

Minutes of the ESMTB board meetings

Heidelberg, March 8, 2019.

Present: the complete board (Maíra Aguiar (MA), Ellen Baake (EB; minutes), Luděk Berec (LB), Sílvia Cuadrado (SC), Andrea De Gaetano (AdG; chair), Susanne Ditlevsen (SD), Toby Lundh (TL), Anna Marciniak-Czochra (AMC), Bob Planqué (BP))

Board meeting 9:00-13:00

- The informal decisions taken via email ballot since the Lisbon meeting were unanimously approved. The list of informal decisions is attached to the minutes.
- Identity and journal representation of the Society: The core business of ESMTB, namely mathematical and theoretical biology, is characterised by research combining insight into a biological problem with a non-trivial conceptual/mathematical core (ideally yielding a high convex sum). Neither the branch of the mathematics nor the branch of biology involved is important. JOMB, the official journal of ESMTB, does not cover all of this. Nevertheless, with a clear majority (7 in favour, 2 abstentions), the board decides not to suggest any changes to the scope of the journal, in order not to interfere with its mathematical focus, clear profile, and immaculate reputation. While it seems to be difficult to have more than one official journal, possibilities should be explored to support, endorse, or advertise another journal to keep the balance; the board is unanimous on this. It might also be a good idea to suggest special issues of JOMB with a more computational focus.
- Various suggestions for the logo of the society are discussed. The general preference is for a butterfly, landing on an Lorenz attractor shadow, its body an integral sign, and its wings dissolving into discrete objects (indicating a transition from continuous to discrete).
- Guidelines for supporting meetings and events: The following rules are agreed on.
 - The scope of the meeting must be within the scope of ESMTB.
 - At least one of the organisers is member in good standing, where age and amount of membership are considered as additional aspects.
 - If the registration fee for the event ≤ 200 EUR, then ESMTB members get a 50 EUR discount. If the registration fee is more than 200 EUR, they get at least a 100 EUR discount. The treasurer is the contact for the organisers to check membership status for those requesting the reduced registration fee.
 - Meeting participants will be offered ESMTB membership at a fee reduced by 50 percent. There is no reduced fee for ESMTB membership for school participants, since we already have a discounted membership fee for students (25 EUR).
 - The event should give visibility to ESMTB via a link to the Society's webpage, public recognition of the endorsement, and visibility to ESMTB throughout event
 - The organiser(s) undertake(s) to write a post-event report, to be published in the Communications.
 - The organiser(s) undertakes to offer each participant the possibility to be included in the ESMTB contact list. Participants should be asked if they want to be part of the ESMTB email list and to receive our info letter. That should be done during the online registration and for those who accept (data privacy rules?), the email/institution info should be shared with the Society.

- Travel support will be handled separately.
 - An upper limit of 9000 EUR per year applies; it will be distributed in 2 rounds (deadlines June 30, Dec. 30, with a decision 2 weeks later) Requests will be handled by treasurer. He makes (or solicits) a realistic estimate of how much conference needs and presents it to board, who decides.
 - Member enrolment campaign: The board is close to finalising lists of researchers working in mathematical and theoretical biology/medicine. Maira will draft a message advertising membership in ESMTB, and Andrea will bulk mail the letter under his own name.
 - Special interest groups within the Society ('subnetworks'): For some thematic groups, there is the desire to use the functioning infrastructure of ESMTB, such as the web page to advertise activities, and the communications to report on current developments. If such structures develop within ESMTB (rather than building up duplicate structures), this also gives additional visibility to ESMTB. In SMB, such structures are called subgroups; we might call them focus groups. Members are expected to be ESMTB members. The current suggestion for a focus group on multi-scale methods, made by AMC, will serve as a pilot project, to be communicated as a currently-emerging group, welcoming others. AMC will take care of the details.
 - Funded Research (H2020/FP9) action group: This initiative will facilitate the participation in consortia who send grant proposals to H2020/FP9. AdG and TL will take this in hands. In particular, the infrastructure of ESMTB will be used to distribute the news about these opportunities, establish contacts, and facilitate the formation of the corresponding groups.
 - ESMTB web page: BP reports on the status of the new web page, which is being completely restructured.
 - EMS web page: Susanne has editing responsibility for the year of mathematical biology. In the future, the corresponding page should become a part of the ESMTB web page.
 - Membership fee structure: It is decided that a 'light' membership (free access to JOMB, reduced fee at meetings, no eligibility for travel grants) will be offered to those based in underfavoured nations (BP will identify a suitable list) and western PhD students in their first year. Full student memberships with benefits will apply to all other PhD students. No change of fee structure is envisioned here, apart from a 1-year free membership for recipients (and first rankings) of the society prizes (that is, the winner of the Arino prize, the top-5 for the Heinrich prize, and the winners of the ECMTB poster prize; the latter gets a second year if already a member). Whether there should be elected (rather than ordinary) members (as with ISI) is to be discussed in the future.
 - Reinhart Heinrich awards procedures: Some subtle changes will have to be made, and decided upon by email ballot.
 - Upcoming events:
 - ICIAM July 2019 in Valencia: Maybe SC can attend as ESMTB representative.
 - ECMTB 2020 in Heidelberg: Originally planned for August 3–7, 2020, a shift to the 1st week of September is now preferred, due to building availability. AMC will negotiate this with SMB. AdG will then get in touch about the scientific board according to decision in Lisbon.
- Meeting with Springer and JOMB managing editor (14:00–16:00)**

