**MINUTES 17/3/2021**

In attendance: Vinicius Ribeiro, Bjorn-Erik Lonn (BEL), Yulia Gracheva, Eva Eiderstrom, Xiaodan Zhang, Chin-Yuan Chen, Takashi Fujisaki, Hiroyuki Kobayashi, KS (Giri) Venkatagiri, and Kate Harris (KH) (Secretariat).

Please note decisions are underlined and actions are placed in **bold font.**

Meeting was called to order at 10:03 GMT

Quorum acknowledged.

**Administrative Matters**

* 1. **Welcome by the Chair**

Bjorn-Erik welcomed everyone and formally opened the meeting.

The Chair discussed unlikely that we will be face to face for the next 6 months and cknowledged positive developments with secretariat transition and function.

The Chair also outlined an opportunity with UNEP and the One planet Consumer Information working group WG2- to discuss the revision of the ecolabelling training. There is potential for the contract to be with GEN and for Kate Harris to deliver the contract in addition to the current Secretariat Services. It was noted that there are several WG members who are also on the GEN Board. Xiaodan and Xiaohui are now also on the Advisory Committee for the CI SCP-program together with Yulia and Bjorn-Erik.

It was also suggested that due to UNEP being 50 years in 2022, that there could also be an opportunity for elevating exposure of ecolabels in 2022.

**Action: Board members who are involved in the UNEP work are to ask to:**

**Identify any opportunities for ecolabels in 2022 and**

**Clarify the future of the One Planet program which was set to end in 2022.**

Eva highlighted the UN conference in Sweden will be on sustainable consumption, 2022.

* 1. **Approval of Board meeting agenda**

Decision: Board approved agenda noting that there is a new format prioritizing operational before strategic agenda items, to ensure informed decision making. Board members were asked to notify the Secretariat if they have any questions or concerns about document dissemination.

* 1. **Approval of January Board meeting minutes and standing action items**

Decision: Board approved minutes.

* Board reviewed Action Items- nil further changes.

1. **Operational**
   1. **Secretariat report**

-Secretariat (KH) outlined efforts on governance and completing Delaware filing and updating. It was acknowledged that we would discuss benefits and barriers of Delaware registration in the bylaws agenda item, later in this meeting.

KH also outlined that the BMU grant decision was still outstanding and had required further submissions.

It was recommended that we continue to follow up all Green Building council members to support next level conversations for potential affiliate membership.

**Actions:**

**KH also to follow up ISEAL regarding possible joint meeting of members, sharing of strategy document and feedback on company registration within the United Kingdom- and notes from Google meeting to be shared for interest. Secretariat to action with support from Giri.**

**The Chair outlined his presentation with ISEAL and was asked to send out slides from ISEAL talk to Board members (DONE)**

* 1. **GENICES Update**

The Board reviewed the GENICES tracking document and confirmed dates of intended prioritized audits for 2021.

Decision: Clarification on allocation of auditors were confirmed- **please see attached GENICES tracking documented updated for reference.**

It was acknowledged that there is a large number of audits expected this year.

**Other actions:**

**Eva to send through any templates and / or guidance after the first remote initial GENICES audit takes place.**

**Secretariat to continue to support coordination of GENICES audits. Board members to cc Secretariat in emails so that there is transparency of progression of audits.**

* 1. **Magazine #39 due for release- for noting**

Secretariat provided final magazine for noting. It was also acknowledged that the formal approval for the magazine is with the Chair and whilst not formally required, the Secretariat will avail publications to the Board as able. This approach was supported.

Yulia requested that the updated Vitality Leaf logo be used in the new magazine and confirmed she will resend the logo.

**Action: Secretariat to update the logo as above (DONE)**

* 1. **Communications schedule including intended Greenseal supported webinar**

Secretariat provided a suggested communications schedule with content and themes. This included a webinar supported by Greenseal and possible launch of video.

Secretariat also discussed the likelihood of the AGM being virtual versus in place which will shape the communications schedule. Communications sub- committee will also be consulted.

This will be decided in the May meeting, noting that 6 months prior is an appropriate time frame for decision.

Other discussion included the importance of ensuring the right audience to be presen- not those already dedicated to ecolabelling. Suggested that retailers and suppliers to consumers would also be relevant. Noted that it is intended to be focused on a Western centric/ European audience. Other suggested content was for an ISO update on the current ISO 14020 standards progression.

**Action Location of AGM- virtual or in place to be decided by May 2021**

**3 Special Projects**

**3.1 Type 1 Video Ecolabelling campaign**

Secretariat outlined that the video has been finished and we are now focussed on a promotion and dissemination plan.

The feedback from the Board was positive- described as sharp and crisp.

Suggestions from Board members re dissemination of video include:

Direct to the website with a strong landing page

Ensure tracking of hits and visits to landing page if possible / subscriber request

Landing page- to help direct next cause of action

Host a virtual launch event in parallel with a webinar.

**Action: KH to send link to video but not for sharing. Decide how we will measure the success of the campaign**

Decision: Publishing date discussed as quarter 2 with aim for May/ June /July (Autumn at earliest).

It was also discussed as to whether we should wait till we have a new website before launching but it was acknowledged that this was too far away in regards to timing.

