

MINUTES OF THE FEE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING ON 1 FEBRUARY 2008 IN RABAT, MOROCCO



Present:

President: Jan Eriksen (JE)

Executive Board Members: José Archer (JA), Heiko Crost (HC), Henny Kromhout (HK), Malcolm Powell (MP), Roberto Riccioni (RR), Dirk Vercaemmen (DV)

Administration: Finn Bolding Thomsen (FBT), Irene Lauridsen (IRL)

Programme Coordinators: Bjørn Helge Bjørnstad (BHB), Estela Gonçalves Pereira (EGP), Cedric Davoine (CD), Thierry Lerévérend (TL), Elena von Sperber (EVS)

1. Welcome and approval of agenda

Welcome to Cedric Davoine, replacing Marie Leplay as Green Key Coordinator during her maternity leave.

2. Apologies for Absence

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3. Minutes of the last meeting

a. FEE Executive Board meeting 6 November 2007

The minutes were approved with one correction regarding the length of the current agreement with FEEE France on the hosting of the Green Key Coordination.

b. Matters arising from the minutes

FBT briefly informed the Executive Board about latest contact with Costa Rica.

The Programme Coordinators had discussed the issue of payment for expenses in the pilot phase at their last meeting. The conclusion was that the Programme Coordinators should visit the countries in the pilot phase whenever it is possible from the financial point of view.

The Programme Coordinators requested the Executive Board to discuss whether Members Forum could have a programme training session. The idea was rejected, as the General Assembly is a political forum, while the Programme national operator meetings are technical forums. It will still be possible for informal discussions between the organisation representative and International Programme Coordinator on programme implementation.

The Executive Board agreed with the suggestion that if an observer at a programme national operator meeting is not from a member organisation, then there should be no travel reimbursement. If the observer represents a member organisation (not yet having started the implementation of the programme), then the organisation cannot expect travel reimbursement, but the situation might be considered case-by-case, also depending on the financial situation of the programme coordination.

Information was given regarding the work among the Programme Coordinators on the climate change issue. The coordinators are in the phase of identifying relevant work related to climate change within the respective programmes and the feedback to the Executive Board will be given at a later meeting.

MP requested that the letter to the International Blue Flag Jury members regarding participation in the meeting will be sent as soon as possible.

4. Reports

a. President

JE found the meeting with ISESCO very positive. ISESCO is very keen to reach a Memorandum of Understanding with FEE. JE communicated that he will have an additional meeting with ISESCO to discuss the next steps in the cooperation.

JE informed about his attendance at the YRE and Eco-Schools national operator meeting. He also informed about letters written to China, Slovenia and Denmark inviting the governments to use the CO₂ scheme for upcoming international events. He encouraged the Executive Board members to promote the use of the FEE CO₂ compensation system whenever possible.

b. Executive Board

HC told the Executive Board about the difficult situation that the member organisation in Russia meets in the country. HC stressed that the organisation is working relatively well with Blue Flag and Eco-Schools. MP stressed that the issue of only one organisation covering a very extensive country (such as Russia) needs to be a matter for discussion in FEE.

The other Executive Board members had no further comments to their activity reports.

c. Secretariat

FBT communicated that the Secretariat in the phase of changing the website company due to poor cooperation with the previous one. He apologised for the problems with the e-mail addresses to the FEE Secretariat.

FBT circulated a draft of the FEE Annual Report 2007. The Secretariat is now working with a new printing company. The reports are expected to be ready around 15 March 2008.

FBT informed about the production of a handbook for the FEE member organisations. The index and a draft copy of the handbook were circulated. The final document will be finished right after the General Assembly 2008, and an updated version of the document will subsequently be sent annually at the beginning of a new year. The Executive Board was invited to give comments to the handbook within two weeks after the meeting. The Board members were very happy to see this initiative.

The Secretariat is planning to produce a welcome package for new organisations with a welcome letter from the President, the handbook, a FEE flag, the Branding Guidelines CD and some material from the International Coordinators.

d. YRE

TL informed about the economy of the programme. YRE may face financial problems now when the programme has 3 new countries involved. The financial issue will be

addressed (a levy will be considered) in the coming Programme Action Plan.