Guests: Lynn Brandon, Elena Griniari (Springer), Mats Gyllenberg (JOMB managing editor, ME)

The following topics were discussed.

- Elena Griniari reports that, due to a re-organisation at Springer, responsibility for JOMB has moved to Lynn Brandon.
- The Springer representatives report on facts and figures on JOMB: From 2017 to 2018, submissions have increased from 500 to 512 (with an upward trend over several years), downloads have increased (from a median of 262 to a median of 287), the number of published papers has increased from 122 to 128, the number of online-first papers has increased, and the turnaround time to first decision has decreased to 60 days.
- Scope of the journal: The ME confirms that a condition for publication in JOMB is some kind of mathematical sophistication, where modelling also counts as mathematics.
- Perspectives section: There are very few Perspectives articles; there should be more. Current Perspectives editor is Helen Byrne; the ESMTB board should appoint a contact person (it is later decided that this will be SD), who will identify topics and authors and solicit manuscripts. It is discussed whether the Perspectives are to be understood as representing policies of the board, which express opinions, beliefs, or convictions, which then belong to the 30 pages that are reserved for ESMTB every year and need not be peer-reviewed; or whether they are scientific papers, which are peer-reviewed and fall under the final responsibility of the ME. It is also discussed whether the Perspectives may be published on ESMTB web page and in the Communications. This would require publication under a different licence. SD will negotiate these questions with Springer and clarify the format and the workflow.
- Special issues: More special issues should be solicited. The workflow is that the ESMTB board identifies (preferably at least two) guest editors, who have to be approved by the ME, and make a plan (authors and topics) of the issue that has to be approved by the board and the ME. The guest editor has the role of an associate editor, which means that the final decision on a paper rests with the ME, who is responsible for all of scientific quality of the journal. (This is a general Springer policy; in practice, decisions of the ME against an AE or GE are extremely rare.)
- The 30 pages reserved in JOMB for issues of ESMTB seem to have become mostly obsolete since scientists do no longer read paper issues cover to cover, but individual electronic articles. A sub-page of the journal or a web page would be more appropriate. It should be discussed how this can be realised.
- Springer inquires into the collaboration on a book series (such as Springer Briefs, a collaboration with the Bernoulli Society; these are small books of 50-125 pages). A similar cooperation with ESMTB might involve lecture notes for summer schools, or longer review articles.
- The cooperation agreement between ESMTB and Springer is inconsistent w.r.t. the responsibilities in appointing new AEs. Is this the responsibility of the ME alone, or is there cooperation with the ESMTB board?
- Sponsoring: Springer has previously sponsored poster prizes in the ECMTB conferences and will consider doing so also for the 6-9 smaller events supported by ESMTB per year.
- Transfer to BMB: The question is raised whether there should be the possibility of transfer of manuscripts from JOMB to BMB. The usefulness of this is unclear.

- EMS: The ME reports that the EMS will increase grants to summer schools, EMS distinguished speakers at conferences, and similar issues, and encourages ESMTB to apply for such funding (deadline September 30, 2019, for events in 2020). It is also important that ESMTB should be represented at ECM 2020.

Board meeting 16:00-17:30

- Financial situation: BP reports that we currently have a balance of EUR 70.000. Payment of membership fees by credit card has become available. Problems with institutional membership remain to be resolved.
- Support for meetings: It is agreed that the treasurer hands out money for meetings before the event.
- Free membership: It is agreed that Angélique Stephanou is to receive a free membership for a couple of years, as a thank you for her role as our representative in France.
- Communications: they may now be printed in Prague, at the cost of 1 EUR for printing, and 4 EUR for sending. It is discussed whether hardcopies are still required. After all, all other societies still do it this way. The decision is delegated to SC, SD, and LB.

