

D7.2

Project Advisory Board Terms of Reference and Composition

WR

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ABBREVIATIONS

NDA	Non-disclosure agreement
PAB	Project advisory board

Executive Summary

This deliverable D7.2 provides the Project Advisory Board (PAB) Terms of Reference that describes the roles and responsibilities of the PAB, as well as the terms and conditions of the membership to the PAB and procedural information (e.g., meetings and costs of participation). This document also provides the composition of the PAB listing the experts who have confirmed their participation to join the PAB at this time (M6). The advisory board with committed support from representatives of industrial organisations in the biobased economy and experts on sustainability standards, schemes and ecolabels will play an important role in achieving the project objectives, maximise impact and outreach. This will facilitate the further development and adoption of robust and effective schemes/labels and market growth of sustainable biobased products for contribution to a circular biobased economy.

1. Introduction

The PAB will be a consultation body providing the project with feedback, strategic recommendations and guidance, contribute to the project dissemination through their wider stakeholder communication channels, and to maximize and sustain the project results.

They will be invited to join relevant stakeholder engagement activities (such as workshops) organized related to specific tasks of the project or individually contacted to provide advice and feedback based on their knowledge and expertise during the project. The PAB members can also be invited to join General Assembly meetings held every six months to assist and facilitate the decisions made but shall not have any voting rights.

Several key experts have been identified and contacted already during the proposal preparation stage and expressed their interest in the project. For this a wide coverage of key target groups was considered including industrial biobased value chain actors, experts on sustainability standards, scheme/label owners, academia and international organizations related to sustainability and bioeconomy.

This project (SUSTCERT4BIOBASED) addressed the Horizon Europe call *HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-07: International and EU sustainability certification schemes for bio-based systems*. It is a Coordination and Support action. Two other projects – HARMONITOR (led by Sergio Ugarte - SQ Consult) and STAR4BBS (led by Luana Ladu - Technical University of Berlin) – were also awarded to address the same call. Together with the project officers of the European Commission, the 3 projects have decided to form one joint Advisory Board, instead of a separate board for each project. This clustering also makes it possible to bring feedback from experts from other organisations that are part of other 2 projects' consortium.

Upon discussion between the 3 coordinators, a joint list of experts was compiled and a division was made between the coordinators to contact each expert. These experts were accordingly contacted by the coordinators and some already confirmed their participation. Additional experts may become part of the joint PAB during the implementation of the project.

This deliverable provides the Project Advisory Board (PAB):

Terms of Reference that describes the roles and responsibilities of the PAB, as well as the terms and conditions of the membership to the PAB and procedural information (e.g., meetings and costs of participation). By agreeing to become a member of the joint PAB the expert agrees to be bound by these terms.

The Composition of the PAB listing the experts who have confirmed their participation to join the PAB at this time (M6).

2. Terms of Reference

2.1 Role and Responsibilities of the Project Advisory Board

The role of the joint PAB is to:

- Monitor and critically review the projects' development and progress in meeting their objectives;
- Providing input and feedback to the projects based on their knowledge and expertise;
- Advise about long-term and short term strategic decisions of the projects;
- Help the consortiums to stay up-to-date with the developments related to the project, whether in standards, schemes/ecolabels, legislation, industry or research on sustainability and bioeconomy;
- Facilitate connection with the targeted stakeholder groups to join the organised stakeholder engagement activities;
- Bring alignment with ongoing international efforts (especially for international organisations);
- Contribute to the wider dissemination of project results with relevant stakeholders via their network and thereby support sustainability of project outcomes beyond the project lifetime.

The responsibilities of the joint PAB include:

- Participation in joint PAB meetings
- Participation in stakeholder engagement activities organized by the cluster projects (e.g., workshops, meetings and other events) throughout the project

to provide feedback on the research findings, to bring input relevant for the research conducted, and bring recent developments to consortiums' knowledge.

Moreover, they can join General Assembly meetings held every six months (to assist and facilitate the decisions made, advise on long-term strategy making).

