

Swiss Society of Plant Biology

General Assembly 2022

13 June 2022, 15h30–16h40

Parkhotel du Sauvage, Meiringen (BE)

Minutes (draft)

18 voting participants are present:

Committee members: Christian Fankhauser (chair), Thomas Boller, Cyril Zipfel

Society members: Celia Baroux, Emilie Demarsy, Lea Frachon, Markus Geisler, Felix Kessler, Roland Kölliker, Yamama Naciri, Christoph Ringli, Christelle Robert, Joelle Schläpfer, Sara Simonini, Klaus Schläppi, Sebastian Soyk, Roman Ulm, Tobias Züst.

Ex officio: Sylvia Martinez (minutes)

Excused: Simon Aeschbach, Kirsten Bomblies (committee), Jurriaan de Vos, Ted Farmer, Manuela Dahinden, Christian Parisod, Barbara Pfister, Didier Reinhardt, Philippe Reymond, Julia Santiago Cuellar, Merry Schuman.

1. Welcome by the president and agenda

The president, Christian Fankhauser, welcomes all participants and the group unanimously agrees on the proposed agenda.

2. Minutes of the extraordinary General Assembly, 13 Sept 2021

The participants unanimously agree on the minutes of the last extraordinary general assembly.

3. President's report 2021

Christian Fankhauser presents his report with slides: In 2021 the committee met twice and held one General Assembly and one extraordinary General Assembly.

By the end of 2021 the society had 76 paying members.

13/09/2021 was an important date: We changed the society's bylaws and name to Swiss Society of Plant Biology.

In January 2022, all board members of the Swiss Plant Science Web (Thomas Boller U Basel, Yves Poirier U Lausanne, Ted Turlings U Neuchâtel and Bruno Studer ETH Zurich) unanimously agreed to merge the SPSW with SSPB.

In March, all SPSW members were informed and encouraged to join the SSPB.

The Swiss Plant Science Website continues to be our window.

We encourage memberships of the younger generation and have plans to make SSPB more attractive to young scientists.

The society is officially back at SCNAT and is part of its Biology Platform. Each society has to contribute CHF 7 per member to SCNAT.

4. Annual financial statements and Budget 2022

Thomas Boller presents the 2021 financial statement. The last year was marked by getting things back to work, this includes the society's PostFinance account. The treasurer had to submit the new by-laws and minutes that list the new committee members' names.

The revenues consist of the membership fees received. The expenses of the year 2021 consist exclusively of the costs of the PostFinance account. There is no auditor's report for the 2021 financial statement, since the society missed to elect auditors in 2021. In the next agenda item, the committee presents two candidates.

The participants unanimously agree on the 2021 financial statement.

5. Election of auditors

Klaus Schläppi and Jurriaan de Vos, both from the University of Basel, volunteer for election as auditors. Jurriaan de Vos was unfortunately unable to attend the General Meeting.

The participants unanimously elect Prof. Dr. Klaus Schläppi and Dr. Jurriaan de Vos as the society's auditors.

6. Annual membership contribution

Committee proposes to keep membership fee as is CHF 40.

The participants unanimously agree to keep the annual membership fee at CHF 40.

7. SwissPLANT and early career plant scientists

The committee proposes to adhere to the Gordon Research Seminars (GRS) concept that precedes a Gordon Research Conference (GRC): One day before the SwissPLANT conference advanced PhDs and post-docs hold their own meeting that they organize themselves. This includes 2 PIs acting as mentors in the background. This is a great way of getting started for advanced PhD-students who have a nicely developed project and postdocs. We propose to do this in January 2023 in Les Diablerets. This early career meeting could consist of one session on Sunday afternoon and one session on Monday morning. The cost would be covered by SSPB. We plan to submit a proposal to a special 2022 call for SCNAT funds. We pre-reserved some rooms at Les Diablerets. Approximate cost is: CHF 250 per person. Participants may stay for the SwissPLANT meeting; however, these costs will be charged separately.

A committee will select the talks and posters. We have to define the total number of people who can attend.

CBaroux: Define a mentor (= a society member)

FKessler: CUSO PhD-students would maybe have own funding.

RUlm: LS2 also uses this system of early career meeting preceding the LS2 meeting.

EDemarsy: Early career scientists will vote on the 2 best talks from their meeting, which can then present at the SwissPlant meeting.

CBaroux: avoid making such a meeting on a Sunday as it will make life difficult for young parents. CF answers that for 2023 we can't change that but we need to think about it for following years.

The 2023 SwissPLANT Scientific Program Committee is from U Basel. Christian proposes to have one mentor from there plus one SSPB committee member (who would not be from U Basel).

CF: We will need some factors to choose participants if we have too many applicants, e.g., diversity gender and geographic. Decided based on abstracts by the meeting organizers (Basel) and SSPB committee member. We need a name for the ECS meeting, e.g., SwissPLANT next generation scientist meeting. 15 rooms à 2 people = max. 30 potential participants.

MGeisler: What about the more senior early career scientists? Are they going to be placed in the early-career meeting? Not presenting anymore during SwissPLANT?

CFankhauser: Oberassistent-positions were wiped out in the West-Switzerland. Will have to look into details about how to deal with this issue. This being said Oberassistenten can obviously continue to sign up for the regular SwissPlant meeting, hence the Early Career meeting won't diminish their chance of presenting.

CZipfel e.g., draw the line for eligibility for the Early career meeting, if are you are eligible for a SNSF funding.

The participants unanimously agree to opt for a new format in 2023 and hold an early career scientist meeting before the SwissPLANT conference.

8. Activities 2022/2023

- 1) Mostly administrative to reconnect with SCNAT.
- 2) Do something for ECS: Seek support for attendance of this meeting.
- 3) We are invited to engage in "Weiterentwicklung der gymnasialen Maturität" within SCNAT
→ Markus Geisler, U Fribourg, volunteers to get involved in this SCNAT committee.
- 4) Elaborate the new format for SwissPLANT next generation scientist.
- 5) Maintain contacts to other societies to discuss new activities.

9. Federation of European Societies of Plant Biology (FESPB), membership

Annual cost is Euro 600 as long as our society is below 100 members.

Currently, 22 societies are members of FESP.

Next international meeting will be held 3-6 July 2023 in Marseille.

The main impression is that there is no immediate benefit. However, it seems important to be part of it.

CF: EPSO does a lot of lobbying for plant biology. It is not so clear what the role of FESPB is.

The participants unanimously agree to become a member of the Federation of European Societies of Plant Biology (FESPB).

10. Varia

CZipfel reminds all participant of the important role of European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO). It has several working groups on various plant related topics, interested scientists can also start a new one.

Search EPSO webpage.

Next meeting

22–23 January 2023, SwissPLANT early career scientist meeting in Les Diablerets.

23–25 January 2023 SwissPLANT meeting in Les Diablerets

The General Assembly closed with an apéro for all participants.