* 1. **New website**

**- Secretariat presented the three proposal to date for the website- acknowledging limited scope.**

Moving forward, the communications sub- committee will be responsible for progressing the proposal and defning the scope of work. Three proposals will be now for the recommendation from the sub- committee and for formal approval via email by board members. It was acknowledged that the Board has been consulted.

**Decision:** The sub-committee will put forward a recommendation to the Board for formal approval prior to progressing.

**Action: Sub-committee and Secretariat to action**

* 1. **Database**

The Secretariat explained the recommendation that Origin felt more pilot members would be an advantage. The Board confirmed current members.

It was also discussed that there would be two methods of participation- API and manual entry.

Yulia recommended that there be a database meeting between the 29th – 31st of March (subject to Origin’s availability)

Eva to also volunteer a representative for the Origin pilot meeting but will not commit further at this time.

**Action:**

**Secretariat to schedule Origin pilot database meeting**

**Board members to suggest further participants for involvement**

**Eva to send forward the individual for pilot meeting involvement (DONE)**

**4 Finance and Governance**

**4.1 GAO update**

Hiro provided an update on finances including those members who have sought fee reduction/ exemption.

These will be brought to the May Board meeting for final decision.

In regards to the financial statements for 2020, GAO will provide draft finances for the May meeting for the formal adoption of accounts prior to sending to auditors.

Timing is for final accounts and financial statement to be finalised at the May GEN Board meeting and then to be sent to the auditors by the end of May. This will ensure that we receive the audited financial report well prior to the August publication of the GEN Magazine.

It was also noted that on current process, the GEN accounts are published in the magazine prior to the formal approval of the members, however noting that this is a publication only, there is still scope for a revision and resubmission and publication if required post AGM.

**5 Strategy and Sub-Committees**

**5.1 Convenor updates**

Chair/ BEL provided update on the ISO work and the progression of the ISO 14020 standard.

It was also acknowledged that Eva would host specific discussion on the by- laws on the subsequent agenda ite.

All sub committees provided updates.

The Secretariat suggested that ideally we would be looking to achieve a common standard across all members.

Meeting Part A adjourned at 12:51 GMT

Meeting Part B commenced at 10:05 GMT

Chin- Yuan Chen arrived at 10.20 GMT ( apology received prior)

**5.2 Approval of Sub- Commitees Work plan activities**

* All convenors of sub- committees were given an opportunity to discuss activities including potential changes.
* Chair suggested two meetings before the May meeting with a required progress update at the August Board meeting prior to the AGM.
* Secretariat discussed possible template for terms of reference- supported in principle.
* Chair also suggested reference to the code of conduct/ policy manual as provided on the website.
* It was also acknowledged that there are interlinkages between the by- laws and GENICES review and this these may need to be reviewed in parallel.
* **Action:**
* **KH to communicate out to all the sub committees and suggest to commence a first call.**
* **KH to place work plan activity confirmation for decision as presented by all convenors.**
* **Sub convenors to have hosted two meetings between now and the May meeting- one introductory and one to progress the work and to report back in May.**
* **KH to provide one page terms of reference template for convenors to populate.**
* **Board members to provide feedback and comments on terms of reference template- short period of feedback to be confirmed.**

**5.3 By- laws progression**

Eva outlined the comments and suggested considerations from the Board members.

The document provided also outlined discussions from previous Board meetings.

There are key decisions needed in regards to:

* Further defining of membership levels (eg how to manage associate members who are not meeting GENICES)
* Requirements of members
* Delegations and authority of sub- committees

Fors and against

The Board also discussed the benefits and concerns about Delaware registration.

Eva to progress key considerations with sub- committee and ensure they are shared with the Board in the August/ September meeing prior to the AGM.

**Action: Chair to approach ISEAL for feedback on UK registration experience (DONE)**

**6 General Business / Other Agenda items**

**6.1 information process management**

The proposed timing of documents was noted. No other changes were suggested from the Board members, however there was a preference for future Board papers to be on dropbox prior to the Board meeting.

**Action: Secretariat to amend the information management process document for future implementation.**

**6.2 World Ecolabel Day (WED) & 2021 AGM initial discussion**

Secretariat sought confirmation that there is still commitment to repeating world ecolabel day.

This was agreed.

KH outlined that the 2020 delivery of World Ecolabel Day was successful and suggested a repeat of similar activities.

In particular the Linked in paid advertising was very successful (as based on linked in click through metrics).

It was recommended that a WED strategy be put to the Communications sub-committee and that possible testing occur.

Other ideas included a suggested webinar and or white paper for promotion and dissemination.

**Action:**

**KH to explore testing with Yulia**

**KH to design up draft WED campaign strategy- based on successes of 2020**

**6.3 AGM follow up/ Other agenda items**

Nil further 2020 AGM follow up was needed.

Significant dates for 2021 confirmed.

14th of October is World Ecolabel Day. (in line with every second Thursday in October)

Eva and Secretariat had recollection of AGM dates 2021 being 18-22nd of October but there is no confirmed calendar entry as of yet.

Nil further agenda items.

Chair thanked the Board and Secretariat for an efficient meeting.

**Meeting close**

**1250 GMT 10.2.21**

Next Board meeting confirmed for virtual / online on the 19th and 20th of May, 2021

Secretariat to email out new Board invites for above and also 8th and 9th of September.