**MINUTES draft 13/9/2022**

**31 August 2022**

In attendance: Vinicius Ribeiro, Eva Eiderstrom (joined 10.37am), Bjorn-Erik Lonn (joined 10.41am), Yulia Gracheva, Xiaodan Zhang, Chin-Yuan Chen, Takashi Fujisaki (joined 10.22am), Hiroyuki Kobayashi, and Kate Harris (Secretariat)

Apology:  
KS (Giri) Venkatagiri, Part A

Meeting was called to order at 10:06 GMT

*Decisions are in italic*

**Actions are marked in bold**

1. **Administrative issues**
   1. Quorum present
   2. Welcomed by Chair. All shared an update on their region. It was higlighted that the revision of the GENICES and the revision of the bylaws would be discussed as key topics in this meeting.
   3. *Agenda for the August meeting was approved.* It was noted that there was a lot to cover and that item 3.1 would require longer time to discuss.
   4. *Minutes of the 2022 #2 April Spring Board meeting were approved with agreed amendments at item 4.5.* Action items were also noted and discussed. It was asked that the Sectretariat escalate action item 4.3.1.

1. **Operational issues and communications**
   1. **Secretariat report**

* The Secretariat provided an overview. Key highlights were outlined including the update on key projects such as the new website, GENICES review and World Ecolabel Day preparation. The Secretariat also suggested key foci for 2023 including a needed focus on the Look Closer campaign, focus on growing affiliate members and strategic partnerships.
* **Action. Secretariat asked to provide linked in and facebook social media numbers in order to ascertain growth rate.**
  1. **World Ecolabel Day 2022**

The Secretariat presented the new campaign for World Ecolabel Day, reflecting the new branding. The campaign is focused on celebrating sustainability heroes.

In addition, there is a white paper being released on ecolabels and climate change. It was suggested that more data would be useful to be captured in the white paper. It was also suggested that the reference to carbon neutrality be reviewed.

It was agreed that the positioning of the paper was appropriate in that ecolabelling was framed as a supportive mechanism for climate change and not a sole solution.

The Board were supportive of the new tiles for World Ecolabel Day.

* **Action: The Board suggested additional consultation for the white paper to expand on the way ecolabels support mitigation of carbon emissions.**
* **The Board also asked that the Secretariat develop a media release and promote to seek broader publication of the white paper. It is noted that contacts from Angelina have been provided.**
  1. **AGM 2022- timeline and agenda**

*The agenda was presented and supported.* The GENFast presentations were also discussed. Bjorn Erik Lonn will present on ISO 14020 revision.

The UNEP Consumer information webinar will also be a key event as part of our AGM and will tend to the consumer focus, noting the built environment is a dominant theme this AGM.

**Action: The Secretariat will promote the UN Consumer information webinar on the 14 September 2022.**

* 1. **Finance and AGM preparations**

The 2021 financials have been audited and signed without any further comments by the auditing committee.

The Nominations committee presented the current state of applications. It was also noted that there had been several seeking to apply for nomination of a Board position but not yet received. No nominations for the Chair position were received.

The closing date for nominations was 1st of September and therefore the nominations would be re-evaluated in Part B of the Board meeting.

It was also announced that Vinicius Ribeiro was no longer with ABNT as an employee and therefore an alternate representative from ABNT needed to be approved for the second 12 month term.

*Decision: The Board will fill the last year of Vinicius‘ term by continuing Vinicius or appointing Guy Ladvocat as Board member, given his prior knowledge and experience. IT is noted that this is to be guided by ABNT as this was their representative who was appointed for a 2 year term.*

* 1. **By- laws**

The Secretariat explained that the by-laws need to be finalised by the 17th September in order to prepare for the AGM pack.

The Board discussed the need to change the responsible party in the event of insolvency, noting that many members would not be able to engage with GEN with that risk of liability. The Secretariat highlighted that if the liability is with Directors, Association insurance may need to be considered.

Suggested changes are as follows:

Review Article 7 regarding the dissolution

Article 4 change member’s general meetings to member meetings

Article 5.2 to articulate who the decision making body is (it is the members who delegate the decision to the chair and the Board. (see article 1)

It was also asked to ensure there is clarity that the Chair has the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

It was asked that there is a review the amount of meetings required in order to make change to by- laws. Note that in Scandinavian tradition, two meetings are required to make amendments to by-laws.

**Action: The Secretariat is to consider the following amendments and finalise the bylaws for the AGM pack for members.**

* 1. **Associate member applications**

An application for associate membership was reviewed and discussed.

The Board have requested further information and a revision of the application form to accurately reflect the standards that are aligned to ISO 14024.

**Action: Secretariat to request the revision of the Associate member application form and to circulate to the Board out of session for approval of consideration at the AGM by members.**

**Associate member application not to be disseminated with the Member’s AGM pack due to slow progression**

**4.1 Website update**

The Secretariat highlighted the new structure and website wireframes. Positive feedback was received from the sub- committee of communications. It was also highlighted that the website will most likely not be launched on World Ecolabel Day but majority of pages will be ready for launch at the AGM.

