

President's report Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) 2022

In 2022, the board of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) consisted of Arjan de Visser (president), Koen Verhoeven (secretary and ESEB liaison), Rutger Hermsen (treasurer), Vasilis Kokkoris (PR officer), Bregje Wertheim (education officer) and Barbara Gravendeel (board member). Board members Sander van Doorn and Liedewij Laan stepped down and Vasilis Kokkoris and Barbara Gravendeel joined the board in 2022.

The board met five times in between the General Assemblies of 2022 and 2023 (27 August, 13 October, 16 December, 9 February & 3 April). During these meetings, the organization of activities announced in the policy plan was discussed and planned, as well as *ad hoc* issues relevant for the functioning of NLSEB, such as a new website, changes in the NLSEB board and committees and in the junior board. Except for the board meeting in August, all meetings were online.

At the 2022 NLSEB General Assembly on June 28, the policy plan for 2022 was approved, which stated that the society would carry out the following activities:

1. Organize an annual scientific meeting, with scientific presentations on evolutionary processes, in any field of science, and with other activities aimed at community building, such as networking meetings and round-table discussions.

This was the 4th conference of NLSEB, which was the first in-person meeting since 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and took place in Ackoesticum (Ede) on 28 June 2022. The conference had a modest attendance of about 80 participants, but was much appreciated, judged by the positive comments of participants. Unfortunately, the yearly BioSB meeting was scheduled on the same, which prevented some of our members to participate. The conference included plenary lectures by Katja Peijnenburg, Jaap Kaandorp and Eric Snijder, as well as by the winner of the Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Prize 2021 (see below), 4 parallel sessions with presentations selected from the abstracts, a poster session, the General Assembly and a *cultural intermezzo* by Tim Hammer and Mirthe Dokter. The board is grateful to the committee, that organized NLSEB2022: Sijmen Schoustra (chair), Jeroen Meijer, Koen Verhoeven and Marjon de Vos.

2. Organize an annual PhD and post-doc meeting, aimed to foster interactions between the 'next generation of evolutionary biologists'.

In 2022, this meeting was organized for the second time and for the first time in person. It took place in the afternoon of June 27 with some 25 participants. The meeting involved pitch presentations by participants, a plenary lecture by Nico van Straalen and workshops on career decisions, cell modelling, fair and open bioinformatics, story telling with data and creating a research vision. The board is grateful to the NLSEB junior board who organized the PhD/postdoc meeting: Melanie Lindner (chair), Nadja Brait, Alanna Leale, Yumi Nakadera and Sam von der Dunk.

3. Inform members about upcoming meetings, funding opportunities and community news relevant to the society via Twitter, Facebook, the NLSEB website and newsflashes.

The main platform for information on NLSEB is its website www.nlseb.nl. In 2022, we changed to WIX as web host and board member Vasilis Kokkoris constructed a completely new website, which is

more attractive and accessible now. Ten Newsflashes came out between June 2022 and May 2023, all still available on the NLSEB website. NLSEB also has a Twitter account with 318 followers.

4. Annually, award an outstanding evolutionary biologist with the Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Prize for the best peer-reviewed publication in the previous year as either first or last author, which consists of a financial award of 500 euros. The prize-winner delivers the Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Lecture during the NLSEB conference.

At NLSEB2022, the Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Prize winner of 2021, Jean-Christophe Billeter (RUG), was announced and given the opportunity to present their prize-winning work in a plenary lecture. The jury members were Paulien Hogeweg, Koen Verhoeven and Marjon de Vos.

5. Other forms of community building, such as organizing networking opportunities.

In 2022, the NLSEB Junior Board underwent substantial changes, with Melanie Lindner, Nadja Brait, Yumi Nakadera and Alanna Leale stepping down and five new members joining. The current Junior Board consists of Jana Riederer (chair), Victoria Terry (secretary), Malin Klein (treasurer), Sam von der Dunk, Nicky Faber and Yannick Woudstra. The Junior Board represents the community of PhD students and postdocs working in evolutionary biology in NL, and advises the NLSEB board on related issues. Their activities include the organization of the annual PhD/postdoc meeting and on 9 December 2022 the first of a series of lab visits was organized at Gelifes in Groningen with about 25 participants.

In addition, two workshops have been organized in January and March 2023 at Utrecht University with representatives from all Dutch universities with Biology curricula, with the aim to join forces and develop knowledge clips that support existing courses in evolutionary biology and will be made available through the NLSEB website (organized by Jelle Zandveld & Hilje Doekes). In addition, NLSEB and BioSB co-organized a symposium on evolution in and of cell communities (15 February 2023, VU Amsterdam) with foreign and Dutch speakers from evolutionary biology, systems biology and cancer research and some 65 participants (organizers: Meike Wortel, Evert Bosdriesz, Sijmen Schoustra & Arjan de Visser).

6. Serve as a communication channel to NWO, KNAW, universities and relevant institutions and societies (ESEB, NIBI, Origins Centre, Nationale Wetenschapsagenda, Topsectoren, NERN).

We have contributed to the organization of NWO Life 2022 (24 and 25 May 2022, Egmond aan Zee) and the organization of monthly online workshops of the Origins Center. Board members maintain links with ESEB (ESEB-liaison Koen Verhoeven), NIBI, the Origins Center (Bregje Wertheim is member of the Steering Committee of the OC) and NERN. At ESEB2022 (Prague, Czech Republic), NLSEB organized a ‘get together’, and Arjan de Visser participated in a meeting with representatives from other national and international evolutionary biology societies from Europe, Asia and North and South America to discuss issues relevant for our societies. We are pleased that ‘evolution’ received a prominent place in the ‘Sector Plan Biologie’, which details new investments in biological research in the Netherlands. Former NLSEB board member Jacintha Ellers is currently chair of the Biology Council, who played a coordinating role in the development of the Sector Plan.

7. Support education and outreach by publishing links to educational resources on evolution on the NLSEB website.

Two workshops have been organized to initiate the development of knowledge clips aimed at filling knowledge gaps in current evolutionary biology courses at Dutch universities (see above).

On the 31st of December 2022, NLSEB had 99 members. In 2021, participants to the online NLSEB2021 meeting all received a one-year membership for free. As a consequence, in December 2021 NLSEB had an unusual number of members (293). As expected, the majority (203) did not continue their membership in 2022. Nine new members were welcomed in 2022.

In 2022, the confidentiality advisors of NLSEB (Hannah Dugdale and Bas Zwaan) did not receive any complaints. Together with the confidentiality advisors, the code of conduct was updated and a complaint procedure added to warrant ethical standards and social safety & inclusivity during NLSEB-sponsored activities.

1 May 2023

Arjan de Visser, president NLSEB