Direct contacts (e-mail or video call) with individual members may also occasionally be arranged to seek specific input, advice and feedback based on their knowledge and expertise.

The partners have the ultimate legal responsibility for the conduct of the project as the beneficiaries are bound by the Grant Agreement. The PAB will make recommendations to the consortium, who will in turn take action as necessary with regards to these recommendations. The PAB recommendations however are not binding for the consortium that may accept, amend or reject them.

2.2 Membership to the Joint Project Advisory Board

Membership of the joint PAB is voluntary, unremunerated and by invitation by any of the three coordinators on behalf of the consortia. They are external experts and are independent from the projects and their consortia. The joint PAB members are selected on the basis of being recognised experts, having a certain expertise relevant for the cluster projects. They collectively cover a range of expertise and represent range of stakeholder categories including: industrial biobased value chain actors, sustainability system community, academia, and international organisations. The following qualities are expected from the members:

- Demonstrated experience and knowledge on the biobased industry, and/or sustainability standards, schemes and ecolabels
- High professional integrity and adherence to ethical values and principles
- A sound judgement, derived from experience in management, scientific research or other qualifications and experiences, which allow them to function in an advisory role
- Connection with key stakeholder groups
- Willingness to devote adequate effort to the roles and responsibilities of the joint PAB (as described in section 2.1)

The members of the joint PAB were invited by the coordinators. The confirmed eight members of the joint PAB and their expertise is provided in section 3. The current members have a good gender balance with equal distribution of number of men and women.

As indicated in section 3, there is pending confirmation from 4 other organisations whose contribution were identified to be of value for the projects. Should it turn out during the project that a further expertise is missing in the joint PAB, additional members can be nominated in an ad-hoc basis.

The chair (and co-chair) of the joint PAB will be elected from the board members and recommended to the coordinators for approval. The chair(s) will oversee an efficient and effective operation of the PAB in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the term of the project and chair the PAB meetings. They will also lead communication with the coordinators for the delivery of PAB recommendations and arrangement of PAB meetings.

If a member does not attend a meeting, it should be ensured that they are available for the next meeting. If a member does not attend a second meeting, they should be asked if they wish to remain part of the PAB, and the consortium may decide to appoint another member for replacement.

The composition and the members of the joint PAB will be publicly acknowledged on the project websites unless a PAB member explicitly asks for her/his membership to remain confidential.

The membership is for the entire duration of the projects (36 months). The membership is terminated automatically with the end of the three projects (SUSTCERT4BIOBASED, HARMONITOR and STAR4BBS). The members may request their membership to be terminated at any time in writing by email.

The members provide their input and advice on a voluntary basis. There is no contractual obligation to the consortium, but commitment to cooperate, actively participate and provide advice.

2.3 Rules of Procedure of the Project Advisory Board

2.3.1 Meetings

The joint PAB meetings are aimed to be organized at least once a year. This is where the 3 projects will present progress, show preliminary research findings and ask for input and feedback from the joint PAB. After each meeting minutes will be prepared including recommendation of the joint PAB to be adequately taken into consideration in the execution of the project. The meeting minutes will be circulated to the joint PAB for comments and approval.

The joint PAB will furthermore be invited to join stakeholder engagement activities related to their expertise organized by the cluster projects (e.g., workshops, meetings and other events) throughout the project (3 years).

The members of the joint PAB can participate in General Assembly meetings of each project upon invitation. They shall have an advisory role in these meetings and shall not have any voting rights.

All these meetings are envisaged to be mostly in the form of online meetings. In SUSTCERT4BIOBASED project it is considered to invite the joint PAB in at least 1 of the 3 physical plenary consortium meetings.

The PAB will be notified about any upcoming meetings and events in advance (~ 3 weeks). A draft agenda shall be shared in advance.

2.3.2 Costs of Participation

In case of physical participation in plenary consortium meetings, the travel and accommodation expenses of the joint PAB members will be covered in line with the project budget rules (e.g., economy class). Reimbursement will be made on the basis of original receipts and justifications.

