#

# ABIE Meeting Minutes

**Date**: 9 May 2020

**Venue**: Conference call via Zoom

**Attending**: Maya Joshi (ANZCCL / Chair), Monique Bachmann (ANZCCL), Catherine Woo (Australia-UK Chamber of Commerce), Gina Bowman (ASBA), Jennifer Tucker (ABiE Netherlands), Sabine Pittrof (GABC), Jason Collins (EABC), Joana Kehlibarova (BABC /until 1105), Dimitar Stoimenov (BABC), Richard York (ABiE Czech), Jenni Isola (FABC), Veronica Comyn (ABiE France), Rory Donnelly (ANiB)

**Apologies**: Barry Corr (Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce),

**Materials**: [An agenda](https://1drv.ms/w/s%21ApoBD-1I43crlnju6W1dTz-dr_X6?e=bQkcAd) was circulated by email in advance of the call

**Quote of the meeting award:**

*"The ABiE network is now at its strongest since de-incorporation of the branch structure"* (Veronica)

| **Time** |  | **Matters discussed** |
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| 1000 | 1 | Maya opened the call as chair and confirmed attendances.  |
| 1005 | 2 | **Webinar offerings (Facilitator - Richard)***How valuable have these been for each organisation?** **GABC (Sabine):** Good member feedback. GABC have not been able to promote all webinars due to clashes. Also held first virtual AGM in same format and saw increased attendance from Hamburg / Munich (people do not normally travel from these locations for AGM)
* **ABiE France (Veronica)**: GABC / ABiE France webinar was a success and very high quality - have had good member feedback. That was ABiE France's second webinar; now holding once a week with good participation. People are available; also see attendees who did not previously come to in-person events. Ambassador webinar was a sell out with a waiting list
* **Aus-UK (Catherine)**: Active with 1 webinar / week as well as digital roundtables (select events alongside the webinars - 4-5 people, chamber convenes and facilitates). Also running sector specific activities. See signs of webinar fatigue - started with 200+ attendees, now creeping down so need to be careful and thoughtful with content. Also migrated content online, e.g. ESG report. As lockdown measures lift and people return to work, see challenges in the interim period as people back at work, less interested in webinars but also don't want to come to in-person events yet
* **ASBA (Gina)**: Spain has perhaps been more consumed by the health crisis - ASBA has taken a back seat. Have been promoting the network webinars and have two potential webinars in development to contribute. Network webinars / collaboration on same have shown the value add of the network
* **ABiE NL (Jennifer)**: Webinars have been great - see attendance from members not coming in person
* **FABC (Jenni)**: Small organisation with approx 30 members on the mailing list. Holding a joint event with Ambassador / Finnish CofC in Australia end May. Very positive sharing the network events and positive feedback
* **BABC (Dimitar / Joana)**: Video broadcast with responsible ambassador (Greece) - Balkans situation, how to go back. FTA session would be of interest - will crisis have an impact on negotiations? Considering a (possibly broadcast) open area AFL event in mid June
* **ANiB:** June cricket match was planned with the embassy - unlikely to proceed. Online events promoted on Facebook page and newsletter but don't have line of sight on ANiB attendees as people join directly. Tried a Friday night drinks - mainly people who know each other but a few new faces; used Houseparty

*What are the takeaways so far?** Catherine: We are no longer driven just by geography (e.g. FTA as pan-regional topic) - can we think big - e.g. Frydenberg, Hunt, Payne webinar, open it up to the network?
	+ Jason: Yes - see email circulated just before the call re Austrade / Dr Stephanie Fahey / Simon Crean
* Jason: consider platform (zoom more user friendly but govt. officials v reluctant to use, RABC uses Webex as the alternative). Consider also presentational items e.g. use a co-host to run the Qs and use a non-presenter to cut away to the question asker (feasible in zoom meeting mode, not webinar mode)

