

Draft minutes EBCC Board meeting, April 2022

**Verkehrshaus der Schweiz, Lucerne
4 April 2022 0930–1300 hrs**

Present: Mark Eaton (Chair, ME), Verena Keller (Vice Chair, VK), Dawn Balmer (Secretary, DB), Chris van Turnhout (Treasurer, CvT), Aleksí Lehtikoinen (AL), Mikhail Kalyakin (MK), Henning Heldbjerg (HH), Danae Portolou (DP), Petr Voříšek (PV), Alena Klvaňová (AK), Anna Staneva (AS), Sergi Herrando (SH), Gabriel Gargallo (GG), Ainars Aunins (AA), Jean-Yves Paquet (J-YP)

Apologies: Szabolcs Nagy

1. Conference update

Attendance at the conference has been affected by Covid-19 with a few last-minute cancellations. There is no attendance by Russia or Belarus, though there will be one attendee from Ukraine. Alexander Mischenko has asked Verena to read out a letter, which she will do. The organisation of the conference has gone well. There were 260 participants booked, and now 245 registered. There is good participation from African countries. There is an African workshop in Sempach after the conference. Excursions are well planned. The offer to go to Riga in three years time is still valid from AA and the board is very happy to stick to that plan.

2. AGM

ME will give the Chairman's report, CvT will deliver the Financial Report and HH will deliver the Delegates update. HH will leave the Board after c12 years and we thank him for his hard work and support over those years. DP will take on the role of Delegate Officer. We propose that SH will join the Board. It will be a straightforward procedure for SH to join the board at the AGM; there are no other candidates. There are some changes in delegates to announce. In 2021 there were three changes: Latvia (Oskars Keiss replaces Andris Dekants), Spain (Virginia Escandell González replaces Juan Carlos del Moral) and Switzerland (Nicolas Strebel replaces Verena Keller). VK said that two or three other Albanians are joining the conference and it would be worth talking to them as possible delegates. The updated Delegates list is on the website. ME and VK will stay on for now in the role of Chair and Vice Chair. No offers from the current Board and we agreed it would be harder to bring in people from outside the Board. ME reiterated that he still encourages interest in the Chair's role at any time.

3. Secretariat

We have previously discussed the idea of supporting a paid-for Secretariat to help with a range of tasks and since then ME, VK and CvT have progressed discussions with CSO (AK, PV) and looked at overlap of work areas with existing funding. We propose to spend €35,500 for the rest of 2022, in order to fund a Secretariat at CSO. PV will do the bulk of the work, with AK working as the

Communications Officer, although it will be good to involve new staff to share knowledge/experience. An important part of the role will be to look for funding for future years, such as the EU and to also bring in funding for Small Grants Fund. The proposal is to fully fund 2022, and then reduce commitment over the next two years, €26,600 in 2022, €25,000 in 2023, and €10,000 in 2024. VK said there was approximately €29,000 also available in the CSO account from Species Sponsorship. VK suggests this money should be earmarked for tasks following up from EBBA2. We will look at what tasks can be covered by the funds at CSO, on the understanding that some EBCC funds may need to be used for EBBA2 tasks. 10000 Swiss Francs from Vogelvarte should be used this year. VK says to make it clear in the Financial Report the difference between Secretariat and Small Grant Fund (expenses and income). Plan to bring in a new person to support PV and AK in due course, to share knowledge. We discussed how we would explain this to the conference – it is experimental but can be supported by EBCC, and it is the right time for EBCC to look at this option. Learning and managing the project well will be important.

AP: Plan out estimated costs for tasks that need to be carried out by the Secretariat

There will be an overarching MOU governing the relationship, accompanied by annual funding agreements. We need to think about how we engage with organisations that might be able to contribute funds in the future. CvT said that fixed contribution could be difficult, and AS agreed that BirdLife International could also find fixed contribution difficult as they are project-led. VK is very positive about this move – it was identified 12 years ago as a priority in EBCC Board minutes! Thanks to SOI for ongoing support, especially with the atlas which has enabled us to be in this position.