TL informed about a YRE project from northern Cyprus being validated by the Turkish YRE national operator. The Executive Board confirmed that CYMEPA from Cyprus is representing the whole island of Cyprus, and CYMEPA is willing to explore whether the project can be run via CYMEPA. JE will send another message to Turkey on the issue, and if not solved before, it will be an issue at his presidential visit to Turkey in April.

TL presented a new logo for YRE. The Executive Board had some minor questions to the logo. MP asked if all the other conditions (colour, translation, copyright, etc) have been considered. TL answered that the artist wishes to donate the logo to FEE unconditionally. FBT reminded that there are associated to producing and distributing Branding Guidelines with the new logo and these expenses are not considered in the budget of the FEE Secretariat. HK will look for sponsors to pay those expenses. As conclusion, the Executive Board supported the changing the logo. A new YRE page in the Branding Guidelines with the logo will be prepared for the April meeting and the financial situation will also be discussed at the next meeting. The official approval of the new logo must be taken at the General Assembly.

FBT reminded TL that FEEE France must give an official indication of interest (including objectives) in hosting the YRE Coordination 2008-2011.

e. Green Key

CD explained the final budget for 2008 has a lower turn-over compared with the preliminary budget due to the fact that it was not known at that time that the Green Key Coordination would be unified in one coordination.

CD informed about the national operator meeting in Genoa, where main points were: a) the harmonisation of criteria and procedure and decision on a timeline for the revision of the criteria, and b) the internationalisation of the Green Key Programme with the inclusion of Tunisia and Morocco, which is seen as an important difference to the EU Flower that is only located in Europe. JA stressed that an extra value of the Green Key compared with other accommodation programmes is the environmental education component.

CD communicated the idea of introducing the CO₂ fund into the Green Key Programme by potentially offering the CO₂ scheme to hotel guests. It was stressed that currently the CO₂ Fund of FEE only includes air travel. It will be relatively complicated to calculate the CO₂ emission of all activities of a guest using a Green Key hotel.

JE stressed that it is important that the FEE Rules of Procedure regarding deadlines for sending out invitations and material for FEE meetings are followed. Too few members came to the Green Key national operator meeting in January 2008, because the invitations were sent out too late, and it furthermore means increased ticket expenses and other expenses.

JA questioned the situation of the ISC for LEAF and Green Key. JE explained how the scheme started and why. Even if FEE does not own those programmes they cannot leave FEE. The logos and branding guidelines belongs to FEE. If HORESTA leaves Green Key, then Denmark does no longer offer Green Key, but the Programme will continue in other countries.

The Executive Board confirmed that due to financial reasons the programme will not in 2008 be extended to other areas than hotels and campsites (with some dispensations

for Denmark and the Netherlands). JE stressed that the hosting agreement with FEEE France was made on the basis of a transition year. It was decided that the proposal from Belgium for enlarging the Green Key to include tourist attractions was rejected, but the issue can be subject for discussion again after 2008.

FBT informed that the FEE Secretariat will in the FEE Newsletter in February 2008 insert a call for tender for hosting the Green Key Coordination 2009-2012.

Finally, CD informed that the Green Key ISC is planning to meet in February in Paris.

f. LEAF

BHB informed that a LEAF national operator meeting is planned for 5-7 March 2008 in Biri in Norway.

The Executive Board was asked to help LEAF with the reimbursement of tickets for the LEAF national operators coming to the meeting (expected amount will be around 2000 Euro). FBT pointed that this amounts corresponds to 15% of other travel costs in the budget of the FEE Secretariat and it will of course have an impact on the possibility for other travels. BHB was asked about how LEAF intends to create an income. BHB replied the programme is trying to build networks that give money. A levy in LEAF is also under consideration. JE recommended to ensuring a balance between the countries' levy contribution and potential travel reimbursements or other expenses. MP offered to contact a South African company as a potential sponsor for LEAF. FBT informed that the next Executive Board will have an overview from the Coordinators meeting regarding suggestion for levy in 2009. As a conclusion, the Executive Board decided to approve the suggestion for having the FEE Secretariat extraordinary ensuring the travel reimbursement from the LEAF national operator meeting in March 2008.

