**MINUTES draft 12/04/2023**

In attendance: Hiroyuki Kobayashi, Yulia Gracheva (joined 12:50), Guy Ladvocat, KS (Giri) Venkatagiri, Fallight Xu, (joined 11.27) Svetlana Perminova, Katherine Larocque, Tao Yan and Kate Harris (Secretariat)

**Apology:**

Meeting was called to order at 11:06 GMT

*Decisions are in italic*

**Actions are marked in bold**

1. **Administrative issues**
   1. *Quorum present*
   2. **Welcome by the Chair**

Welcomed by Chair. The Chair acknowledged the ongoing support of German Ministry who are intending to support grant funding of 35,000 euro in 2023.

Giri looks forward to speaking to all individual Directors separately in due course and has benefitted from speaking to several to date.

There are several additional items Giri would like to speak about during this Board meeting- namely,

1: the potential for regional /global coverage. Giri suggested the World Green Building Council model as one successful approach for the Board to consider.

2: The issue of Green Directive Giri is prepared to travel to Europe to have this conversation with key stakeholders if/ as required but has flagged this as critical in timing.

3: The issue of net zero: many countries are committing to net zero targets. How can we ensure GEN supports the delivery of these aspects?

*The agenda for the Board meeting was approved.* **Secretariat noted change to item 5.1 and 5.2- not 6.1/ 6.2, which was an issue of numbering only**

* 1. *Minutes and actions of the 2023 #1 Board meeting were approved, with one amendment of the spelling of Katherine’s name.*

**Action items noted with nil changes. Legacy items also noted.**

1. **Operational issues and communications including sub-committees**
   1. **Secretariat report**

Secretariat report noted. Katherine recognised the large amount of work with the GEN magazine which was one of the largest to date. The Secretariat highlighted recent interest in joining sub committees including broader non member stakeholders.

**2.2 AGM themes and planning**

The suggestion was to prioritise B20 events and opportunities as part of the AGM theme and series of events.

Giri asked if the Board could be available to have a kick off GEN meeting in August in India and as part of an early/ additional GEN AGM series.

The Board discussed the suggested theme of net zero targets for the AGM. The opportunities were outlined but it was felt it is still too early for ecolabels to be able to deliver core value to net zero. Caution was also raised in regards to carbon offsets.

The Board also recommended that GEN Board travel once again be offset,

It was suggested that whilst we could have x1 session on net zero, the theme for the AGM should be sustainable public procurement- a key priority of the Board in 2023.

B 20 event in August could be problematic for those in summer holidays.

Giri suggested a virtual meeting in August.

*Decision: Theme for 2023 AGM will be sustainable public procurement (SPP)*

*One session on net zero will also be included. (Fallight to present a potential journey on net zero for GEN and our members).*

*It was agreed that the AGM be in late October in Europe in order to optimize stakeholder engagement and partners.*

*2024 AGM may be India.*

**Actions:** **Fallight to take lead through a survey of members to ascertain current practice and value of net zero.**

**Action: late 2023/ early 2024- consider a guideline for carbon consideration for GEN members.**

**2023 AGM planning to commence.**

**Fallight to explore potential for TUV Rheinland to host the 2o23 AGM.**

**In addition, Secretariat to approach other European based members in order to gain support for side events.**

**ACTION: ask all members to submit comments on the Green Directive in order to aggregate the explicit position of our members-**

**Secretariat to draft email from Chair to members.**

**Deadline for reply by end of April if possible, in order to make early June closing date.**

**Secretariat to reach out to European partners including ISEAL, Caroline Lambert / EU Flower re feedback on EU Green Directive and AGM opportunity in 2023**

**2.3 Preparation of B 20 events / opportunities**

*It was agreed that due to summer holidays and timing that the Board will engage in a virtual B20 event in August. Those who can attend in person in India are to be encouraged.*

*The event will be to support an initiative and to highlight GEN’s importance of ecolabelling and their credibility.*

**2.4 World Ecolabel Day themes**

**The subcommittee communications have suggested an ambassor communication campaign.**

**This was supported by the Board.**

**In addition to ambassadors, the Board suggested additional SPP themes as well as key influencers /ambassadors and more consumer facing initiatives.**

**and work with large purchasers.**

**The Secretariat are encouraged to consider a sector approach to engage large purchasers, similar to the previous university campaign.**

*Decision: Ambassador campaign and SPP sector initiative to be key themes for 2023 WED.*

**Action: Secretariat to take additional WED themes to the SPP subcommittee for consideration.**

**2.5 Update on GENICES allocation /audits 2023**

Secretariat raised issue of liability/ indemnification and flagged that we are seeking quotes.