4. Financial Report

CvT updated us on the financial position. The report for the AGM is ready and has been approved by Financial Audit Committee. Capital as of 31 Dec 2021 was over €77,000 and is currently €88,000 – our financial situation has much improved. There has been €45,000 of income, mostly from EBBA2 sales and some data charges. There have been few expenses due to the lack of physical meetings. Banking costs are quite high. There has been some expenditure to support monitoring in Serbia.

Small Grants

We've not done as much work on this as we would have liked. There is enough funding to support Serbia, Moldova and Russia this year. There have been discussions with Montenegro, though we are unlikely to support them this year. €10,000 euros for the Small Grant fund this year (€3,000 for Serbia, €3,000 for Moldova). We need to think about the implications of direct financial support for monitoring in Russia. CvT thought that practically may not be able to transfer funds to Russia anyway. We can announce set-out plans for the Small Grant Fund. Funds for a full range of work areas will be considered – start-up funding for new monitoring schemes, emergency funding, and capacity building.

5. EBP

GG updated us on EBP. He is talking with the Commission about applying for a new proposal this year. The call for the launch will be in May and will cover three areas. GG described the potential funding proposal and we agreed not to minute as these ideas are confidential.

EFSA work is going well. Modelling where outbreaks in AI could be shows 76% accuracy where the next outbreak could be. There is potential for a new contract for four years. At the workshop

the Migration Mapping Tool will be launched, followed by a short EBP meeting. Later this month the Migration Atlas will be launched.

6. BCN

For the next issue, there are plans for two Covid-related papers, from UK and Catalonia. There will also be a short summary of the conference. Plans to interview ME and JYP. Updates on monitoring schemes and screenshots. We could also focus on bird monitoring schemes that collect data on other taxa; a questionnaire to scheme coordinators; the Catalanian scheme has started collecting mammal data (SH); the BTO could write about their modelling of mammal data (DB). Regarding the Proceedings of the Evora EBCC conference, papers will be emailed to authors this week. All volumes of BCN have now been scanned and the next job is to collect metadata on authors, co-authors, and titles to make the archive searchable. Will be deposited at Biodiversity Heritage Library.

7. Research

The first EBBA2 paper is out, one has been submitted to *Nature Comms*, and one to *Nature Ecology and Evolution*. SH has dealt with some EBBA2 data requests. Horizon calls coming later this year so we need to make some plans, perhaps when the Secretariat is up and running. We need a single person to know what calls are out there, and to coordinate an EBCC response. AS spoke about the Biodiverse stakeholder group, Martin Harper is representing BirdLife International on the Enlarged Stakeholder Board and AS confirmed BirdLife can participate in Biodiversa calls for projects.

8. EBBA2

There were 10 data requests in 2021 and 13 requests since the launch of the website. Most requests are simple but at least half needed some discussion.

VK reminded us that where possible we should consider using EBCC affiliation as well as our personal institute. It's a good way of showing EBCC work to a broader audience and gives EBCC a better profile. Consider what postal address to use for EBCC affiliation. The official seat of EBCC is in the Netherlands. VK suggested coordinators of European projects, Steering Committee, Board members and potentially ex-Board members.

AP: Consider what postal address to use for EBCC affiliation.

The new website is working really well. A huge amount of work went into it! Since last week you can now download the maps as well. Congratulations from the Board to the EBCC2 team for the excellent book, and now the wonderful website. The Mava report has now been completed. The next step is to look at how national coordinators can access the data they provided. Papers on population change in Russia, population estimates, and possibilities of Life atlas data are current areas of work. There are just 200 copies of the EBBA2 book left.

9. PECBMS

AK updated us on PECBMS and told us they had signed an addendum for further work. The main challenge is funding for 2023, AK will arrange a meeting with Anne Teller. Priorities are to speed up the process of publication of trends, explore species-specific monitoring programmes and produce habitat-specific indicators. There has been a PECBMS workshop with c. 30 participants online, and a discussion on the SLACK platform.

10. Communications

Plan to rename the EBBA2 Twitter account to EBCC. EBP already stopped using their Twitter

account in 2020. Newsletters are going well with a c. 60% opening rate and there are still new subscribers joining. Not many articles are published on the EBCC website.

11. Next meeting

Consider Belgium for the next meeting in spring 2023 (late March) – third time lucky! Continue with the shorter interim meetings.

Dawn Balmer
Secretary