

ECSITE-UK COMMITTEE MEETING

18 July 2006, Thinktank

MINUTES

Present: Linda Conlon, Kelvin Boot, Goéry Delacôte, Heather Mayfield, Sally Montgomery (for Judith Harvey), Gillian Pearson, Melanie Quin, Leigh-Anne Stradeski, Peter Trevitt, Nick Winterbotham.

1 Apologies

Apologies received from Roland Jackson and Stuart Monro; noted that Leigh-Anne and Heather would be late.

2 Minutes of meeting held on 20 March 2005

The Minutes were approved, with the addition of Nick to list of those present – oops.

3 Treasurer's report

Peter reported:

At the mid-year point, the overall position is healthy. There is a small surplus for the year to date of £9,365 and an overall balance of £213k.

The core activities have very nearly broken even this year so far, against a projected loss, whilst the balance for these activities stands at £104,000.

Project activity continues to dominate the core finances with approximately three times the rate of income and expenditure. Slightly more than half the overall staff costs fall to projects.

As would be expected with projects of this kind, income and expenditure for individual projects does not follow a steady pattern, and differs from what was budgeted. It is not possible to assess the financial health of the projects without detailed information about them. A statement from the project managers would be helpful in this regard.

5 Ecsite-uk networking and projects' progress

Brief project reports, the webmaster's report and admin manager's update had been pre-circulated.

Melanie highlighted:

- 5 facilitation skills workshops, born of needs identified through the Doing Dialogue project, now being run thanks to additional support from the Potential Trust
- 12 centres, spread nationwide with Royal Observatory Edinburgh as the lead partner, delivering events to support Go For It! Space Science (Girlguiding).

Sally commented appreciatively the new pie charts in the webmaster's report.

Goéry updated the Committee on Generation Genome:

- Contract to be received this week from the Wellcome Trust
- US visit to review existing exhibitions completed (AMNH, Exploratorium, New York Hall of Science, Cold Spring Harbor)
- Initial kick off meeting held
- Evaluation and exhibition content workshops held
- Content developers secondment to the Sanger Institute planned for August
- Review of literature on Public Attitudes to genetics/evaluation reports on other

exhibitions received from Ben Gammon

- By the end of this week, Scientific and Content Advisory panel to be invited to first meeting. Panel membership agreed with Wellcome
- Planning for Stakeholder Advisory Panel underway
- Partnership for CPD for teachers agreed in principle with the National Network of Science Learning Centres
- Programming post job description in preparation ready for recruitment.

Actions:

AGM discussion period to act as a Stakeholder Forum, to elicit members' wish list for the learning programme that will accompany the major exhibition and exhiblets.

MQ/Martin to post summary material on the website

6 Advocacy

Updates

Wales: service level agreement is being re-defined with the Welsh Assembly for a new 3-year agreement from November 2006, with reference to measurability and impact, off-site (all Wales) as well as in Cardiff Bay. Technopolis' 20-point agreement is one of several models for KPIs. Peter is happy to share KPIs with the Committee when they are formulated.

NI: Armagh Planetarium due to re-open summer 2006. South of the border, 3 sets of plans under development (Exploration Station, Dublin; TCD is developing Science Gallery; children's museum with attraction developer). W5's business plan has been approved for a year. Service provision off-site is now of increasing importance to funders, eg delivering Government targets in schools in multi-deprived areas.

England: Linda/MQ meeting with OSI/DfES officials has been followed by a proposal (pre-circulated for comment, and thanks to At-Bristol noted), and a follow-up meeting is scheduled for 28 July. Independently, Ecsite-uk jointly with the BA, SETNET and SLCs, are exploring the possibility of delivering the DfES' target of piloting 250 science clubs in the two financial years 2005-07.

Regionally, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Birmingham are both designated science cities, with Life and Thinktank slated to deliver 'science engagement' but with no clear idea yet how much funding will be forthcoming.

Mission, vision

Ecsite-uk endorses Ecsite's 4 strategic objectives:

1. Provide quality opportunities for networking
2. Develop and formalise tools for professional staff development
3. Develop strategies to assist members become economically more sustainable
4. Ensure Ecsite-uk's financial sustainability and executive strength

Ecsite (Europe) has a 5th objective, to "Grow the network to become the main organisation for science communication in Europe." This does not translate to the UK where, for historical reasons, the BA, RI, Royal Society, and SETNET are all also important players with complementary roles.

