

MINUTES of

EAFE Bureau and Corporate Members Meeting

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Policy
Sala Serpieri
Via XX Settembre, 20
Rome

26 September 2005

AGENDA

1. Discussion on possible EAFE activities: workshops, review of research, website, scientific dissemination
2. Economic advice to the Commission and to the RACs
3. Structural adjustment (the role of the Advisory Committee, the secretariat)
4. Next year's meeting
5. Other issues

Present:

Evelina Sabatella (President, IREPA)
Luc van Hoof (Vice President, RIVO)
Erik Lindebo (Secretary, FOI/Seafish)
Hazel Curtis (Auditor, Seafish)
Jorgen Lokkegaard (FOI)
Bertrand Le Gallic (CEDEM)
Massimo Spagnolo (IREPA)

Apologies:

Hans Frost (Treasurer, FOI)
Jim Watson (Rapporteur, Seafish)
Sean Pascoe (CEMARE)
Ola Flaaten (Tromso)
Niels Vestergaard (SDU)
Regis Kalaydjian (IFREMER)

Introduction

ES welcomed the participants to the meeting and outlined the content of the agenda. The minutes of the meeting below do not strictly follow the agenda structure, although its content was extensively covered.

EAFE aims, objectives and structure

The underlying theme of discussions was: "Who is EAFE, who are its members, and what are the aims of both?"

The general consensus was to provide EAFE members with a document of suggestions for the future of EAFE, both in terms of structure and its aims and objectives. Currently, EAFE membership is split (about 50/50) between members who are engaged in academic research or advice (applied research). Some are engaged in both. It is essential that the areas of academia and advice stay in touch to maintain standards and relevance.

ES and HC touched on feedback received from some absentees:

Niels Vestergaard commented that EAFE should focus on improving the academic network of EAFE. Regis Kalaydjian urged his support of the discussions and will follow up with ES. Sean Pascoe stressed the continued need for economic advice.

The Bureau agreed that EAFE was currently not in a position to come up with a common "EAFE" opinion, for example, in relation to advice to the Commission. Hence the main objective of EAFE should be to provide a gateway to expertise in fisheries economics, providing a recognised network of this expertise. The main emphasis must be to rebuild the confidence of EAFE members to ensure that members feel they are getting something out of being a member!

New secretariat

A new and more active secretariat is needed. BLG will start the ball rolling with regards the establishment of a new EAFE website/secretariat at CEDEM. The project will be initiated later this year and a draft version could be distributed to the Bureau and corporate members for comment in early 2006. A potential meeting can be organised to specifically discuss the new look and needs of the website/secretariat.

The skeleton of the new website should include the following information and services:

1. Links to EAFE corporate members
2. Personal information of EAFE members (interests, publications, etc.)
3. Document dissemination page (Public)
4. Document dissemination page (Restricted to EAFE, e.g. for draft papers, Bureau minutes)
5. Notice Board/Events
6. Monthly update with news, conferences, workshops, courses, etc. Also, an ad hoc e-mail information service, as currently provided by IIFET could be set up.
7. Outline of sub-groups, chairs and members (EAFE commitments, see below)
8. Project listings and on-going research information

Input from members will be essential as the essence is to make EAFE more visible, but also to improve the network (i.e. to make it more transparent what each of us is working on).

The old and new websites will run parallel during the start-up phase.

The structure of a new secretariat and the election of its officers will be discussed and voted upon at the next AGM.

New treasury

JL reminded the meeting that Hans Frost and FOI will only be able to host the treasury until the end of the current financial year (April 2006). Hence, a new treasurer/institute able and willing to take over ahead of the next AGM needs to be found. The treasury includes membership lists, fees and the budget.

HC will investigate whether Seafish can host the Treasury for a 5-year period. Failing this, CEDEM and IREPA will make similar enquiries.

EAFE commitments

It was decided that sub-groups be established to deal with the specific commitments of EAFE, with a chair person for each sub-group, elected by the Bureau at the meeting. Currently these include:

Commitment	Chair	Action
Academic networks – people exchanges, research funding, Erasmus, FAME (collaborate with S. Europe?), social funds	Bertrand Le Gallic	Contact Niels Vestergaard to discuss ways forward
North Sea RAC	Jim Watson	-
Baltic Sea RAC	Jesper Andersen (FOI)	-
EFARO	Luc van Hoof	-
MARIFISH - network of research funding institutions	Evelina Sabatella	Funding for review of fisheries economics (WP4) Clarification of what EAFE needs to do? What funds are available?

