Overview

The coordination committee meeting, led by Samuele Pii of the ERIAFF Secretariat, includes key participants such as Elisabetta Cecchi, Ronald Van der Stroom, Minna Storm, Pau Brunet, Michael, and others from various European regions. The meeting covers a broad range of organizational, strategic, and collaborative topics. Initial discussions reaffirm positive feedback from the recent annual conference survey and the network's active engagement in EU policy consultations, including the Biotech Act. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking and other regional networks is highlighted as a strategic step to enhance cooperation.

Planning for the next annual conference in Jonkoping, Sweden, is detailed, addressing logistics, program structure, and potential conflicts with local elections. The selection process for the 2028 conference host is underway, with Turku and Extremadura as candidates aiming for a decision by October. Working group updates include the completion of a bioeconomy declaration and efforts to improve the AREAF website's accuracy and collaboration with the S3 group. Elisabetta Cecchi introduces a pilot LinkedIn profile "Maria 123" to facilitate working group communications and document sharing, with guidelines circulated for feedback.

Samuele Pii presents new project opportunities, including a letter of support request for a bioeconomy cluster project and a call for experts on innovative fertilizer strategies, encouraging working group engagement. Ronald Van der Stroom proposes organizing study visits for European Parliament members to the VD Born Campus to showcase innovative agriculture and suggests creating a European map of field labs hosted on the AREAF website. These initiatives receive support and plans for concrete proposals and collaboration with the communication team are made. The meeting concludes with commitments to share materials, maintain communication, and prepare for upcoming events, reflecting a collaborative and forward-looking approach within the network.

Detailed Summary

Annual Conference Survey Results

Samuele Pii shares positive results from the recent annual conference survey, noting over 120 participants responded. The feedback is constructive and valuable for promoting future conferences. The committee agrees to publish the survey results on the website to enhance transparency and encourage participation.

- Samuele Pii highlights the survey's positive reception and significant participation.
- Sydney expresses agreement via chat, supporting publication of results.
- Consensus is reached to publish survey outcomes on the network's website.

Contribution to Biotech Act Consultation

Samuele Pii discusses the network's timely contribution to a public consultation on the Biotech Act, emphasizing the importance of active participation in such consultations. The contribution was concise but meaningful, demonstrating the network's engagement with EU policy developments and readiness for upcoming partnership opportunities.

- Samuele Pii explains the network submitted a one-page contribution to the Biotech Act consultation before the June 16 deadline.

- He encourages working group leaders to monitor and participate in future public consultations.
- The contribution reflects the network's proactive stance in EU policy engagement.

Memorandum of Understanding with CBE Joint Undertaking

The network has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking and other European regional networks. This MoU aims to enhance cooperation, promote best practices, and prepare the networks for future funding opportunities. The agreement is non-binding, lasts five years, and requires biannual meetings to review progress.

- Samuele Pii presents the MoU text and explains its scope and objectives.
- The MoU involves multiple regional networks including AREAF, FE, ERRIN, and Vangarden.
- The agreement is non-exclusive, non-binding, and focuses on information sharing and networking.
- Parties commit to attending two meetings per year to monitor cooperation.

Next Annual Conference Planning in Jonkoping

Michael provides detailed updates on the upcoming annual conference scheduled for May 24-26 in Jonkoping, Sweden. The conference will coincide with the Elmia Wood exhibition and include study visits focused on agriculture and local food production. Accommodations and logistics are well planned, with 200 hotel rooms pre-booked and free local transport provided. Adjustments to the program structure are proposed to enhance working group participation.

- Michael outlines the conference dates and location near Gothenburg, Sweden.
- He describes collaboration with Elmia Wood exhibition and university conference for shared keynote speakers.
- Two study visit tracks are planned: one on agricultural design and another on local food and drinks.
- Michael proposes starting the last day with farewells followed by working group meetings to allow more time for discussions.
- Minna Storm requests a short working group session on the first day to improve engagement, which Michael welcomes.
- Michael has pre-booked 200 hotel rooms due to limited local availability.

Annual Conference Date Conflicts and Registration

Participants discuss potential conflicts with local elections in Spain and the Netherlands coinciding with the conference dates. Michael confirms hotel availability and plans to open registration by January. Samuele Pii emphasizes the importance of early registration and coordination with Amsterdam organizers. Sidony Venema and Miriam González highlight election timing concerns for their regions.

- Sidony Venema notes Dutch elections in late March may affect participant availability.
- Miriam González mentions Spanish local and regional elections on May 23, close to conference dates.
- Michael confirms hotel room availability and plans to launch registration in January.
- Samuele Pii commits to coordinating a joint meeting with Amsterdam organizers for conference planning.