Lisbon, July 2018, at ECMTB2018

The meeting was distributed across the following time slots: July 24, 12:30-14:00; July 25, 12:30-14:00; July 26, 12:30-14:00; July 27, 15:45-17:45. These minutes also contain a report on the general assembly on July 26, 16:40-17:30.

Present: Maíra Aguiar (MA), Ellen Baake (EB; minutes), Andrea deGaetano (AdG; chair), Susanne Ditlevsen (SD), Torbjörn Lundh (TL), Anna Marciniak-Czochra (AMC), Robert Planqué (RP).

Absent (with apology): Silvia Cuadrado (SC), Luděk Berec (LB)

1. Meeting with Springer and JOMB managing editor (July 24, 12:30-14:00)

Guests: Elena Griniari (Springer), Mats Gyllenberg (JOMB managing editor).

The following topics were discussed:

- The contract between Springer and the ESMTB (attached to the minutes) dates from 2010 and must be updated. The current benefits for ESMTB members are: free online access to JOMB, discount on the printed copy of 25%, and a discount of 20% on Springer books in biomathematics for a two-month period every year (currently this period is set to April-May). The modalities of ordering with this privilege should be publicised on the internet pages of ESMTB one month ahead of the privilege period each year (so far, this did not happen; we should see to it in the future). The new contract will be negotiated in due course. On the technical side, it will be article-based rather than page-based. Further aspects are discussed within the board later during the week.
- 30 pages per year can be used for societal issues; this has not been much used in the past.
- The 'Perspectives' section aims at 1-2 articles per year on recent developments or emerging fields. Current editor is Helen Byrne.
- Special issues on specific topics (with guest editors) are welcome. They may be initiated via proposals of 1-2 pages. There have recently been several special issues on the occasion of birthdays, and memorial issues; but this should be discontinued.
- Review articles are welcome (there are too few). They are solicited by invitation by the editors or the ESMTB. It is discussed whether review authors should get a Springer book for free, rather than a free JOMB subscription.
- Promotional materials from Springer can only be sent to mailing lists if individuals

have agreed to receive them.

- Development of the journal: Submissions are stable at around 500 per year. At least 50% are rejected without review. Of the remaining ones, roughly 50% finally make it into the journal. In light of the high rejection rates, a transfer desk to other journals (such as *Bulletin of Mathematical Biology*) would be welcome.

Impact factor, citations, and downloads have increased, the turnaround times have decreased. Elena Griniari presents a report including detailed journal statistics.

- The JOMB editorial board currently consists of 17 persons, plus the two managing editors. 7 out of the 17 are Europeans, 2 are female. The board should be enlarged; preferentially in the directions of evolution, stochastics, and/or epidemiology.
- It is discussed whether the scope of JOMB should be opened up into the direction of computational biology. Mathematical Biosciences did enlarge its computational section. It is discussed whether computational biology is a case for JOMB; or whether the journal should stick to its proof-oriented focus, which gives it a well-defined and high reputation in mathematics. Another possibility would be to widen our scope by supporting a computational journal; options are discussed.
- It might be helpful to name a liaison officer for the journal.

2. Wednesday, July 25, 12:30-14:00

The following topics were tackled:

- The e-vote decisions taken via email ballot since the Warsaw meeting were unanimously ratified. The list of e-vote decisions is attached to the minutes.
- ESMTB 2020 will take place in Heidelberg, August 3-7, 2020, organised by AMC. It will be a joint conference with the SMB. A two-tier procedure is envisaged for the scientific board, namely: 2 persons from the ESMTB board, 2 from the SMB board,

and 1 local person will decide about the plenary speakers and the number of minisymposia. The second tier, including the first one plus an additional 4 people from ESMTB, 4 from SMB, and 2 locals will decide about the minisymposia themselves and the contributed talks. The locals will decide about the posters. AdG will discuss this suggestion with the SMB.

- Bank account: Treasurer, president, vice president, and secretary should have access to the new bank account (to be opened in France since the society is registered in France).
- Web page: The web page must move out of Dresden by October 1st at the latest. RP takes care of this, decides what is necessary, and buys expertise where required (in particular, web design).
- Memberships: ECMTB participants that are not ESMTB members and have paid the full conference fee can apply for membership for one year without fees.
- EC H2020: AdG presents plans of the European Society of Oncology Surgery, and the European Society of Intensive Care, for joint proposals with ESMTB within the H2020 framework. These proposals will set up a framework within which individual PIs can then apply for funding. The board approves these plans.
- Next board meeting: will be in Heidelberg in March or April 2020, organised by AMC.

