

	Alternet Council & Steering Committee Meeting Minutes In-person Aveiro CESAM with hybrid option 13 May 2025 09:00-12:00 (Local time, CET-1)
Venue	SANTIAGO UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, UNIVERSIDADE DE AVEIRO Room Room Sala do Senado at the rectory building. The Rectory building is located on the Santiago Campus of the University of Aveiro, the Rectory building stands orthogonally to the Alameda, at the junction between it and the Central Square.  The link for the meeting: Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: https://videoconf-colibri.zoom.us/j/98566312441?pwd=1ONIDzCSLRgR8FNigPAMArumeUaMIM.1 Password: 388733
Contact	secretariat@alterneteurope.eu ; Jiska.van.dijk@nina.no
Aim meeting	Alternet strategy and its future

In-person participants

Jiska van Dijk (Council Chair; NINA); Philip Roche (Steering Committee and MB Chair; INRAE) Fiona Nevzati (Alternet), Tyler Kulfan (Alternet), Lisa Norton (UK-CEH), Karmen Czett (ESSRG), Mark Frenzel (UFZ), Johannes Peterseil (EAA), Kerry Waylen (Hutton), Clara Veerkamp (PBL), Brooke Wilkerson (Alternet), Eszter Kelemen (ESSRG), Chris Short (CCRI), Ana Lillebo (Council Vice Chair; CESAM), Amadeu Soares (CESAM), Jomme Desair (INBO), Monika Suskevics (IAES), Mihai Adamescu (Unibuc), Robert Kanka (ILE-SAS), Kinga Krauze (ERCE), Maurice Hoffmann (Alternet), Leonard Sandin (NINA)

Online participants

Ben Delbaere (DC), Sibylle Schroer (IGB), Allan Watt, Juliette Young (INRAE)



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Abbreviations of topics - **INFO**: information topic; **DECI**: decision topic; **DISC**: discussion topic

1. INFO (Amadeus & Jiska): Welcome and start meeting – aim of the meeting (including some practicalities on payment of membership fee)

The meeting began at 9:00. Chair Jiska van Dijk opened the meeting and CESAM president Amadeu Soares welcomed all those present to Aveiro and to CESAM.

2. INFO (Jiska van Dijk): Alternet in a nutshell & the future of Alternet - for Alternet its aim, its partners, its activities see [Home - Alternet](#)

Jiska reviewed the history of Alternet and its evolution. The network of excellence origin, the development of Alternet's legal structure, the joining of European projects, and the hiring of employees were noted. Alternet funding streams (membership fees and project funding) were reviewed, as were the activities which these streams fund.

Two options for the future of Alternet were raised as examples: an EU-project centric model and a member-driven research network.

3. INFO (Jiska van Dijk): Breakout groups intro – inspired by Japanese Economist Tatsuyoshi Saijo his 'Future Design' model

A small group exercise was introduced to explore possible visions and futures for Alternet, starting in the future (2035) and slowly working backwards to today. Those present split up into breakout groups. A strong emphasis was placed on consistency regarding the successful flagship activities of Alternet (e.g. the summer school, conferences) and openness to integrating new voices, perspectives, and personnel—namely, that there would be natural turnover to engaged young researchers. A growing focus on science-policy and society interface and collaborative research was identified. The relationship with a changing policy landscape of Europe and the potential impact of a great deal of uncertainty and instability were discussed. A strongly emphasised final message was that engaged Alternet members must lead by example.

Key themes: Strong focus on SPSIs and having a role in SSBD; attractive to its members and more inclusion of partner colleagues; strong visibility and strong impact; collaboration among ourselves and with other networks

Keywords: reflective; proactive; influential; trustworthy

4. DISC (all): Discussion in small groups



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- a. **Being in 2035 and moving back to 2025, what should our strategy be and what should we aim at?**
- b. **(Breakout group reporters): Outcome of the groups**

Notes from groups:

- Alternet integration in the SSBD (science service for biodiversity - BioAgora)
 - Beyond EU
 - Concerns remain about losing independence; could provide service as an independent entity
- Alternet filling gaps that EU cannot delegate
 - Examples: training, conferences
- A clear vision is needed of what Alternet wants
 - Interactions with lobbying
 - Offering and promoting dialogues on hot topics (e.g. hydropower, land use, etc.)
- Gaps and needs
 - A vision - e.g. summer schools, promoting dialogues, collection of knowledge, provision of science input
- Dialogues could be brought to summer schools as content
- Impact, projects, and expansion
 - Alternet as key player in SSBD; waypoint between research institutions/researchers and science service
 - Alternet could bring new players into the SSBD

5. DISC and DECI (all): Alternet strategy and its future

- a. **DISC and DECI (all): Realization and proposed actions**
- b. **Summarizing and closing the meeting (Jiska van Dijk)**

Why do we do what we do? And with whom do we do it (alliances)? In the context of these questions, the changing political landscape was again discussed—including the general skepticism towards elites. As their allegiance to biodiversity progress changes, putting science at the service of policymakers becomes more risky and questionable. Reinvesting in networks was discussed; including renewal through involving new people and through outreach.

The changing roles of the council members was also discussed, including taking on more of a visionary oversight role and being more communicative with their institutes. The need for Alternet to determine and clearly state its values in the face of changing realities (e.g. for sustainability and conservation of biodiversity) was advocated for by some members. It was also stated that increasing networking activity with non-scientist/academic actors and



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increasing transdisciplinarity could be important for Alternet's future. The success stories and elements of A4Cap were reflected on. Onboarding and integration of Alternet Conference attendees should be prioritized.

Other proposed actions and outputs:

- Research outputs for impacts; what we think is important.
- Position paper on science for society
- Increased engagement to make diverse voices heard, get them onboard.
- Connect to and promote other skills
- Budgets for open discussions, personal development

A major overarching conclusion for the Alternet community was: Together we are stronger (if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together).

It was decided that the Steering committee will take on redefinition of Alternet's mission.

6. End meeting

The meeting concluded at noon; the attendees proceeded to the Alternet Conference.