Each chair person will invite EAFE members to be participants in the sub-groups, using the official EAFE mailing list. Once a list of interested participants has been established, the chair will outline a course of action (aims, objectives, meetings, etc.). The chairs will report to the Bureau on progress and disseminated to all other sub-group members.

RAC commitment

It was felt that the current North Sea RAC involvement of EAFE members (HC, LvH, EL) had been positive and the input of economic viewpoints was deemed essential by the NSRAC secretariat. Currently, the EAFE attendee at meetings receives travel, accommodation and expenses. It was the general opinion that, in the future, the structure of EAFE's observer status should be more prominent, with possible time allocated in the agenda for a formal presentation. Further, where economic research is warranted, this should be allocated funding from the NSRAC secretariat. The secretariat has already indicated that both of these requests would be within the scope of future meetings and working groups. Also raised was the possibility of receiving a nominal fee per day for attending meetings, especially if a paper is presented. Any payments/contracts should be between the RAC and the individual expert, and not EAFE. Similarly, EAFE should not apply for any RAC tenders.

HC/JW will attend the General Assembly of the North Sea RAC in Stockholm in late October, on behalf of EAFE.

JL will appoint someone from FOI to be the EAFE representative in the Baltic RAC (see above).

ES will contact all the other RACs to state EAFE's interest in having an official observer status in their RAC (along the same lines as the North Sea RAC).

EAFE Advisory Committee

The future of the AC was discussed, especially with regards to the notion that the Bureau currently feels that EAFE is not in a position to express "joint" advice. The EAFE AC was set up following an AGM decision in 2001, which aimed to produce ad hoc advice to the Commission on fisheries issues from an economic perspective.

The Bureau suggests that the future of the AC be discussed with corporate members and with all other members at the next AGM, opening up for a new strategy with regards advice, possibly without the formal existence of an AC.

Biennial EAFE conference

Following on from AGM discussions in Thessaloniki, the Bureau suggests that the annual conference is replaced by a biennial (every two years) conference, in the IIFET off-year. This is in general response to the relatively poor attendance and interest of EAFE members during recent years. This would also allow EAFE to refocus its activities, and the biennial conference should be actively supported by the organisation of seminars, workshops, courses, etc. for EAFE members (through the Academic network commitment). There will be no EAFE conference in 2006 (see below).

ES is to contact EAFE members from Iceland to look into whether they would be willing to host the next EAFE conference in 2007. A decision will also be made on the timing of the conference. In previous years the conference has been in connection with Easter, but given the new biennial organisation (and no conflict with IIFET), the timing could be more freely decided by the conference organisers.

EAFE/IIFET 2006

Simon Mardle of CEMARE responded positively to a request by ES to hold an EAFE session and AGM in connection with IIFET 2006 in Portsmouth.

The Bureau suggested that EAFE, in collaboration with the IIFET secretariat, organise a workshop on EU policy issues. The proposed workshop would include a keynote by a European Commission representative, and two to three papers by EAFE members on topical issues. The latter could include the direct work of EAFE in relation to its sub-groups/commitments. A panel discussion would conclude the session. The workshop will be open to all IIFET participants.

The EAFE AGM will be organised separately for all EAFE members during the IIFET conference. With the new developments being proposed herein, it is hoped that AGM participation will be significant. An extra incentive will be in the form of a cocktail reception following the AGM! Other ways to raise the EAFE profile at the conference will be considered, and the Bureau is more than happy to receive your suggestions.

ES will forward our ideas for the organisation of the workshop and AGM/cocktails to Simon Mardle and the IIFET secretariat for further discussion.

Membership and fees

There was a discussion about fees. If members begin to reap the rewards of membership (e.g. in terms of tenders from sub-group collaboration) then EAFE could open up for the upward adjustment of fees.

It was further felt that annual membership fees should be completely separate from conference fees, to avoid over-complexity. Since annual conferences will no longer be pursued, this seems a logical step. We also need to urge people to pay up, and with a new secretariat/website, a more up to date record of paid-up members should be available. Payment by credit card should be a future option.

EAFE should also seek to increase the number of corporate members. If the benefits of membership become more apparent than now, then EAFE should be able to attract further corporate members.

Future meetings of Bureau and corporate members

It was decided that EAFE will pay for Bureau members, and corporate members will continue to pay for themselves. The next meeting might be in relation to the setting up of the new secretariat/website in early 2006.

ES closed the meeting and thanked all participants for a very productive meeting.

Erik Lindebo
Edinburgh, 7th October 2005