3. Ovide Arino outreach award on Thursday, July 26, 12:30-14:00

Guests: Jean-Luc Gouzé, representative of the Société Francophone de Biologie Théorique (SFBT); Rafael Bravo; Suzanne Touzeau

It is agreed that the Ovide Arino outreach award, to be co-sponsored by SFBT and ESMTB, will be awarded on the occasion of ECMTB every two years. The prize will amount to 1000 Euros of personal

money, to which SFBT and ESMTB will contribute equally. The prize will go to a person from a non-favoured country, maybe at the early postdoc level, who has done outstanding work in connection with a European group. The jury will consist of 5 persons: 2 from ESMTB, 2 from SFBT, and one from an underprivileged country. The jury will agree on the rules, assisted by TL, due to his experience with the Heinrich Prize.

As to the jury, the board approves the nomination of Rafael Bravo and Suzanne Touzeau for ESMTB. For SFBT, Angelique Stephanou is suggested, together with Julien Arino (the son of Ovide Arino and a mathematician himself) or a substitute. SFBT will decide about these suggestions. The fifth member will be chosen and invited to join the committee by the four above members.

4. General assembly, Thursday, July 26, 16:40-17:30

The current board introduces itself: Members are MA (Vice president), EB (Secretary), LB, SC, AdG (President), SD, TL, AMC, RP (Treasurer).

The board reports on important current developments, namely communication (SD), prizes, schools, grants (TL), administration (EB), members, finance, web page (RP), ECMTB (MA, AMC), and Horizon2020 (AdG). MA, in the name of the previous and the current board, thanks Andreas Deutsch for his extended service to ESMTB; Mats Gyllenberg informs about JOMB.

AdG then initiates a discussion with the participants about the future role of ESMTB. The 'wishlist' includes: networking (information about who does what where), the option to pay membership fees by credit card (rather than PayPal), satellite meetings to ECMTB, lobbying for the area, improved information about job offers, and mandatory membership for ECMTB participation.

5. Friday, July 27, 12:30-14:00

The following topics were tackled:

- Acta Mathematica Hungarica offers a special issue with proceedings of ECMTB. The board decides against this (it's too late, and the board lacks the necessary manpower to appropriately compile the proceedings).
- Thursday, October 10, 2018, is the Day of Mathematical Biology. The board will think about possible means of promotion (press, radio) and send suggestions to TL.
- Reinhart Heinrich Prize: The procedures are contained in the attached document. This year, there have been very few suggestions; when soliciting new members, one should, at the same time, solicit suggestions for the prize. Two members of the committee will step down next year and will have to be replaced.
- ICIAM: In this year's ICIAM meeting in Philadelphia, ESMTB was represented by Alex Ostermann (Austria). At the next meeting (spring 2019) in Valencia, AdG will attend.
- EMS: This year's EMS meeting was attended by AMC.
- ESMTB communications: appear once per year (more is not feasible). There is some discussion about size, format, and paper versus electronic; it is decided to stay with paper.
- ESMTB logo: It is agreed that the logo is ugly and should be changed. Suggestions will be discussed via email, and the layout should be done by a designer (MA will ask the designer of the ECMTB18 logo).
- Finance: ESMTB will receive from ECMTB18 a 10 EUR flat rate per participant paying a non-member regular fee (MA will do the exact sums in Sep.).
- ECMTB20: There is nothing to decide today. The next steps will be to decide about the scientific committee, and on the fee structure.

