MINUTES
TAFTIE BOARD MEETING
26th November 2013, Antwerp

Present:
Klaus Schnitzer  FFG -Chairman of the Taftie Board
Hrvoje Mestric  BICRO
Isabelle Bébéar  Bpifrance
Javier Garcia  CDTI (acting as Board member)
Klara Sekanina  CTI (acting as Board member)
Søren Jensen  DASTI (acting as Board member)
Diego Santi  ENEA
Madis Võõras  Enterprise Estonia
Veerle Lories  IWT
Jean-Michel Ludwig  Luxinnovation
Arūnas Karlonas  MITA
Zsuzsanna Mokry  National Innovation Office
Marlouke Durville  NI Agency
Bozena Lublinska-Kasprzak  PARP
Dieter Labruier  PTJ (acting as Board member)
John Hill  Pera
Hallgrímur Jónasson  RANNIS
Tobias Ellingsen  RCN (acting as Board member)
Rut Bízková  TA CR
Ari Gröñroos  Tekes
David Golding  TSB (acting as Board member)
Ferda Ulutas  TTGV
Wolfgang Gessner  VDI/VDE-IT
Sylvia Schwag Serger  VINNOVA (acting as Board member)

In attendance:
Sabine Mayer  Executive Secretary
Robert Stangl  Treasurer (part of the meeting)
Joanne Goede  Assistant Secretariat
Christian Dubarry  Bpifrance
Ene Kull  Enterprise Estonia
Lisa Berg  FFG
Nicole Firnberg  Taftie Academy
Ian Cresswell  Luxinnovation
Jeroen Heijs  NI Agency
Anna Wróbel  PARP
Waldemar Banas  PARP
Kristof Bertram  PTJ
Marita Paasi  Tekes
Henrik Fridén  VINNOVA
Ljiljana Kundaković  Innovation Fund Serbia
Patries Boekholt  Technopolis (part of meeting)
Pieter de Bruin  NI Agency (part of meeting)
Apologies for inability to attend were received from:

Juan Carlos Cortés  CDTI
Walter Steinlin  CTI
Thomas Alslev Christensen  DASTI
Rita Ward  Enterprise Ireland
Michel Hivert  Matimop
Mark Glover  TSB

Welcome and opening
Klaus Schnitzer opened the meeting and welcomed all. The attendance sheet was signed by members.

1. Approval of the Agenda
The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 2013 June Board Meeting.
The minutes were approved.

3. Membership issues

3.1 Membership applications
Ljiljana Kundaković, interim Managing Director, gave a presentation of Innovation Fund Serbia (IFS) to the Board. In her absence, the Board decided unanimously to appoint IFS as new member of Taftie. FFG volunteered to coach IFS.

3.2 Proposal from Membership Group
Jeroen Heijs, chairman of the Membership Policy Group (MPG), introduced the proposal to the Board. He started with recalling the tasks of the MPG: coordination of application procedure, coaching of new members, assessing compliance with criteria after fundamental organisational changes in existing member organisations, update of criteria, active membership policy, suggesting cooperation with Strategic Partners.
Jeroen continued with an overview of activities of the MPG in 2013.
After this status report, he told the Board that the EWG concluded in their meeting in September that Taftie wants to be more open to non-members than before, but only in a very controlled manner. The definition of what is open and what not for non-members should therefore be well defined, including control mechanisms. Communication on this should be clear.
Based on the request of the Board to work out a Strategic Partner concept and this conclusion the MPG proposes to establish two groups of Agencies besides the existing Full Member status:

1. A selected group of interesting non-European Agencies that are invited to become a Strategic Partner of Taftie, they will be mentioned on the Taftie home page and are allowed to use a special Taftie logo:
2. A group of European non-member Agencies that will not be labelled. Some of the Taftie events will be open for them on an invitation basis. The Assistant Secretariat will keep a mailing list of this group (not for publication purposes).

Decision-making bodies (Board, Executive Working Group and General Meeting) will not be opened up to the two groups, they are restricted to full Taftie Members only.

For task forces the existing rule remains in force: non-member Agencies can be invited by task forces if they add value in terms of specific expertise and if their number does not exceed the number of Taftie members participating in the task force.

Strategic Partners can be invited to Expert Sessions (in conjunction with EWG Meetings). Decisions will be made per Expert Session.

Both groups will be invited to participate in the Annual Conference and the Policy Forum.

Taftie Academy networking workshops and trainings are open to both groups. For Strategic Partners the same fee applies as for full Taftie Members. The other group has to pay a higher fee: 900 euro (versus no fee) for workshops and 1500 euro (versus 600 euro) for trainings.

