

Notes from the SBSP Board meeting 14th Jan, 2014

(conference call)

Participating board members: Pikka Jokelainen (PJ), Brian Lassen (BL), Jakob Skov (JS, parttime/by email), Rebecca Davidson (RD), Vaidas Palinauskas (VP), Gunita Deksne (GD), Ulrika Forshell (UF, minutes)

1. **Accepting new members**

The following applicants were accepted as members in the society: Andrea Miller (SE), Giulio Grandi (SE), Mohammad Nafi Solaiman Al-Sabi (DK), Esite Zanda (LAT), Bettija Ligere (LAT). The candidates had previously been voted into the society by the board by email and were formally accepted.

2. **Choosing the country that will host the single SBSP account in the future. The local representatives presented their arguments for and against having the SBSP account in their country. Brian Lassen emphasized the importance of remembering that SBSP was founded in Denmark (All)**

- a. Norway (NO, RD): a business account costs NOK 2300 (EUR 300)to register SBSP in NO. The account is cheap to maintain. Transfers cost a few euros. It is more expensive to transfer to account in other bank. Users do not need to be registered in NO.
- b. Sweden (SE, UF) SBSP has an account in Nordea , which means that SBSP is registered in SE (required in order to be eligible for a bank account) and a c/o address shall be provided for signee(s). According to former secretary of the society, Eva Osterman-Lind, there are no costs for monetary transfers. To maintain the account, the cost is approx. 50-70 Euros per year. The account can be accessed via the Swedish bank web page.
UPDATED INFO post-meeting: The annual cost for maintaining the account is SEK 450 (EUR 51). Payments from EU and NO in **SEK** into the account are free of charge. Otherwise there is a charge of SEK 60-80 (EUR 7-9) per payment in other currencies. It is possible to establish "Currency pockets" at a cost of SEK 450 (EUR 51)/year, per currency. This cost covers all currency administration for one individual foreign currency, i.e. one annual lump sum for all payments into the account made in e.g. EUR (another for NOK, another for DKK etc).
International payments **from** the account to EU and NO is SEK 1.50 each and SEK 40 (EUR 4.50)/ payment to third countries. It is fine with the bank for the Treasurer (RD) located in Norway to have authorization rights to the account and handle it with a digipass.

- c. Latvia (LV, GD). It costs EUR 8.54 for transfers to banks outside of the investigated bank. Opening an account in Latvia as a society costs EUR 85. Opening the account as a society in DK will cost 21 Euros in Latvia. Internet bank option is available, but the access possibilities are unknown. The bank claims no problem regarding the change of society treasurers.
- d. Lithuania (LT, VP). Vaidas explained that due to the bureaucracy involved just for changing the name of the association and bank account, Lithuanian banks were excluded from hosting the Society account.
- e. Denmark (DK, JS). Jacob could not provide information yet regarding the local bank opportunities

Latvia, Finland, Estonia and Iceland have been excluded as possible locations for the account in earlier discussions on this topic. BL commented that he did not consider it desirable for the society to pay for accepting membership fees into an account if avoidable.

Conclusion: The board awaits information regarding the bank options from DK. If the DK offer is not more favorable than what was presented for SE, the collective society account will be in Sweden. The account issue shall be finalized at the next telephone meeting in March 2014.

3. Changing the official status of previous “Local Treasurer” to “Local Representative”/“Board Member” as there is no longer need for many accounts (Pikka)

It is important that members know that there is local representation, even if these are located elsewhere (e.g. Pikka, local Finnish representative, geographically located in Estonia). When the society's common assets are collected in one place it is important to change the information on all websites and in the messages to members. Everybody agreed to this change.

4. Updating Board Manual (Brian)

Updating account information in the manual so that there is no local treasurer, only a head treasurer. Everyone updates his/her position and emails their changes to BL.

5. Compiling membership information into one file – status report (Jakob)

The status of the plan of collecting all member info into one master file was discussed. All the local representatives are to send their lists to JS, preferably as an Excel spreadsheet, by March (ALL). Membership info has currently been received only from Vaidas (Baltic States).

6. Creating a payment system for the website and getting a professional to manage it (Brian)

BL suggested that we outsource the management of the website as we are planning to implement larger changes, including an online payment system and forms for submitting membership information. The

proposal is that a person with website experience would be found to redesign and manage our website and compensated by the society. BL wishes to be relieved of the webmaster duties. BL asked the board if we need a webmaster or is it enough with just adding a payment system to our current website? PJ suggested to outsource it all, because website design, membership online forms, and a payment system are closely linked. UF agrees, as it lends consistency and also improves design. BL commented that we need online registering. PJ raised the issue of whether there should be different areas to log into or open access. All board members present agreed that that the more automated the page can get, and the less call for manual handling, the better. All board members agreed to solicit quotes from knowledgeable web designers – the extent of commission depends on final cost. Quotes will be compiled by 1st of March and evaluated at the next board meeting.

7. Creation of a ResearchGate page (Vaidas)

Vaidas presented the idea of a ResearchGate profile for the society, where social networking can be used to share/promote our local research papers in parasitology, Q&A, facilitate new collaboration and create a forum for discussions. No such account within parasitology exists. Creating such a profile raises membership issues as to who can join.