BHB informed about the discussions at the last LEAF International Steering Committee meeting in November 2007 in Helsinki, Finland.

g. Blue Flag

EVS gave the Executive Board an update regarding the situation regarding the sponsors for the Blue Flag Programme.

The Executive Board confirmed the decision of changing the Blue Flag pennant form from a triangle to a square.

The Executive Board approved the new marina criteria to take affect from 2009.

After a short discussion about potential conflicts with the EU legislation, the Executive Board approved a general dispensation from the total coliform sampling requirement to all countries whose applied National/EU legislation do not require total coliform testing.

EVS informed about an enquiry from the National Blue Flag Jury in Finland that due to deterioration of water quality in the Baltic Sea then Blue Flag should not only accept "excellent" water quality but as well "good" water quality standards. The Executive Board rejected the suggestion and found that the high water quality standards in Blue Flag should be kept.

h. Eco-Schools

EGP asked the Executive Board whether pilot countries not attending the national operator meeting should paid the levy, but the reply was that there is no payment during the pilot phase. The Executive Board asked the Coordinators at their coming meeting to

work towards a clear definition of the pilot phase.

The Executive Board approved the suggestion from EGP to accept Morocco as the host of the Eco-Schools national operator meeting in November 2008.

EGP briefly informed the Executive Board about situations where the Eco-Schools methodology has been used by organisations outside the FEE network.

5. FEE Financial reporting

The FEE financial midway reports for 1 January - 30 November 2007 and the final FEE Budget 2008 were approved.

FBT informed about a discussion at the Coordinator meeting where especially the YRE and Green Key Coordinations find it unfair that the programmes have to bear costs decided upon by the Executive Board (e.g. FEE participation in International Steering Committee meetings). JE reminded that LEAF and Green Key would not exist as FEE programme without the International Steering Committees. These programmes have owners outside FEE and are run via an international steering committee. TL said that most activities of FEE are related to the programmes, but that it has been a political decision to e.g. appoint a political responsible for the programmes. JE reminded that expenses related to the Executive Board participating in national operator meetings, discussion of programme implementation during mentor visits, etc are ensured via the budget of the FEE Secretariat. It was agreed that a document should be produced to define more precisely which costs should be covered by whom.

FBT gave a brief overview over the countries that had not paid the Eco-Schools levy: Chile, Estonia, Kenya, Latvia, Malta, Russia for 2007/2008 and the levy from Germany for 2006/2007. Four of these countries are membership review, so the issue will be included in the review. Regarding Estonia and Latvia, FBT will write to these two organisations and remind them about the payment and the possibility for extraordinary membership review in case of continued lack of payment. All organisations have paid the Blue Flag levy.

FBT handed out an updated list of the GDP in the various countries with FEE member organisations. Three countries moved from level C to B and one country moved from level B to A. A few countries have had a decreased GDP. The countries concerned and the Programme Coordinators have been informed about the changes.

FBT informed that the FEE Secretariat has not received any request for the funding from the FEE Contingency Fund for this meeting.

HK questioned the responsibility for Executive Board members in case FEE goes bankrupt. FBT will check the issue with the solicitor of FEE.

6. New activities

a. FEE Objectives and Plan of Action

The issue in the FEE Objectives of requiring the implementation of a third FEE programme were discussed. JA expressed that he is in a favour of a third programme being required implemented by all FEE members gradually. MP found that many countries do not have an organisation created specifically for FEE purposes, but having an existing organisation with other activities than FEE, and MP found that it is better to have two FEE programme well implemented than three programme poorly implemented. FBT stressed that the requirement will not take place until after the implementation of a

sixth FEE programme. It was therefore decided to leave the text unchanged now and take the discussion after the implementation of the sixth programme.

FBT informed that with the current financial situation in the FEE Secretariat, there is not really funding for hiring a sponsorship consultant in 2008 as suggested in the Plan of Action. The Executive Board therefore decided to change it to be a target for the period 2008-2012 generally.

The Executive Board thereafter approved the FEE Objectives and Plan of Action 2008-2012. Information about the status of the work following the document will be given annually at the FEE General Assembly.

