to the interests of all our members), with our current resources we have been unable to make any relevant progress on any of these.

## ***Our Options***

### **Option 1: 'Business as Usual'**

We accept the limitations of our current income level, and accept our inability to fulfill our ambitions mentioned above.

The only way to at least in part get something done in the area of these ambitions is to have the following three conditions fulfilled:

- a. The member associations become much more proactive – they respond to emails to begin with, they provide volunteers and make sure these volunteers do their work, and they actively promote ENEP within their own organisation.
- b. The ExCo must be expanded with people who can be truly active volunteers for extended periods: people that are not only motivated, but that also have the skills, experience, self-discipline and financial means to make a difference – people who are able and willing to spend substantial time on ENEP for some years.

- c. Working Groups become much more active – and finance themselves when they go beyond the sum total of €5,000 per year available in the current budget.

*Given ExCo's experience over the last decade, we do not see a., b. and c. happening: we have been unable to make it happen. We therefore think this option is limited to 'muddling through', and choosing it means accepting we will not fulfill our ambitions.*

### Option 2: 'Slim down priorities'

We accept that we cannot continue serving all goals with our current means. We therefore drop one priority to get some more time and money for the other ones. E.g.:

- Drop the Platform to reinstate legislation information updates;
- Drop Brussels contacts to improve the Platform;
- Drop the Newsflash to have more time to chase volunteers within the member associations to do their homework, to follow up on contacts, etc.

*Our member Associations have widely differing priorities. Choosing this option can therefore be expected to cause a long, unproductive debate. No matter what the outcome of this will be, a number of member associations will be frustrated, and it will cause damage to our cohesion, morale and perhaps to membership. Moreover, it will lead to abandoning some of the goals laid down in our Statutory objectives and our Vision and Values (2006, Bergamo).*

### Option 3: 'Face the Brutal Facts and Break the Vicious Cycle'

We acknowledge that we have exhausted the options of significantly increasing our income by other means than our membership fees. Limited by our lack of executive power, we have been unable to get any significant income out of our website, the Platform, sponsorships, the Sigrid Rausing Trust, the Toyota Foundation, etc.; and despite major investments in time and money, we have failed twice in getting a grant from the EU Life+ scheme.

We are in a vicious cycle: because we have too little executive power and money, we cannot improve our performance and we cannot build a truly active network. As a result, few people (including potential sponsors) know or appreciate ENEP and not many people see it, let alone use it, as a useful tool to communicate, exchange knowledge, get information, influence EU policies.

We know that some of our member associations are in financial difficulties, that there is a Euro crisis and that unemployment is high in parts of Europe, but we must also recognise that ENEP cannot continue like this. In this option, we therefore increase the current fee level of €1 per year (which it has been since we were founded in 2002) to €3 per year. (The minimum fee level will go up from €250 to €350, the maximum from €7,000 to €10,000.)

This increase could be made transparent by the member associations to their members by making it explicit on their annual bill, e.g. the VVM could charge as follows for a full member:

*Today:*

€125 VVM membership

*New set-up:*

€122 VVM membership

€3 Mandatory contribution to ENEP membership

*The ExCo finds this the most realistic and promising way forward as a way of breaking the current vicious cycle.*

Example of global budget changes for 2014 within option 3 (in €, assuming membership constant):

**Extra Income:**

Extra membership fee	25,600
SocEnv full membership	5,800

**Extra Expenses:**

Deficit elimination + reserve buildup	5,000
Working group funding	5,000
Travel reimbursement for activities	2,000
Project Officer 0.5 day/week extra <sup>1</sup>	10,000
Coordinator support increase 0.5 d/w <sup>2</sup>	5,000
Website/Platform improvement (extra)	4,500

<sup>1</sup> To support & energise internal initiatives/communication, Association contacts

<sup>2</sup> To support/oversee working groups, organise meetings, support ExCo, GA organisation, banking, website maintenance

Of course, many other combinations of extra activities are possible, with more focus on one or two priorities rather than on the whole spectrum.

***In Conclusion***

*The ExCo has struggled with the above problems for many years now. In the General Assembly, we have had debates over aspects of this problem a number of times. We, the ExCo, strongly feel that the moment has come to make a fundamental choice, as announced at the end of the latest General Assembly. We must face the brutal facts and act upon them.*

*The Executive Committee is only a tool in the hands of you, the member Associations: it is your Federation. The future room for an Executive Committee to be useful as that tool depends upon the choice the General Assembly is going to make. ExCo members and what professional staff they have cannot be expected to keep fighting an uphill battle.*

*We invite each of you to discuss this not only at the upcoming GA, but also within your own Association. A final decision on our finances needs to be made in the Autumn GA.*