RD questioned the benefit of a page on Research Gate. Do we reach more people? Is it reached by other scientists? Who would have access? BL commented that it is in our society goals to promote the research of our region/members. VP suggested that it enables the invitation of researchers to join the Research Gate page, and it might also attract new members. The forum could also be used to spread information on conferences, position vacancies etc. BL added that it is a new platform for our society/mission. All board members voted in favor of Vaidas continuing to look into creating a ResearchGate profile for the society.

Who would manage the site? BL enquired whether we should appoint a “PR” person for the society, and suggested Vaidas. Vaidas commented that to fill such a position he needs input from all, since his focus is mainly on protozoans and does not cover other parasites. PJ said that even if Vaidas is responsible for the Research Gate project, everybody needs to help out with Facebook updates since we need to cover all aspects of parasitology. UF countered that it is possible that we can’t cover all aspects ourselves. PJ informed that she encourages members to post papers on our Facebook page and added that she will add how-to information on Facebook posting in the board manual. BL suggested that Vaidas have a second look at how to manage a Research Gate profile and that the board then discusses the issue again at the next meeting in March.

8. Choosing a board representative that will find and upload publications from the SBSP-area on SBSP Facebook and ResearchGate pages (Brian)

All need to assist in keeping the Facebook page updated. Vaidas was tentatively suggested as “PR” person for SBSP, but the ResearchGate page and Webmaster issue need to be addressed before we go further with this.

9. Status on formulating the concept of a firm membership of SBSP (Jakob)

This item was postponed due to Jakob's absence due to technical difficulties.

10. Suggestion to financially support students doing a thesis in parasitology. It should be explained if it means stipends or more grants. What does it mean/require from us and for the recipient if the money is given as a stipend or as a grant (reporting, taxation)? (Gunita and Ulrika)

UF explained the background for the suggestion; that it is hard to recruit parasitologists in SE, but also elsewhere. To counteract this, perhaps a stipend that could fund parts of undergraduate theses, for example of veterinary students, could result in more students going into parasitology.

RD shared personal experience with two students having problems funding their theses (field trips, professional support in e.g. statistics). GD commented that in Latvia travel cost is usually not a problem because it is a small country, but stipends to cover e.g. technical assistance/PCR development could be useful.

PJ agreed that funding for material, travels, and short courses could be feasible and asked about how the students would apply. UF voiced the issue of follow-up. RD commented that the theses are part of the veterinary training program, and that publishing them is common practice. Also, we can publish the theses on our website. BL observed that with respect to countries that do not have English as the chosen publication language, we can ask for a summary/abstract in English for promotion purposes.

BL commented that we have two grants already - is it too much with three? Firstly, it has to be easy to apply. The experience from current feedback is that we need to evaluate proposals and give money in advance, not retrospectively. RD observed that we can set an application deadline to avoid a "first come first serve" scenario, serving instead to give all applicants an equal chance. The board was in unanimous favor of giving the grant in advance to successful applicants.

BL raised the issue of the size of the grant and EUR 1000-2000 was suggested. VP observed that we should focus our funding to support keeping SBSP conference fees low as there have been complaints from members about this, who feel that they are not getting enough revenue on their membership. VP further advised that reduced conference fees for student members should be a priority when evaluating new expenses. Grants for student projects could be flexible according to the amount available in our account at the current point in time. BL advised that currently the society has approx. EUR 30000. RD asked how many grants we would provide per annum. PJ suggested a maximum of EUR 2000/year and to leave the amount open for each application according to a stated need (between EUR 100-2000). UF wondered if there should be any geographical constraints to the availability of a student project funding? BL advised that if they qualify for SBSP membership – they should be able to do their

course/study where they want. Is it necessary that undergraduates be members in order to apply? UF suggested that perhaps we should invite winning applicants to become members instead? The Board was in unanimous favor of this procedure. Decision: Undergraduates and masters students will be invited. UF and GD will draft the proposal prior to the next board meeting (1st March 2014) based on the existing grant application forms of the society.

11. Spreading information about parasitological meetings in our area, especially the 5th International Giardia and Cryptosporidium Conference (IGCC) in Sweden (in May) and the ESCCAP *Echinococcus* Meeting in Lithuania (in October) (Brian)

BL urged the board to spread information meetings mentioned in the heading above. No other events in our region had come to the attention of the present board members.

12. Assisting in EMOP XII conference. Please prepare ideas for potential sponsors and collaborators (Brian)

BL advised that SBSP is the official hosting society for EMOP XII. UF has already solicited interest from a medical company that might be interested in backing the event financially. If the board can think of other possible sponsors please relay the contacts to PJ/BL. The board should also ask around for committed persons willing to work on site during the event.

13. Other

VP asked about scientific statutes for changing the name of the local account to SBSP. BL explained that the General Assembly minutes had already issued, but would follow up on the matter.

14. Next Meeting

Next meeting will be in March. Please complete your tasks as detailed above. BL will issue new agenda before meeting.