Directors are requested to consider their capacity to perform additional GENICES audits if/ as required.

If GEN is unable to secure indemnity insurance, the Board will need to be responsible for the GENICES audits.

**Action: Secretariat to finalise indemnity insurance.**

*Decision: It was decided that a confidentiality statement for GENICES auditors and disclaimer forms should be created for GEN members to sign.*

**Action: Secretariat to draft disclaimer document for members to waive liaibility on GEN.**

**Action Katherine to shadow one of Eva’s virtual audits (Vitality Leaf).**

**Action: Secretariat to send copy of final by-laws to all Board Directors (dropbox)**

**Action: Consider a future policy/ procedure for enforcing the by – laws including the removal of members for non fee paying or failure to complete GENICES audits within a timely manner. This policy / procedure to be brought to the AGM.**

**Action: Green Crane able to be audited in June/ July- Secretariat to update GENICES audit schedule.**

**2.6 Sub Committees**

The Board outlined progress on the below sub- committees.

Secretariat to support the engagement of members.

Once members are appointed and terms of reference are clear, the convenor who is ideally the Board Director will be responsible for engaging.

Katherine Larocque: SPP

Awaiting list of sub- committee.

Intent to have a listening session.

Identify potential sectors to approach

Approach as a sounding board

Fallight: Partner outreach and new projects- yet to commence

Request for additional information

Yulia:

Subcommittee is more an advisory role given the function of the implementation of the Secretariat.

Svetlana: Common core criteria working group

Shared results of survey. Will work with Yulia and Chin- Yuan to progress next steps.

Svetlana is seeking clarity on budget.

Majority thought the common core criteria should be for full GENICES members

Laundry detergent

Guy: standards and technical information. Further clarity on scope of work is required.

Yan Tao

**Action: Secretariat to prepare a guideline on how to run a sub- committee meeting**

**to share with convenors. This will include:**

* **terms of reference**
* **Scope of work including budget/ spend**
* **Introductory power point.**
* **Prepare standard introductory slides for all convenors**
* **Secretariat to support booking of meetings**
* **Governance**

**Summary of decisions from Part A**

Venue for AGM to be Europe for Green Deal opportunity

Green Directive- send to all members and give end of April feedback for comments (due 8 June Brussels time midnight)

We will make recommendations to B 20 committee re SPP and establish an event to recommend type 1 ecolabels

Autumn Board meeting will be schedule to complement B20

All will meet virtually with B 20 logo and GEN logo to create a consultation virtual meeting and submit

Priority for insurance / liabilities

Action: Secretariat to request all the members to share overall terms of reference and guidelines for sub committees

Themes of AGM to be SPP with a net zero session

AGM to flag projects and votes for decision based on an approach based on the feasibility

Action: approach for developing a common ambition /aspects and an example for criteria and create explore several specific exclusions (including the delivery of a feasibility report).

*Close Part A*

*Closed at 13:30 GMT*

*Part B*

*All Present*

In attendance: Hiroyuki Kobayashi, Yulia Gracheva, Guy Ladvocat, KS (Giri) Venkatagiri, Fallight Xu, Svetlana Perminova, Katherine Larocque, Tao Yan and Kate Harris (Secretariat)

**Apology: nil**

Meeting was called to order at 11:04 GMT

Quorum is present

Chair provided a summary of decisions and actions from the Part A meeting.

**3.0 Special projects**

**3.1 Common core criteria**

Svetlana provided an update on the common core criteria project. The direction based on the survey suggested that common and non-common parts of criteria should apply for all GEN members.

The required budget would depend on which criteria/ standard is chosen.

Expected budget would range from 20k USD to 25 USD.

It is important to also acknowledge trade considerations and opportunities. Less than 5% of global trade is of green products and it is important to escalate our ambitions,

Considerations could include energy, waste, water and chemicals for example.

It was recommended that we develop a common ambition and position an evolutionary approach, in order to accommodate diversity of members.

From this common ambition GEN could prioritise a feasibility study.

There is a question of whether GEN is going to focus on a procedural process or a more technical, higher order solution.

*Decision: It was decided to commence with a common feasibility study to determine our evolutionary understanding of common technical aspects.*

**Action: Svetlana to review current proposal and submit refinements to the Board within 2 weeks**

**Once proposal received, the working group will be consulted and Board decision will be sought through circular resolution.**

**Secretariat to support working group and ask Chin Yuan Chen if he can join.**

**Ecolabel SPP proposal**

The current app was developed by Vitality Leaf with support from the Nordic council of Ministers in 2017.