Selection Procedure for 2028 Annual Conference Host

Samuele Pii addresses the need to decide the host region for the 2028 annual conference, with Turku and Extremadura as candidates. He proposes a transparent decision process to conclude by October, allowing the non-selected candidate to host in 2029 if desired. Minna Storm supports early decision-making to facilitate planning and offers to coordinate with Turku authorities. A joint call with candidates is planned to finalize arrangements.

- Samuele Pii outlines the selection timeline and transparent process for choosing the 2028 host.
- Minna Storm reports Turku's flexibility and willingness to host in either 2028 or 2029.
- Samuele Pii offers to organize a joint call with candidates to expedite decision-making.
- The committee agrees to aim for a final decision by October, with possible earlier resolution.

Working Group Updates and Bioeconomy Declaration

Pau Brunet reports on the bioeconomy and resilience working group's progress, including a draft declaration on place-based European bioeconomy presented at the Amsterdam conference. The document has been updated following feedback and is ready for distribution. Samuele Pii suggests uploading the final version to the website with a brief introduction and including it as an agenda item in the next meeting to increase visibility.

- Pau Brunet announces completion of the bioeconomy declaration after consultation.
- Samuele Pii proposes publishing the document online with a short explanatory text.
- The declaration will be presented to the coordination committee in the next meeting for awareness.
- The working group encourages further comments before final dissemination.

Website Update and S3 Group Collaboration

Minna Storm raises concerns about the AREAF website's outdated information, noting that some S3 group members cannot find themselves listed as partners. She emphasizes the importance of updating the website to facilitate collaboration and improve network visibility. Samuele Pii acknowledges the issue and requests specific contacts to address updates. He notes gradual improvements and encourages direct communication for website corrections.

- Minna Storm reports S3 group members' difficulty finding their regions on the AREAF website.
- She highlights interest from S3 members to participate in AREAF working groups.
- Samuele Pii requests contact details to facilitate website updates and improve accuracy.
- He confirms ongoing gradual improvements to the website and encourages reporting issues.

LinkedIn Profile and Document Upload for Working Groups

Elisabetta Cecchi updates on the creation of a mock LinkedIn profile named 'Maria 123' to facilitate working group communications and event postings. Working group coordinators received instructions to follow and request administrator roles to post content. Additionally, credentials were provided to

upload documents to dedicated working group areas on the website. Draft guidelines for LinkedIn usage were shared with a feedback deadline set for July 31, aiming to finalize the approach by September.

- Elisabetta Cecchi explains the test LinkedIn profile 'Maria 123' for working group coordinators to post events and news.
- She confirms coordinators received credentials to upload documents to their working group sections on the website.
- Draft soft guidelines for LinkedIn profile usage were circulated with a feedback deadline of July 31.
- Elisabetta encourages coordinators to coordinate postings between LinkedIn and the website for consistency.
- Samuele Pii acknowledges the initiative and commits to ensuring all coordinators receive the instructions.

New Project Opportunities and Expert Calls

Samuele Pii presents two new project opportunities: a request from the Bioeconomy Cluster Spring for a letter of support for a Horizon Europe Cluster 6 proposal, and a call for experts on innovative on-farm fertilizer strategies by the UCAP network. He suggests sharing the letter with the bioeconomy working group for feedback and encourages interested members to engage with the fertilizer strategy call before the July 13 deadline. Ronald Van der Stroom expresses interest and readiness to involve colleagues.

- Samuele Pii outlines a request for the network to sign a non-financial letter of support for a bioeconomy cluster project proposal.
- He introduces a call for experts on innovative fertilizer strategies with a July 13 deadline.
- Samuele offers to share detailed information and links with interested members.
- Ronald Van der Stroom confirms interest and plans to involve relevant colleagues.
- Samuele emphasizes the importance of sharing such opportunities promptly within the network.

VD Born Campus Study Visit and European Field Labs Map

Ronald Van der Stroom discusses the VD Born Campus, a potato farm with advanced data collection and sharing practices, proposing to organize study visits for European Parliament members to showcase modern sustainable agriculture. He also suggests creating a European map of field labs with long-term program details hosted on the AREAF website to facilitate knowledge sharing. Samuele Pii supports these ideas and invites Ronald to develop concrete proposals and collaborate with the communication team for implementation.

- Ronald Van der Stroom proposes organizing study visits for MEPs to the VD Born Campus to demonstrate innovative farming and data sharing.
- He suggests developing a European map of field labs with program details to be hosted on the AREAF website.
- Samuele Pii encourages Ronald to prepare a concrete proposal and involve the communication team.
- They discuss the potential to formalize the study visit as an official European Parliament event.
- Elisabetta Cecchi offers to share related materials and recordings from previous seminars on high-tech farming.