**Action: Secretariat to revise the product categories that are listed as the filters on the website.**

**4.2 Look closer campaign and recommendations for 2022 promotion**

The Secretariat recommended that 2023 be the focus for the Look Closer campaign.

It was highlighted that to establish a strong campaign for the look closer video that a significant expense on public relations was required -estimated to be $15-20k.

Due to the expense of the website in 2022 it was agreed that the Look Closer campaign design and associated KPI’s be revisited in early 2023.

*Decision: This recommendation was supported by the Board.*

**4.3** **Database and survey results**

The data base survey results have only just been received.

The results show the diversity of technological stages of our members and also the need for future investment in a GEN database. Findings were noted.

This is for further discussion at a future Board meeting.

**4.4 Common core criteria proposal**

The Board received a proposal from Green Crane ecolabel, proposing to develop a common core criteria guideline for use by GEN members.

Given the previous work by Chin- Yuan Chen and the existence of the current common core criteria, it has been recommended that as an alternative, the Ukraine Green Crane propose to implement the existing common core criteria as a pilot/ proof of concept through the development of a criteria.

Examples of potential common core criteria included fertilizer or air conditioning units. ABNT and EDF expressed interest in being involved in the pilot.

*Decision: The common core criteria guideline could then be refined post pilot.*

*The project could potentially be funded in 2023 with a maximum of 25k USD, subject to the above requirements.*

**Action: Secretariat to contact Ukraine Green Crane to consider the above proposal.**

**Part A closed at 1300**

**1 September, 2022**

**Part B commenced**

**Opened 1000**

**All present except Chin – Yuan Chen who arrived at 10:20 in item 5.1**

**3.1 Finance- nominations revisited**

**Additional nominations had been received within the 24 hours.**

**5.0 GENICES****5.1 GENICES progression 2022**

This agenda item provided an update on the GENICES audits in progress.

The audit of Turkish Environmental Labelling member is scheduled for late September.

Singapore is also scheduled for late September and is progressing.

TEI has had all papers submitted and will be finalised by end of September also.

The Board have been in contact with the Philippines Center for Environmental Protection & Sustainable Development and they are committed to completion in 2023.

*Decision: The request for Hong Kong Green Label scheme to delay GENICES was noted and supported. This will be in 2022 but not till after the Board meeting. Xiaodan will continue to perform the audit as is able to perform this function even after the Board term has been finalised.*

**5.2 GENICES review and recommendations**

The findings of Sarah Sannen- consultant, were presented to the Board.

This document outlines an external benchmarking review and recommendations for consideration.

The Board discussed the findings and recommended the following next steps:

That a significant transition period be given to Associate members awaiting Full membership

Criteria not to be too restrictive and be supportive of enabling membership progression

Membership mentoring was supported

Transparency of progression of members was also supported so that all could see how the applicant was tracking for completion.  
It was also agreed that GENICES should continue to be the basis for mutual recognition and therefore should continue to be optimized.

The suggestion of a self-assessment was supported, noting that this could also reduce the frequency and therefore costs of auditing, whilst also optimizing credibility and transparency.

Remote audits were also deemed as acceptable but outsourcing the auditing was not possible at present. The Board supported the opportunity for outsourcing auditors but did want to ensure cost efficiencies for our members.

It was also agreed that inclusivity and credibility are not mutually exclusive.

*Decision: The GENICES will be for discussion at the AGM series of events but not for decision at this time.*

**Action: Secretariat to provide a 2-page report for the AGM which outlines the potential process for discussion.**

**Secretariat to contact Blue Angel about their auditing processed which is outsourced and determine associated costs.**

**6.1 Biannual survey and results**

It was noted that the number of standard/ criteria and number of licensees are going down, however the number of products are increasingly significantly.

Board members reflected that this is similar to observations made amongst our members.

The Secretariat also advised that whilst response late was over 50% it remained poor, although higher than 2020.

**6.2** **Discussion on communication of life cycle ecolabels- how will we refer to ecolabels post ISO 14020 reviews**

The terminology of how to refer to ecolabels moving forward was discussed.

The Chair outlined the current terminology of the ISO 14020 work and also explored suitable equivalents through translation.

The Board overall supported the term “life cycle” ecolabels. Further discussion will be held at the AGM with members.

**6.3 Sub Committee updates were provided**

Bjorn-Erik provided un update on ISO Working Group.

Giri provided an update on fundraising.

*Decision: It was agreed that the future subcommittee structure would be reviewed and led by the new Chair post AGM 2022.*

1. **General Business / other agenda items**
   1. It was noted that there are a large number of GENICES audits due in 2023- both those scheduled and those not completed or deferred from 2022.
   2. **Planning for Board/ Chair transition**

The Board reviewed the nominations to be presented at the AGM.

The change of times for the post AGM Board meeting were also discussed as a collective and agreed upon as the Friday 21st October 7.30-9:00 CIT.

Meeting adjourned at 1300 GMT