2.3.3 Potential Changes

The composition of the joint PAB (e.g., adding or replacing members) and this Terms of Reference may change as the project develops (for example, due to the circumstances of individual PAB members). This document will be updated accordingly.

2.3.4 Confidentiality

The joint PAB has the duty to protect all confidential and non-public information, such as draft versions of project deliverables, preliminary findings or contents of the discussions within the joint PAB meetings.

The projects' coordinators will ensure that a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) or a confidentiality declaration is executed between all partners and each PAB member. As per the consortium agreement of SUSTCERT4BIOBASED, the Coordinator is to sign, on behalf of all partners, an NDA with each member of the PAB, in order to protect Confidential Information disclosed by any of the partner to any member of the PAB. The NDA for the PAB members was prepared and enclosed in the Consortium Agreement (Attachment 4). With the decision of a joint PAB, it is considered that the projects will jointly prepare a confidentiality agreement to be signed by each of the PAB member.

A member of the PAB shall not participate in any discussion where a situation or circumstance of personal or professional nature can compromise his/her ability to provide advice and recommendations in the interest of best performing his/her objectives and tasks.

3. Composition of the Joint Project Advisory Board

External international leading experts have been invited to be a member of the joint PAB. They cover together a range of stakeholder groups including: industrial biobased value chain actors, sustainability system community, academia, and international organisations. Information on the eight members who have kindly accepted our invitation to participate in the joint PAB is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: List of joint Project Advisory Board members

Name	Affiliation	Expertise
Ms. Constance Ißbrücker	European Bioplastics	Deputy Managing Director / Head of Environmental Affairs, among others responsible for Sustainability of bioplastics and Standardisation and certification of bioplastics
Mr. Marco Rupp	Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC)	Public Affairs & Sustainability Manager
Mr. Mario Bonaccorso	SPRING – Italian Circular Bioeconomy Cluster	Cluster Manager at SPRING, development of biobased industries in Italy in a sustainable way with a focus on regional territorial players
Dr. Audrun Utskarpen	Ecolabelling Norway	Senior Environmental Advisor, among others knowledge on ecolabels and their role in reducing the environmental impact of products
Mr. Santiago Fernandez De Cordoba	United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS)	Coordinator of the UNFSS, head UNCTAD Sustainability Standards Program analysing potential effectiveness and development impact of sustainability schemes from the perspectives of developing-countries
Ms. Jenny Walther-Thoss	Berndt+Partner Consultants	Senior Consultant Sustainability, expertise in sustainability standards and certification, sustainable biomass and supply chains
Dr. Martin Greimel	University of Natural Resources and Life Science Vienna	Head of the Center for Bioeconomy, coordination of all bioeconomy related research
Ms. Sussanne Albertini	FVA New Media Research	Senior communication expert, co-creation, communication, impact and valorisation of research results with experience on sustainable circular bioeconomy



About SUSTCERT4BIOBASED

SUSTCERT4BIOBASED is an EU funded (Horizon Europe) project aiming at defining and promoting the adoption of effective and robust sustainability certification schemes and business-to-business labels for industrial biobased systems to support tracing the sustainability (environmental, social, economic) of biobased products along the value chains and trades within the EU and globally for responsible production and consumption. This objective is realised by the development of a monitoring system, mapping of the current situation in global trade flows of biological resources and biobased products, and feasibility assessment from the adoption of certification schemes and labels considering actual economic as well as internalized environmental and social costs and benefits. The results of the project are leveraged to provide recommendations to four key target groups: policy makers, sustainability system community, industrial biobased value chain actors, and regional bioeconomy stakeholders. These ambitions are addressed by a strong, well-balanced and multi-disciplinary consortium comprised of 5 complementary partners. SUSTCERT4BIOBASED thereby supports the development of harmonized system requirements, continuous improvement of sustainability certification schemes and labels and contributes towards establishing a circular, climate-neutral and sustainable biobased industry.

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