*Panel webinar (discussion led by Veronica)** See Veronica's email 27th April
* Topic is reflections on Aus-European business during the crisis & future challenges
* 3-4 speakers from Australian companies in Europe and European companies working with Australia. Format: webinar with a panel of CEOs
* Focus on having engaging and insightful speakers, not sector specific, talk about their personal experiences and how they see the future; not too structured or formal
* Demonstrate the network's access to interesting groups and experience across several countries (as v different approaches in different countries to the crisis)
* Different organisations (GABC, ASBA, ABiE France, Netherlands) have so far provided speaker proposals
* Jason has been proposed as facilitator during the panel discussion
* June date (last week June - avoid 18 June as GABC has event)
* Consider a second seminar with a possible focus area with wide appeal

**Next steps**: * + *Develop the June panel webinar (lead - Veronica / Richard)*
	+ *Interested in feedback from BABC or others who try the first in-person events*
	+ *Add migrated online content to our watchlist for the mid-term future (e.g. from Catherine of ESG report, e.g. from Maya of law firm insurance app)*
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| 1110 | 3 | **Event in Paris - 30 October - Update (Facilitator - Veronica)*** Current situation - date of 30 Oct for a presentation by Greg Medcraft is confirmed and the OECD meeting room is booked; a reception is planned afterwards at the Embassy. However, is is just too soon now to know if this could take place. Should know more about position in France in June.
* If it proves impossible to hold an in-person event, the OECD event could be run as a webinar.
* In-person events are problematic - too soon to say what can / can't take place in Oct
* Will people feel safe? Thoughts were:
	+ Event seating can accommodate social distancing but not the post event cocktail reception
	+ Example - OECD have said no events with drinks or refreshments until year end
	+ Will probably not be able to have a wholly in-person event, some people may not feel comfortable to travel even if no formal restrictions
	+ Aus / EU travel - could be Schengen quarantine, Scott Morrison has not made expected announcement to lift quarantine in six months, view in market is "forget about travel in 2020", etc.
* Save the date discussed - agreed the event can be added into the lists of schedules now. Review situation in June with a view to send out a save the date late June
* Could move forward to promote event as a webinar and later could convert to a limited numbers in-person which could be broadcast via professional camerawork

**Next steps**: * + *Organisations can add the event to their listings*
	+ *Update from Veronica at next call*
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| 1140 | 4 | **Austrade relationship (Facilitator - Sabine)***The opportunity** Peter Horn has been appointed as Austrade head of Europe - European role and remit
* Will be based in Germany but currently back in Australia due to family concerns (NB working European business hours)
* Peter very open on potential collaboration, e.g. in country support by attendance etc.
* On the network side, network is not incorporated and different ABIEs have different in-country needs, however Peter provides a pan-European entry for ABiEs in the network to have a high level contact and develop collaboration

*The meeting's thoughts on the opportunity** Sabine suggested to invite Peter to an introductory conference with all ABiE heads and to join our in-person meetings when they resume
* Sabine / Maya suggested to have a regular touchpoint with Peter, to be led by the ABiE chair, e.g. twice per six month chair. Given the rotating nature of the chair, they suggested to have Sabine (in-country contact for Peter) also attend these touchpoints to provide continuity to Peter
* Jason suggested considering an MoU with Austrade to set a framework for the relationship which should be mutually beneficial. Participants generally agreed that while an MoU might not achieve any truly enforceable actions but it would showcase the network, foster mutual understanding and collaboration and generally act as a foundation for a good engagement and collaboration going forward. It was noted that most if not all organisations would require board approval for any ultimate MoU
* Gina noted that a more formal committment with Austrade would also be valuable in fostering better regular dialogue with Austrade and could help address gaps in collaboration, e.g. early heads up of key visitors, understanding of organisational changes at Austrade end
* Jennifer reported very positive experience post-Frankfurt with the new in country Austrade rep
* Dimitar noted the difference for ABiEs which do not have an in country rep
* Veronica felt that it was important to seize this opportunity to develop a constructive, and mutually beneficial working relationship between the ABIE Group and Austrade, particularly given the impact the coronavirus pandemic will have on how we all do business in the future.