The MPG will identify possible candidates for a Strategic Partnership. After confirmation by the Board, they will be invited by the Chair.

Following a question by Vinnova why Taftie should actively acquire new members in Europe, Jeroen answered that this decision was taken by the Board a long time ago since there are strong arguments for trying to cover the EU+ countries. The question is often raised by external parties like the EC who Taftie is representing and if we intent to stay an exclusive club. New young agencies are emerging in Europe. Taftie can help them and they strengthen the network. The idea is not to pull new members in, but have an open eye for the possibilities. Taftie is open to these possibilities, but candidates have to fit into the new criteria for membership that were adopted, which are quite strong. Sabine added that the idea is to have an open eye, as Jeroen said, and screen the landscape to be prepared to attract – if any - the right agencies rather than waiting passively to be approached by – maybe – the wrong ones. She agrees with Vinnova in having a close look on the added value for Taftie.

Criteria for Strategic Partners will be more or less the same as for Full Members, although there will be no strict procedure. The main criterion is that Taftie can learn from them. A total of maximum 10 Strategic Partners is expected.

EU matters are of course of less or no importance to Strategic Partners as they are from outside Europe. But looking at Europe is only one aspect of Taftie. Taftie focuses also on national/internal issues like project assessment, evaluation of national programmes and financing of national projects. For these aspects an exchange of knowledge and experience can be foreseen to the mutual benefit of both Taftie Members and Strategic Partners.

It was decided to map existing relationships between Taftie Members and interesting agencies in all three categories: EU+, potential Strategic Partners and organisations for the non-label mailing list. Arūnas Karlonas mentioned agencies in Moldova, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Georgia. David Golding talked about India and Javier Garcia promised to identify candidates in Latin America (through the Iberoeka program). He will prepare a report for the next EWG meeting.

The Board took notice of the Status Report of the MPG. They agreed with the introduction of the term ‘Strategic Partner’ defined as ‘a non-European Agency that can be of strategic interest to Taftie’. They approved invitation by the Chair of a select group to become Strategic Partner after identification by the MPG and approval by the Board. They agreed that activities open for these Strategic Partners are the Annual Conference, the Policy Forum and (most of) the activities of the
Taftie Academy, all at the same cost as Taftie-members. Decision making and management of TAFTIE, drafting opinions and comments for the use of external stakeholders such as the EC, the set up of Task Forces, as well as programme development for Taftie Academy are strictly limited to Taftie members. Strategic Partners will be mentioned on the TAFTIE-website and are allowed to use the special TAFTIE Strategic Partner logo.

The Board approved that European Agencies cannot become a Strategic Partner, but that the above mentioned TAFTIE-events (Annual Conference, Policy Forum and (most) Academy activities) will also be open for them on an invitation basis. A higher fee is applicable for this group when participating in Academy events. The Assistant Secretariat will keep an exclusive internal mailing list.

Other membership issues

NAI
The Italian National Agency for Innovation merged this year into the new Agency for Digital Italy. Based on the information available, the MPG got the impression that the activities and the focus of the new Agency do not comply with the Taftie criteria for membership.

Diego Santi (the ENEA Board member) reported that he has been in contact with the former National Agency for Innovation Director Mister Mario Dal Co, who told him that, given the focus and activities of the new Digital Agency, there is no interest to take over the Taftie membership from NAI. Diego will contact mr Dal Co again to ask for a letter confirming this statement.

Given the fact that the membership of NAI will not be continued and that they have been working on the merger throughout 2013, the Board decided to remit the 2013 membership fee.

AdI
The Portuguese member AdI has been merged with IAPMEI, the Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation. A letter was received by the Chair from Miguel Cruz stating that the Board of Directors of IAPMEI concluded that it is of strategic interest for IAPME to succeed AdI as member of Taftie. Since the new Agency is in compliance with the criteria it is welcomed by Taftie to continue the membership of AdI.

The IAPMEI representatives to the EWG and the Board will soon be appointed. IAPMEI will be asked to present their organisation at the first meeting they attend in 2014.

Chairperson of the MPG
As of the 1st January, Jeroen Heijs leaves NL Agency for a new job at the Ministry of Economic Affairs. His recommendation to appoint Sabine Mayer as the new chairperson was taken over by the Board.

4. Report from the Chair 2013
Klaus Schnitzer looked back on the Chairmanship year of FFG. A detailed Chairmanship’s report will be uploaded to the Taftie web site.

5. News from Members
Prior to the Board Meeting, Members were asked to provide input, so that the information could be disseminated before the meeting and to enable Board members to prepare themselves better for the discussion of topics that are of joint interest. Thirteen members sent their input to the Chair.

