

Minutes of the ERFP Steering Committee meeting

March 23rd, 2023, webmeeting

Participants:

Chair: Montserrat Castellanos Moncho, Spain

National coordinators, members of the SC:

Danijela Bojkovski, Slovenia
Christina Ligda, Greece

Jan Hendrik Schneider, Germany

Excused:

Nina Svartedal, Norway
Ruta Šveistienė, Lithuania

Secretariat:

Coralie Danchin (Idele), and Eleonore Charvolin-Lemaire (Inrae) (France)

Montserrat Castellanos welcomes the participants and introduces the agenda. The Agenda of the SC meeting is approved.

1) Brief information

Cf. slides presentation

The new reimbursement rules were approved by email, therefore they will apply for all ERFP events starting January 1st 2023.

The Secretariat informs about the new NCs. The chair suggests contacting the Swedish NC to check if she is aware of the work done to follow-up the RG strategy by the ministry at Swedish level.

2) Follow up of the work by the EURC EAB

Cf. slides presentation

A discussion is raised by Christina Ligda on how to ensure the close connection between the work done by the EURC EAB and the ERFP Working Groups. A difficulty raised in the fact that most of the work accomplished by the WG is done during the meetings whereas the EURC EAB tasks are led throughout the year. This issue as well as the difficulties met to replace the WG chairs are suggestions that we need to find new way to organize the WG. The new proposals should be included in the next term of references.

The importance of how to guarantee a good connection and coordination between ERFP and EURC EAB is highlighted.

The advancement of the EURC EAB work will be presented during the WG; the SC suggests including it in the agenda of our next General Assembly.

3) MYPOW and TOR

- a. ToR: update on the UN scale - ERFP 2024 budget

Cf. slides presentation

The scale use at ERFP level is based on the UN scale:

Each country's contribution is based on a formula intended to represent a country's "capacity to pay." The formula starts by using a country's share of global gross national income. Adjustments are then applied for factors like their debt and population, with a minimum and maximum determined for least developed countries and the largest contributor – the U.S.

When adding the contribution of each country, the total amount is equal to a 100 and countries are grouped by letter when they have similar capacity to pay, the smallest amount to be paid being the group A. Due to the growing economy of China, numerous European countries have a relative gross income that is going down (cf. slide) while only three countries are going up, Azerbaijan, Israël and Turkey.

Thanks to Covid the ERFP treasury is positive, however the 2022 budget is negative and it is expected that the following budgets will be too. The fee change was stalled due to the Covid situation, but a decision needs to be taken at the General Assembly to ensure the ERFP sustainability. A discussion raised as when the changes should be acted, since most countries are planning their next year budget in the first semester, before the General Assembly. Danijela Bojkovski reminds the SC that the contributions are voluntary, therefore the changes could be applied as early as 2024, and countries that budgeted the amount corresponding to the previous ToR will pay this inferior amount instead.

The secretariat is showing several simulations on how the fees could be changed and its impact at country level. Jan Hendrik Schneider suggests testing another hypothesis equal to 25% of the ECPGR contribution. Another proposal is to increase by a similar and reasonable % each current country contributions. The secretariat will send the different scenarios including this new one to the SC members for the next SC.

The secretariat suggested other modifications in the ToR. Following the previous discussion, it is suggested that a Chair and a vice Chair could be elected by WG.

b. MYPOW: new draft based on the strategy action plan

The chairs of each WG will dedicate a specific time during the WG to brainstorm on ideas to be included in the MYPOW.

Montserrat Castellanos will also work on a revision draft, based on the strategy action plan.

4) Planning of the further ERFP activities in 2023

Cf. slides presentation

The meeting places for the WG are located at a 10 minutes' walk from the train station. Each WG chairs (except the Documentation and Information one) sent their agenda proposal for the SC.

Each agenda needs to be checked with the ones sent by ICAR and SMARTER, some differences are noted. The secretariat will check the discrepancies.

The SC agrees for a maximum budget of 1200 € (80 people) for the networking cocktail to be held after the presentation of the ERFP network and EURC EAB. The WG budget is not impacted since all the rooms used for the meetings are free of charge.

5) Organization of the General Assembly

Cf. slides presentation

The venue place (Lyon main congress centre) is known, and Coralie Danchin will contact soon her colleagues for the organization of the field trip. A draft agenda is presented that will be detailed for the next SC. The secretariat will also inform the NCs about the sessions linked to ERFP issues as soon as there will be made public.

6) 2023 elections for the SC

Cf. slides presentation

Three members of the SC are finishing their term this summer. The SC discussed names for replacement while paying attention to have a good balance between the different European regions. The potential candidates will be approached by Christina Ligda, Montserrat Castellanos and Jan Hendrik Schneider. If they agree, it is reminded that the candidates will have to send a short resume to the secretariat to be disseminated to all NCs before the GA, with a reminder that all NCs can provide other suggestions too.

The next SC will be held virtually, June 22nd, 2023.