**Next steps**: * + *Sabine / Maya / Veronica to constitute a subgroup to take this forward; schedule kickoff call with Peter*
	+ *Thereafter, Maya / Veronica / Sabine to propose date for an introductory network conference call between the network (same invitees as to this meeting) and Peter (target - in June, during the week)*
	+ *Network to reconvene on approach to Austrade (Maya / Veronica / Sabine to confirm whether before or after introductory network conference call call)*
	+ *In parallel (but prior to network conf call with Peter), Maya to gather network feedback along the following lines:*
		- *What ABiEs are looking for locally from Austrade*
		- *What benefits ABiEs can offer Austrade locally*
		- *What ABiEs think we as a network should look for from Austrade*
		- *What the network can offer Austrade*
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| 1200 | 5 | **Recap of action items, AOB (Facilitator – Maya)** * Juliana Nam as a speaker for a Q&A session with the network (not a member event - same invitees as to this meeting)
	+ Risk of confusion with webinar with Alison Burrows if run in June
	+ Agreed this would be a vauable opportunity due to Juliana's EU engagement role but defer until after the session in June - likely until Autumn and France chair
* ABiE.eu website - reminder to everyone to please reconfirm their organisational details on the website
* Network Chair after France (Sabine) - agreed to defer to next meeting and reconfirm past chair list

**Next steps**: * + *Maya to liaise with Veronica re Juliana's offer*
	+ *Maya to circulate reminder of how to update details on ABiE website*
	+ *Add post-France chair to action items list*
	+ *Circulate list of past chairs as a reminder (GABC will handle)*
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| 12:20 | Close |

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| **Consolidated summary of Outstanding Items**    |
| **Item**   | **Action**   | **Status / comment**   |
| **New from 9 May 2020 call**   |
| **1** | **June panel webinar** * Develop further
 | ***Lead - Veronica / Richard*** |
| **2** | **Paris event** - Organisations can add the event to their listings* Update from Veronica at next call
 | ***Veronica*** |
| **3** | **Austrade opportunity*** Kick off call with Peter
* Introductory conference call - date proposal for June
* Pre or post discussion within network
* Gather network feedback on four identified areas prior to introductory conference call with Peter
 | ***Sabine / Maya / Veronica*** |
| **4** | Maya to liaise with Veronica re Juliana's offer to host FTA session | ***Maya to update at next meeting*** |
| **5** | Maya to circulate reminder of how to update details on ABiE website | ***Maya to action*** |
| **6** | Add post-France chair to action items list | ***Maya to add to next call agenda*** |
| **7** | Circulate list of past chairs as a reminder | ***GABC to circulate*** |
| **Ongoing or heldover items** |
| **7** | Richard co-ordinating an offering of "regional webinars"; all organisations encouraged to promote upcoming ABiE France / GABC joint webinar (Richard, ABiE Czech, Veronica, ABiE France, Jennifer, ABiE NL)   | ***Ongoing*** |
| **8** | ABiE: Strategic plan  | ***All to provide feedback on draft but otherwise hold until next in-person meeting*** |
| **9**   | Develop Paris event for 2020 (Veronica, Richard Jason, Gina, Jennifer, Joana, ) Nov 2020)   | ***Ongoing*** |
| **10**   | All groups to reconfirm their organisation details on the abie.eu website (e.g. ANiB details did not seem up to date) (All organisations, 26 February 2020)   | ***Ongoing*** |
| **11** | E-survey of ABIE groups regarding potential sponsors (Michelle, ABIE NL, 9 Nov 2019)   | ***On hold*** |
| **12** | Establish contact with ABiE equivalent groups in Asia (Richard Y, ABiE Czech, and Michelle, 9 Nov 2019)   | ***On hold*** |
| ***Watchlist items*** |
| **13** | Interested in feedback from BABC or others who try the first in-person events |  |
| **14** | Add migrated online content to our watchlist for the mid-term future (e.g. from Catherine of ESG report, e.g. from Maya of law firm insurance app) |  |
| **15** | Australian Business in Sweden - invite to join the network; Jason outreach end April, awaiting response |  |
| **Closed items**  |
|  | No additional items closed on 9 May 2020 call |  |