Marlouke Durville informed the meeting that the new name of NL Agency after the merger with the Agency for Agriculture will be Netherlands Enterprise Agency.
Christian Dubarry presented Bpifrance that came into existence after a merger of Oseo and four other organisations. He also introduced Isabelle Bébéar, the new Taftie Board member for Bpifrance.

Veerle Lories explained the meeting the new organisational structure of IWT that will become operational in 2014.

Kristof Bertram presented PtJ view on the ERA-Net scheme in Horizon 2020 and the possible consequences for funding agencies like the Taftie members. The item will be included in the agenda of the first EWG meeting in 2014. Kristof will send members additional information after the Information Event foreseen to take place on 16th January in Brussels.

6. Task Force & Expert Networks

6.1 Report Task Force on Benchmarking Impact, Effectiveness, Efficiency (BIEE)

Patries Boekholt of Technopolis presented the results of this task force in which eleven Taftie Members participate and which is chaired by NL Agency. She explained that the objective and scope of the task force is to get a Comparative insight in impact, effectiveness and efficiency of policy instruments that are implemented by innovation agencies. The deliverables will be a reference model to assess evaluation techniques and competences and a benchmark report on evaluation techniques, impact/effectiveness and efficiency. The report will be finalised before the end of this year and can be presented to the EWG in its first meeting in 2014. For this reason the Board is asked to mandate the EWG to approve the task force report.

She concluded that there is a distance between the evaluation practice and the state-of-the-art of methodologies. Learning opportunities are offered by the fact that the survey shows that none of the evaluations scored “good” or “bad” along the whole set of criteria. Difference in design, governance, context and choice of indicators as well as evaluation budgets available were revealed by the study and can serve as lessons to be learnt.

The task force proposed to the Board to continue its work in 2014 with the following activities: connection of other (new) members to benchmark exercise, international alignment of output indicators, organisation of a peer review process and to offer courses to the TAFTIE Academy. In January the work will be presented to the OECD Expert Group. The final report will be presented to the Board in June 2014 after which a discussion will follow on how to proceed the work of this task force.

The Board mandated the EWG to approve the final report in March 2014.

Sabine pointed out that for several reasons it might be good to develop standardised indicators that can be collected by the agency systematically without necessarily having to rely on evaluations to be commissioned (some agencies such as FFG do not commission programme evaluations by themselves). Moreover this would allow for collecting indicators on a regular basis during runtime of a programme avoiding the usual delay of evaluation results. She suggested to deal with this aspect next year in the TFBIEE.

As a starting point, FFG already sent the monitoring indicator set plus the respective monitoring analysis (COMET programme) that has so far been carried out by Technopolis Austria to the TF BIEE.
6.2 Report Task Force on State Aid Rules (SATF)
Marita Paasi presented the state of play of the task force. After the Board Meeting in June, the task force met to prepare the comments to the first draft of the revised General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER). The comments which were sent to the Commission can be consulted at the Taftie web site.
The proposed plans for 2014 are as follows: As soon as the first draft of the R&D&I Framework is published, the task force shall have a meeting to discuss the draft and prepare comments. Meetings with the Commission will be organised to discuss the comments.
The second draft of the GBER is expected to be published in the beginning of the new year. The task force will comment the draft and inform the Board and EWG on the content of the comments.
The task force plans to disseminate the information next year through the following activities: Members will inform their organisations and stakeholders. The comments of the task force shall be published on TAFTIE webpage. A workshop with people from the Commission is planned for autumn 2014. A webinar could be arranged within the Taftie Academy in the autumn as well. A budget of EUR 20 000 is proposed for dissemination activities. The task force asks the Board to transfer the unused 2013 budget (20k) to 2014. A more detailed dissemination plan will be prepared for the June Board Meeting for approval.

The Chair remarked that the Policy Forum, held the day before the Board Meeting, showed that the task force is being heard by the Commission.

The Board approved the plans for 2014 including the transfer of budget from 2013 to 2014.

6.3 Report Expert Network on Tax Incentives
The Expert Network on Tax Incentives emerged from an Academy Networking Workshop earlier in the year. A Network workshop will be organised by NL Agency in the spring of 2014. Marlouke Duville presented the draft programme under the title ‘Execution Fiscal R&D Tax Schemes in the Netherlands’. Members are asked to indicate their interest to attend the workshop. A minimum of 10 persons is needed to go ahead with the organisation. A date will be fixed and communicated as soon as the minimum has been reached.