Further to these, the E-uk Committee has some practical recommendations for increasing its own efficiency (emerging from the meeting facilitated by Arnie Skelton):

- Give tasks to individuals each meeting, with time limits
- Include a learning slot on each agenda
- Commission research to demonstrate we can deliver Govt objectives

- Develop a strategic cultivation plan
- Set a plan for the year at the AGM

Actions:

Heather to dig out research done on interactive galleries and adult dialogue and circulate, by 31st

Nick to prepare 15-minute learning slot on ILFA, for September 2006 Committee Meeting

Gillian to lead on developing a strategic cultivation plan, with **MQ, Goery, Linda** (Sep Mtg)

Linda/MQ to draft annual plan, for approval by all before AGM; discussion session also to include focus on Gift Aid.

Heather, Peter, Stuart to supply 'pitch' blurb, to stand for re-election, to Rachel Simmons by 14 August at absolute latest .

Brochure

This is not to be launched at the BA festival. Committee is still striving to define its identity, and the timetable to September is too tight. In due course, a House of Commons, or 11 Downing Street, event would be ideal.

Sections are:

- 1 Diversity, definition
- 2 Science for all: visitors, audience
- 3-4 Enjoyment + Education >> Engagement >> Empowerment
- 5 Stakeholders, supporters, partners – egs of being rooted: SLC, RDA, Science Village
- 6 Relevance: to our visitors and to stakeholders

In discussion, the Committee recognised that – prompted by the day facilitated by Arnie Skelton – Ecsite-uk's emphasis has shifted from a declared aim of 'fundraising for the sector' to 'support for the membership', specifically at present through networking opportunities and collaborative projects. The Committee has recognised (and the process of writing the brochure points up) that the sector is an inclusive one and consequently very diverse. Within the sector are groups and subgroups, and it would be divisive for Ecsite-uk to lobby for funding for only a select number of its members.

The brochure will therefore celebrate the sector's diversity and act as a support for individual members' own lobbying of their regional and local stakeholders.

Actions, by 31 July:

Nick to recover Robert Winston quote from speech at Thinktank

Heather to get quote from James Dyson

Sally to get W5 percentage figures on attitude change by youngsters

All to supply quotes from adults

Kelvin to circulate 'hit list' of distinctive photos needed – in the exhibition, in outreach activities, of teens and adults, etc etc

7 Any other business

Committee members shared their experience of implementing new Gift Aid rules.

8 Dates and locations of 2006 meetings

7 September, Norwich (BA Festival): AGM 10am thru lunch; Ctee Mtg 14.30-17.30

Ecsite Directors' forum: 24-26 November, Naples

4 December, Techniquet, Cardiff, 11.00-15.30

ecsite-uk 5-year book: 'Engaging the next generation'

Draft brief

smart, not expensively glossy

Aims

- to look back over activities/achievements since 2001, and forward to 2011
- to facilitate regional funding for science centres, and to attract support from the corporate & commercial sector

Content, therefore

- is celebratory (2001-2005)
- summarises funding status quo in 4 countries (ref Scottish strategy)
- draws international comparisons (ASTC data (=30% public + 25% fundraising +45% at the gate), ASPAC case studies, etc)
- documents links with schools – 'supporting the work of teachers... enhancing the experience of learners... a buffer between the worlds of school and science' – hitting DfES targets at all ages from pre-school to university
- documents 'public engagement' activities – 10-year strategy for science and innovation – meeting OST objectives from citizenship to recruitment
- emphasises that much collaboration is already taking place, despite dedicated Government funding
- identifies opportunities for collaboration at regional level with Science Learning Centres (and equivalents in Scotland, Wales, N.I.??), SETNET, meeting RDA (and devolved administration) agendas

folder with 4pp doc

Wellcome endorsement?

BA festival launch

Our USP is that we are neutral, apolitical, informative in clear, exciting ways; people-people organisations; fast, responsive, entrepreneurial, swift to deliver well; AND we contribute to current Govt priorities