- Upcoming meetings supported by ESMTB:
 - Helsinki summer school on mathematical ecology and evolution (Turku, August 2018)
 - Dynamical systems applied to the natural sciences (Naples, Feb. 2019, MA)
 - Summer school on theoretical ecology (Sicily, autumn 2019).
 - SD will apply for funding for the 5th international conference on mathematical neuroscience (June 2019, Copenhagen). (The general procedure is application via email to AdG, then the board votes about a support of 1000 Euros if possible.)
 - Travel grants: the board acknowledges LB's written report.
 - Emails to ESMTB (via info@esmtb.org): The current situation is unsatisfactory; this will change after the migration.
 - Honorary memberships: It has been brought to our attention that some key figures in the development of ESMTB (founding members etc.) are now retired professors and have no access to research funds. We may think whether to institute some sort of (lifetime?) honorary membership, cost-free, to keep these individuals within the Society. If we so decide, then we would have to set up some kind of system for proposing candidates and deciding on granting membership. The board decides against honorary memberships, not least because ordinary members pay their fees from their personal salaries (rather than institutional funds) as well, and the persons in question certainly have generous pensions. Furthermore, they could have become life members during their active career, thus saving money anyway.
 - Role of JOMB for ESMTB:
 - As mentioned before, we can use space (two pages per issue) in the journal for societal issues. It is argued that this does not make too much sense these days because people do not use journals this way any more (they download individual articles rather than looking at journal issues cover to cover). The board agrees that we keep this point in mind for the renegotiations of the contract.
 - In comparison with SMB, our situation is unfortunate. SMB has Bulletin of Mathematical Biology and gets a share of the profit, because SMB has the name rights and could negotiate accordingly. It is discussed whether and how the situation can be improved.
 - Projected and upcoming big conventions: ICIAM in Valencia (2019); global convention on mathematical biology (SMB, ESMTB, Chinese Society of Mathematical Biology, Japanese Society of Mathematical Biology) in China 2022; ICIAM in Tokio 2023; ICIAM 2024 somewhere in Europe.
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- E-vote decisions of the ESMTB board, Jan. 2018 – Feb. 2019**
- January 17, 2018: In lack of a further volunteer, for the moment ESMTB will continue with a single ICIAM contact point (AdG). If at any time one of us will feel interested in joining, they should notify the board.
 - January 28, 2018: With 6 expressed favorable votes the board decides to grant to the event “Mathematics for Biomedicine”, Turin, October 8-11, 2018, the sum of 1000 Euro.
 - February 6, 2018: With 6 votes we define as “Member in good standing” only mem-

bers who have paid their dues for the current year at the time they submit the application (for travel grant, reduced-fee registration or other).

- February 8, 2018: With a majority, it is set that the society will reimburse either the direct beneficiary or a reliable proxy upon presentation of the relevant receipts.
- February 9, 2018: TL will act for the board to draft the necessary regulations for the administration of the Reinhard Heinrich and possible other future awards granted by ESMTB, as well as to represent ESMTB in the necessary discussions with the Heinrich Prize Committee and other prize-related activities.
- March 2, 2018: The board has voted to accept a MoU modification such that the ECMTB2018 organisers will not pay ESMTB the originally agreed 10 EUR per participant for those participants who have benefited from the 50 EUR discount because they are ESMTB members in good standing.
- March 21, 2018: AMC will be our representative with EMS. Check that we will pay or have paid our EMS and ICIAM dues for 2018.
- April 29, 2018: Given the need to proceed expeditiously in effecting the variation of the society's official registered address, the president convened today an electronic meeting of the board, explaining that the building where the society has its previous official address, in the campus of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Grenoble, no longer exists. The kind offer to locate the official address of ESMTB within the same campus, in a different building, was accepted by the board with 8 favorable votes and 2 abstained out of 10. The new official address of the society is henceforth: Société Européenne de Biologie Mathématique et Théorique / European Society for Mathematical and Theoretical Biology (ESMTB), Laboratoire TIMC-IMAG, Pavillon Taillefer, Faculté de Médecine de Grenoble, 38706 La Tronche cedex, France. The board wishes to express sincere thanks to Dr. Angelique Stephanou, to Prof. Philippe Cinquin and to the staff at TIMC-IMAG for their precious collaboration.
- May 17, 2018: The board accepts the resignation of Prof. Frank Hilker, tended by him to all board members by email message. Since the statutes of the society do not foresee the possibility to replace a board member before the regular periodic elections, the board will henceforth count nine members until the next mandate starting January 2021.
- June 28, 2018: The board approves the proposal of the Société Francophone de Biologie Théorique to co-sponsor the Ovide Arino Outreach Award.
- November 13, 2018: the Board decides that in case financial support for a scientific event (meeting, conference, workshop, school) is asked of the Board by a Board Member, by a Board Member's institutional colleagues or staff, or for an event of which the Board Member is an organizer or co-organizer, the implicated Board Member shall abstain from the evaluation of the request and from the Board's decision to grant such request.
- December 11, 2018: ESMTB will support the Samos workshop/summer school at the usual conditions (1500 Euro contribution and agreed upon visibility).
- January 28, 2019: ESMTB will support the Conference on Discrete Models of Complex Systems, 15-17 July 2019, with the standard amount of 1500 Euro.

Ellen Baake
ESMTB Secretary
