

	<p><b>Draft Minutes</b>  <b>ALTER-Net Council meeting</b>  <b>Ghent, Belgium - 18 June 2019</b></p>
<b>Venue</b>	Augustinian Monastery: Academiestraat 1, 9000 Ghent, Belgium
<b>Attendance</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maurice Hoffmann (INBO; council chair) NC, MB</li> <li>2. Mihai Adamescu (Unibuc), NC</li> <li>3. Gyorgyi Bela (ESSRG), NC</li> <li>4. Ben Delbaere (Delbaere Consulting), NC</li> <li>5. Nicolas Dendoncker (ILEE), NC</li> <li>6. Ivan Jaric (BC CAS)</li> <li>7. Lawrence Jones-Walters (WENR), NC</li> <li>8. Tyler Kulfan (ALTER-Net), Secretariat</li> <li>9. Mart Klvik (EMU), NC, MB</li> <li>10. Ana Lillebo (CESAM), NC</li> <li>11. Raoul Mille (Irstea), NC</li> <li>12. Marie Vandewalle (UFZ, EKLIPSE), NC, MB</li> <li>13. Rob Brooker (James Hutton Institute)</li> <li>14. Gregor Kalinkat (IGB)</li> <li>15. Stefan Klotz (UFZ)</li> <li>16. Onno Knol (PBL)</li> <li>17. Leena Kopperoinen (SYKE)</li> <li>18. Marion Mehring (ISOE)</li> <li>19. Jiska van Dijk (NINA; MB chair), MB</li> <li>20. Allan Watt (EKLIPSE), MB</li> <li>21. Jorge Ventocilla (EKLIPSE)</li> <li>22. Juliette Young (CEH)</li> <li>23. Janine van Vessen (INBO)</li> </ol>
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## 1. Introduction and Commencement of Meeting

Meeting commenced at 19:00 on 18 June 2019, the second day of the ALTER-Net & EKLIPSE Conference. The meeting was held in Ghent, Belgium jointly with the Conference.

The Chair (MH) welcomed those present and introductions were made. Special notice was made of those non-Council members who were representing their institutes, as many Council member could not be in attendance. These included: Rob Brooker (JHI), Gregor Kalinkat (IGB), Stefan Klotz (UFZ), Onno Knol (PBL), Leena Kopperoinen (SYKE), Marion Mehring (ISOE), and Jiska van Dijk (NINA).

## 2. Council Meeting Agenda

The draft agenda for the ALTER-Net Council meeting included the following items.

- AHIA Proposal
- SPI Activity (EKLIPSE Mechanism) Proposal
- ALTER-Net Legal Structure
- Any Other Business

The agenda was met with unanimous approval. It was emphasized that the most important agenda item and primary purpose for the in-between meeting is the EKLIPSE mechanism takeover proposal.

### 3. Minutes: 2018 Council Meeting (Prague)

The minutes of the previous 2019 Council meeting in Prague had previously been distributed by TK and comments/edits were made as needed by Council members. Final approval of the minutes was unanimously given by the ALTER-Net Council; they will thus be shared internally on the ALTER-Net website.

### 4. Approval of AHIA Project Selection

The first ALTER-Net activity to be presented and voted upon was the 2019-2020 AHIA proposal. This proposal, entitled “From meta-system theory to the sustainable, adaptive management of rivers in the Anthropocene.” This project was chosen by the selection committee and given preliminary approval by the Management Board.

**Decision:** The Council agrees to the approval of this AHIA proposal. The associated project will be supported accordingly.

### 5. Proposal: Science-Policy Interface (Management of EKLIPSE mechanism)

The meeting of the ALTER-Net Council was originally called to determine whether ALTER-Net should adopt the EKLIPSE mechanism, which aims to improve the European science-policy interface via calls for requests and a selection process which then is directed to expert groups, workshops, etc. and will expire in its present structure at the end of 2019. The possibility of ALTER-Net taking over the EKLIPSE mechanism had been previously proposed at the 2018 Council meeting in Prague and the Council agreed to the exploration of such a takeover. A task force (including ALTER-Net members AL, JvD, MA, MH, and MV) was formed and comprehensive consideration of the costs, benefits, and logistics of such a takeover were explored.

The taskforce met on several occasions to discuss viable options and solutions. MH and JvD attended the EKLIPSE Proof of Concept meeting and Business AG meetings, where general feasibility and viability of an ALTER-Net takeover were detected. MH expressed that there are strong indications that financing will be available until July 2020, which helps to ensure the self-sustainability of the EKLIPSE mechanism. It was additionally emphasized that the functions of the EKLIPSE mechanism fit neatly into the ALTER-Net Science-Policy Interface initiative and that the takeover of this mechanism would advance ALTER-Net’s role in the science-policy interface and raise its international profile.

An official proposal for the takeover of EKLIPSE was prepared by the ALTER-Net Management Board and previously distributed to the Council. This proposal states that ALTER-Net will take over the management of EKLIPSE, enact a network-of-networks

approach for funding, and include the EKLIPSE secretariat under ALTER-Net with the possible addition of two MB members.

In response to some concerns raised by the Council, it was stressed that EKLIPSE has been fully evaluated and that willingness-to-pay (for calls) has been detected. Independence and objectivity were further stressed as essential for the integrity of EKLIPSE and branding will remain static. It was noted that the EU funding extension is just one source of funding for EKLIPSE. The mechanism shouldn't be dependent on this funding; and the prospect of an ALTER-Net takeover presents the opportunity for EKLIPSE to break from dependency and have a fully heterogeneous funding structure.

**Decision:** The Council approved of the proposal for an ALTER-Net takeover of the EKLIPSE mechanism. If it is determined that additional support is needed to implement this takeover, another MB member will be appointed. Strong, consistent support will likewise be provided by EKLIPSE, as well.

## 6. ALTER-Net Legal Structure

The need for a legal structure for ALTER-Net was discussed in Prague.

At present, ALTER-Net lacks any sort of legal structure. With the agreement to adopt EKLIPSE, the need for a legal structure becomes considerably more urgent. A legal structure would enable ALTER-Net to hire staff, send invoices, and lead/coordinate calls and proposals.

Chair proposed a legal non-profit structure as the most appropriate structure for ALTER-Net and further suggested the establishment of ALTER-Net's legal framework within Belgium as an international non-profit organization (I-NPO). Under such a structure, the institution (as opposed to individual persons; i.e. MH and Tessa van Santen) will be able to make and process payments. Ideally, all ALTER-Net consortium will be asked to be part of this legal structure framework, but it was noted that this is not ultimately necessary.

Chair will contact the head of each respective ALTER-Net institute to present this issue and invite legal participation. MA questioned whether a Belgian framework is necessarily best (as opposed to an EU framework or a different national framework). Chair noted that the Belgian framework is the only one that has been explored thus far. AL offered to explore other host countries for ALTER-Net's legal structure. Chair will share the official Belgian legal structure framework information.

**Decision:** The Council approved of the advancement of a legal structure for ALTER-Net with a Belgian non-profit structure recognized as a viable preliminary solution.

## 7. Any Other Business

The next meeting of the ALTER-Net Council will be held on 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 and will be hosted by RM and Irstea in Paris.

The issues of the EKLIPSE mechanism takeover and ALTER-Net's legal structure will be further discussed at this meeting. Additionally, the next Memorandum of Understanding for ALTER-Net and the approval of yearly activities will be on the agenda.

## **8. Closing of Meeting**

**The meeting concluded at 20:30.**