6.4 Proposals for new Task Forces
6.4a Proposal for a Task Force on Project Selection Procedures (SELECT)
Sabine Mayer reminded the Board of the fact that this proposal has been on the agenda before. The idea to establish a task force on selection procedures emerged from an Academy Networking Workshop in March in Madrid. Already seven Taftie members expressed their interest. However, at that time no project leader was available to give the lead. With the Taftie Chairmanship of FFG coming to an end, Sabine can offer to lead the task force in 2014.

The Board approved the establishment of task force SELECT including the budget of 28k euro (20k for external assistance and 8k euro for expenses).

The following members will participate in the TF SELECT: BICRO, bpifrance, CDTI, DASTI, EE, FFG, NL Agency, PARP, PtJ, RCN, TACR, VINNOVA. The Board pointed out that 1,5 years might be a bit too short a time for the planned activities.
6.4a Proposal for a Task Force on Competence Centres (CC) Programs

Since many different programmes are mentioned by agencies and definitions of CCs differ amongst Members, it was decided to start with a workshop before deciding on the establishment of a Task Force. Henrik Fridén offered that VINNOVA will host the workshop. The decision was made to include 50% of the requested amount of money (12,500 euro) in the 2014 budget in case a task force will be launched as a result of the workshop.

7. Taftie Academy

7.1 New Contract for Taftie Academy 2014-2016
The new contract between Taftie and FFG will be signed on short term.

7.2 Report 2013, Programme 2014
Since Nicole Schmidt has a sabbatical, Nicole Firnberg will replace her in the Taftie Academy in 2014. She gave an overview of activities during the year, including the feedback given and the lessons that could be learnt. The planned activities for 2014 (networking workshops, trainings and webinars) were mentioned and the results of the demand survey were presented.

The voucher system (each member that paid the membership fee gets one training for free) was evaluated. Results showed that so far there is no direct interlink between the introduction of vouchers and participation. But since the system was introduced only recently, it was decided by the Board to prolong the pilot for another year. A question on the voucher system will be added to the evaluation that is conducted after each training.

8. Report Budgetary/Accounting Issues, preliminary final

Robert Stangl informed the meeting of the state of play of the financial management system of Taftie. The new banking system is running and the reimbursement process works. The handover meeting with the incoming Treasurer Waldemar Banás has taken place. To secure the continuity the old Treasurer will remain authorised to sign till the end of January 2014.

The accounts 2013 will be on the agenda of the General Meeting, organised in conjunction with the first 2013 EWG, for approval.

He showed a slide with the Financial Management Workflow, a Balance Sheet and Income Statement and an updates Budget as of 15th October.

9. Plans of Chair 2014

9.1 Program 2014
Bozena Lublinska-Kasprzak and Anna Wrobel presented the plan of the PARP Chairmanship in 2014. The following dates were approved by the Board:

TAFTIE Annual Conference & Board Meeting, June 10-11, 2014 (Tue-Wed), Warsaw
Annual Conference on „Growth financing – challenges in funding innovation for growth”

Policy Forum & Board Meeting, November 25-26, 2014 (Tue-Wed), Brussels
The working title of the Policy Forum is „Measuring innovation”

Expert session No 1 & EWG, March 4-5, 2014 (Tue-Wed), Kraków
Expert Session on “Smart specialization as a compromise for horizontal vs. sectorial choice?”
Expert session No 2 & EWG, May 8-9, 2014 (Thu-Fri), Katowice
Expert Session on “Communicating innovation to stakeholders – channels of communication with the stakeholders and promotion of innovation”

Expert Session No 3 & EWG, September 10-11, 2014 (Wed-Thu), Gdynia
Expert Session on “Innovation-oriented ecosystems”

9.2 Budget 2014
The proposed budget was approved by the Board, after the budget for the proposed task force on Competence Centres was lowered to 12,500 euro (only to be spent when the planned workshop results in the decision to establish a task force to be taken by the Board in summer).

Anna drew the attention to the Taftie surplus. The budget for 2014 exceeds the income and as a consequence part of the surplus will be used to cover the costs. The same will be true for this year. If this trend continues over the years the surplus will evaporate.

9.3 Appointment of Executive Committee 2014

The following persons were appointed as Executive Committee for 2014:

- Chairpersons of the Board: Ms Bożena Lublińska-Kasprzak, (PARP President and CEO) and Vice-Chair Mr Dariusz Szewczyk, (PARP Vice-President)
- Executive Secretary: Ms Anna Wróbel
- Treasurer: Mr Waldemar Banaś

10. Appointment of Chair 2015, Offer for Chair 2016

VDIVDE-IT was appointed to chair Taftie in 2015.
The offer of Bpifrance to chair Taftie in 2016 was confirmed by Isabelle Bébéar.