The Executive Board furthermore approved the standardised format for the production of the Programme Objectives and Plan of Action.

b. FEE Branding Guidelines

To get the complete overview of the status of the national protection of the FEE logos, the Secretariat sent out a small questionnaire to all member organisations. Around 45 organisations had replied and around 8 countries have ensured national protection of (some of) the FEE logos. The Executive Board noted the feedback and supported the decision of writing to the countries that had not answered in order to get the full overview of the national protection.

The Executive Board also approved the plan for the coming steps in ensuring the implementation of the FEE Branding Guidelines and the protection of the logos through the Madrid Protocol and national registration.

The Executive Board supported the suggestion from the Coordinator meeting regarding non-compliance with the FEE Branding Guidelines. If non-compliance is observed, the Coordination should remind the organisation about the guidelines, and continued lack of compliance should be part of the FEE membership evaluation.

c. CO₂ fund for FEE

FBT informed about the funding to the CO₂ Fund from travels in 2007. Information regarding CO₂ compensation from travels in LEAF, YRE and Green Key programmes must be available before 1 March 2008. The transfer to the CO₂ Fund should be ensured before 31 March 2008. There will be around 4000€ available for use in 2008. The application form and procedure will soon be produced by the Secretariat in cooperation with DV and BHB. Organisations can apply for funding for tree planting and environmental education activities must be carried out in connection to the tree planting event.

DV presented the updated CO₂ calculation method. The price per ton CO₂ will increase from 10€ in 2007 to 20€ in 2008. The update was approved.

Regarding the promotion of FEE's CO₂ Fund, FBT informed that the online payment system is still not working in a proper way, and therefore the promotion of the CO₂ Fund is postponed until the problems with the website company are solved. CD requested the production of a presentation from FEE with promotion of the CO₂ Fund.

d. Changes in FEE Articles of Association and Rules of Procedure

FBT explained the changes done by the FEE solicitor in the FEE Articles of Association. MP pointed out some contradictions in the changes and FBT promised to inform the solicitor about these mistakes. The Executive Board supported the suggestion for new

FEE Articles of Association with the additional comments included.

The Secretariat will produce the suggestion for new updated Rules of Procedure to be presented at the next Executive Board meeting.

e. Evaluation of the FEE programmes at the coming Executive Board meetings

The Executive Board approved the issues, format and time schedule for the evaluation of FEE programmes at the coming meetings: April 2008: YRE. October 2008: LEAF. January 2009: Blue Flag. April 2009: Green Key.

f. FEE Guide for Programme Responsible Executive Board Members

The Executive Board approved the guide (produced by the Secretariat in cooperation with the FEE programme coordinators) for the work of the FEE Executive Board members as responsible persons for FEE programmes.

g. FEE sponsorship strategy

HK gave presentation of a possible strategy to get sponsors. The idea is basically produce funding by starting a FEE donation shop with projects and products, to create a FEE Advisory Board (with FEE Ambassadors) and to create a network of "Young Industrial Leaders" (YIL) donating money to FEE.

HK asked the Executive Board members to spend some time before next meeting on considering persons as potential YILs among the network of each of the Executive Board members.

HK furthermore suggested that he will organise a meeting in Amsterdam Airport with the Dutch resource person having experiences with the web shop. FBT, HC and RR will attend the meeting.

HK suggested that the discussion about the sponsorship strategy for FEE will be an issue again at the next meeting. The Executive Board supported the idea.

7. Other Items

a. FEE mentor visit

JE informed about his trip to China and asked the programme coordinators to ensure the follow-up to his report. The issue of the involvement of Taiwan in FEE was discussed during his meeting with a potential solution to the problem. JE proposed CEEC to organise the General Assembly in China in e.g. 2010.

RR said that Malta is working well and he will be visiting Montenegro soon.

MP said that the Kenya meeting went very well, but due to the political problems in Kenya it is a good idea to have an alternative location of the Executive Board meeting in October as the situation in Kenya is currently unsure.

MP mentioned that WESSA has negotiations with Madagascar, and South Africa has been asked to come and help them with the FEE and Blue Flag feasibility study, meeting with the Ministries etc.