The app does need constant development but there is an opportunity to skin the app with the GEN brand in order to be closer to additional targets audiences (purchasers and consumers).

GEN can also communicate the app as a tool for World Ecolabel Day.

The opportunity of data would be good to explore – for example the location of the user.

**Action : Yulia to provide additional insights on current collection of data and potential for future data.**

*Decision: ecolabel app proposal approved.*

**3.2 SPP proposal**

The Secretariat outlined the proposal for the brochure and the procurement prioritization tool.

Green Crane noted they have published a variety of guides previously.

It requires practical cases where ecolabels are purchased as part of procurement.

How do we demonstrate the economic benefits of purchasing ecolabelled products?

Oeko institute once published the impact of ecolabelling and it would be good to contextualize.

It is suggested to collate examples from GEN members.

It needs to clearly be about ecolabelling in sustainable public procurement- not just sustainable procurement.

The audience would be for purchasers.

Consider the second target audience which is the GEN members who need to communicate to group purchasers.

Consider additional tool kit- including talking points for GEN members.

Consider how to get to purchasers?

Ensure brochure focus is for GEN to reinforce ecolabels and speak to SPP.

**Action: Secretariat to reach out to IGPN and SPLC to support dissemination.**

**Consider an outreach strategy with SPLC.**

**Consider delivery of brochure before August for B 20.**

*Decision:*

*SPP approved ideally for August 2023 brochure*

**3.3 Expansion of Secretariat services (global coverage)**

The recommendation is to increase the secretariat services particularly in Europe due to current opportunities, including potential funding partners and the EU Green Directive.

Leadership could be provided by members and Directors.

*Decision: to be implemented once funding is approved.*

*These additional roles would support the regional chapters.*

**3.4 GENICES improvements- next steps**

The GENICES proposal for improvements was discussed.

Discussion was held in regards to:

* Identifying credentials for auditors and auditor training/ webinar. In the future it should be considered that auditors will have completed this training prior to GENICES audits.
* Consider removal of GENICES decision from sub- committee.
* Concerns were raised on management of conflict of interest and confidentiality.
* It was suggested that a contract with auditors is required.
* It is suggested that we re-evaluate the auditing requirements once the ISO 14024 are stipulated.

**Action: to consider requirements of GENICES auditors**

**Final version to be taken to AGM for formal decision, noting all members and broader stakeholders will have been consulted for public consultation prior.**

*Decision: SPP proposal approved. Consider a recommendation for auditor requirements noting future variation required once ISO 14024 revision is completed.*

*BREAK*

**4.0 Finance and Governance including budget**

**4.1 GAO update**

Treasurer presented the cash based accounts. No questions or concerns raised. Legal fees were over budget due to the constitutional legal review for the completion of by-laws.

GEN net position of cash has increased by 70k USD.

**4.2 Financial statement pre audit**

Financial statement report has been prepared.

It was noted that one of the three have retired so the financial statement will be sent to the remaining two members of the finance committee. Previously there were only two members of the financial committee.

**4.3 membership waiver requests and current outstanding invoices for members**

4 members have not paid their membership fee.

**Action: Board to prioritise an internal policy and procedure in order to manage the ongoing issues.**

**Consider for August agenda item.**

6 members have requested a fee reduction process.

CQC not approved- recommended that we reduce fee to the previous year’s amount of $3,500.00 Other members fee reduction processes supported. Future revision of criteria required.

**Action: Consider other mechanisms to support members who are struggling/ not growing.**

Please note the Secretariat did not recommend the future use of in kind contribution.

**4.4 international fees of GEN members**

A question as to how the definition of international fees are made.

Secretariat to provide prior definition of international based ecolabel as previously defined in the 2022 Board papers.

***Action:*** *Secretariat to provide previous papers and decision.*

Additionally we will consider placing on next Spring meeting agenda.

**4.5 Green directive-** discussed in Part A. Secretariat to seek comments from all members and collate response for submission prior to 8th June 2023 (midnight Brussels time) with support from Fallight.

**4.6 Preparation for 2024 Secretariat services (postpone to next agenda)**

**5.0 AGM/ General Business/ Other agenda items**

**Next Board meeting- will be virtual but dates to be confirmed once we have clarity on the B 20 event and side meeting.**

**5.1 other business**

**5.2 Close**