The situation with the organisation from Chile was discussed, seen in the light of the cancelled mentor visit in February. It was suggested to await the membership evaluation, payment of membership fee and attendance at the General Assembly. It might still be necessary to consider whether IEP is the right FEE member organisation

from Chile. The Secretariat was recommended to consult relevant persons on the issue.

b. FEE membership issues

FBT informed the Executive Board that the Secretariat had received a request for membership from “Inter-Environnement Wallonie” (IEW), an organisation representing the region of Wallonia in Belgium. IEW expressed interest in associate FEE membership representing Belgium-Wallonia. The current full FEE member organisation representing all of Belgium is Bond Beter Leefmilieu (BBL), but BBL is currently only active in the region of Flanders in Belgium.

The Executive Board had a lengthy discussion about the issue of future FEE membership for Belgium. Either Belgium can work with the “United Kingdom” solution, so that Belgium can in the future have two separate associate/full members, one organisation representing Flanders and one organisation representing Wallonia. The alternative is that BBL continues as full member and IEW can apply for affiliate membership. A third solution could be to create a FEE Belgium with BBL and IEW as equal members.

A decision regarding two separate entities in Belgium could set a precedent for other countries in the same political federal situation (e.g. USA with 50 states). Other Board members highlighted that the division is a wish from the current member, BBL and that Belgium is already two entities with separate environmental and educational legislation. After a vote, JE concluded that five out of seven Executive Board members expressed themselves in favour of the UK solution (dividing Belgium into two separate entities). It was at the same time decided that such a decision can only take place with the approval of the existing FEE member organisation. This means that FEE cannot approve associate membership for an organisation from a region without the approval of the current full member representing the whole country. As conclusion, it was decided that IEW can apply for associate membership for Belgium-Wallonia following the normal application procedures for new organisations. The membership application from IEW must include an official letter of support from BBL.

Regarding membership of FEE in large countries (e.g. Russia or Canada), it was decided that membership for such large countries should be an issue for discussion at the next Executive Board meeting.

The Executive Board approved the FEE Membership Evaluation 2008 document and the review procedure. FBT listed the organisations expecting to apply for full membership in 2008. The situation for KSPT in Russia was particularly discussed.

c. FEE Membership applications

The Executive Board approved affiliate membership for Rainforest Alliance and Finnish Association for Environmental Education (FAEE). Affiliate membership was also approved for Forestry Extension Institute on condition of the statutes being translated into English. Finally, the Executive Board confirmed continued affiliate membership for HORESTA.

d. Relation to International Partners

FBT presented the status for the negotiations with UNESCO and IUCN. A meeting with IUCN is expected to take place in late February 2008.

MP informed the Executive Board about the held meeting with UNEP concerning the planning of a joint environmental education conference for South East African countries in October 2008 as well as other plans for activities and projects within the UNEP-FEE

Memorandum of Understanding. The next planning meeting with UNEP is expected to take place in May 2008.

HC raised the question regarding the presence of FEE at some meetings, such as the UNEP meetings in Monaco; they are very time consuming.

JE and HC informed about the meeting with World Future Council (WFC). WFC is interesting in a cooperation with FEE where schools involved in the Eco-Schools Programme are encouraged to participate in the WFC "KidsCall campaign". WFC will fund the Eco-Schools national operator meeting as well as employing a person to work in the Eco-Schools Coordination for 5 months. There was a discussion about the possibilities and the return for FEE in the cooperation with WFC. It was highlighted that a partnership with a new partner organisation should not be made in a rush. As conclusion it was decided that HC will continue the negotiations with WFC in cooperation with JA, FBT and EGP.

e. FEE calendar

The Executive Board approved the calendar with the comment regarding the possible need for changing the meeting in Nairobi to another place if the political situation in the country remains unsure.

8. Next meeting

FBT informed about the upcoming FEE General Assembly 2008 and coming FEE Executive Board meetings.

FBT informed that a Guide for FEE meetings is under production to ensure planning and organisation of FEE meetings according to the wishes of FEE. The Guide will be presented at the next Executive Board meeting.

FBT also informed that the call for hosting the General Assembly 2009 will be repeated in the next FEE Newsletter.

9. Any other business

FBT asked the participants to keep the deadlines for the next meeting.

JE closed the meeting and thanked the participants for the constructive discussions and thanked Mohammed VI Foundation for hosting the meeting.