
Minutes of the meeting

The meeting was supported by a slide pack which are recorded as The [Chairman's Report](#), which is published with these minutes at: <https://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/board-minutes-reports/>.

1. Introduction and apologies

Attendees were:

SEG Members

Andrew Kerr	David Bunt	Willem Dekker	Alex Koelewijn	Alexander Wever
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Other SEG Officers

Emily Ostler	Norbert Jeronimus	Alexis Pengrech
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Adhering Members

Valentin Lonni	Nicolas Belhamiti	Jan Götting	Freya Welten	Richard Fordham
Marion Debasly				

Also Attending

Kristoff Temmerman (SEG Brussels Accountant)

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Financial Report

Mr. Temmerman presented the financial report.

The accountants had overlooked to file SEG's accounts. This resulted in a court order sent to SEG at an address that was no longer operational, so we didn't receive it and therefore weren't aware of the order and the court hearing. Consequently SEG ASBL's registration was dissolved by the court in May 2025. SEG quickly rectified the situation and the same registration was re-instated and backdated in June 2025. Minutes of the meeting to report the re-instatement, including appointment of the Directors, are published at: <https://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/board-minutes-reports/>

Mr. Temmerman took the meeting through the 2024 accounts and figures which are also published on the same [web page](#) as linked above. The 2024 accounts have been correctly filed.

Freya Welten asked about the extent of legal / advocacy costs. They were not significant in 2024 but will be more in 2025 for the legal advice.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2024 were agreed as a true record. They can be viewed at: <https://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/board-minutes-reports/>

4. Dismissal of an Adhering Member

Alexander Wever described the process and steps that led to the recent dismissal of an Adhering Member of SEG for repeated actions contrary to SEG's policies. There is more detail in the slides in the [Chairman's Report](#).

Richard Fordham said that he had been a customer of this trader for 30 years. He had always received excellent quality glass eels and the supplier had always worked very hard to meet the Swedish quarantine requirements, e.g. for Evex and IPN. Richard expressed that his company, Scandinavian Silver Eel, would be penalised for being unable to purchase from this trader. [Note however: the trader is UK based and cannot trade to Sweden because of the blockage on eel trade between the UK and EU due to Brexit. So the inability to trade is not due to the member being dismissed or their current inability to be SEG Certified].

A key reason for the breakdown in relationship had been SEG's position on trading to Russia. Richard Fordham asked why trade to Russia was so opposed by SEG. David Bunt responded by stating:

1. Our CAB was legally unable to operate in Russia to be able to provide the assurance of traceability of onward trade required,
2. Trade was via Kaliningrad, which our Enforcement partners stated is an international centre of illegal trade of many types, and with evidence of illegal eel trade, so it carried significant risks,
3. There was compelling evidence that the trade was to support a commercial fishery rather than a conservation project,
4. The associated Eel Management Plan was not ICES approved – a stated requirement in our SEG Standard, and also no cross boundary agreements had been made with Poland and Lithuania.

SEG's position on trade to Russia had been [published on our website](#) and circulated on 4 January 2024.

Freya Welten asked where glass eels could be purchased now. This supplier could not have supplied glass eels from the UK to the Netherlands anyway since February 2021 due to Brexit. They can be purchased from two SEG certified traders in France. There are two uncertified suppliers in France and Spain.

Andrew Kerr stated that Brexit had been the root cause of this issue – by preventing eel trade between the UK and the EU.

The SEG Community - Membership Issues and learning points

Another key learning point from this issue had been for SEG to review its Governance and Membership and structure. This is ongoing and members will be consulted on changes soon. Key objectives are:

- To develop the concept of a SEG Community,
- Review and redefine membership categories and criteria,
- Review and require annual subscriptions fees,
- Provide active communication for the membership, rather than just passively, via the website.

5. Anti- SEG Campaign on X (ex Twitter)

Willem Dekker presented an analysis of the trends of posts on X by four accounts that have repeatedly attempted to discredit SEG over the past 9 months with some 4000 posts.

Richard Fordham asked: what caused this campaign? The posts accelerated after the UK Govt. didn't permit the trade of eels from UK to Russia so was likely initially an angry reaction to that for SEG's role. Since then the posts appear to seek to use any information possible to try to discredit SEG.

SEG has deliberately not replied to the posts. We are happy to be accountable and discuss our business in meetings and correspondence in the traditional way, but not via social media where we are smeared and maligned.

6. Chairman's Report

Andrew Kerr and David Bunt presented progress and Impacts made in 2024 in the [2025 AGM Chairman's Report](#).

Within that, key annual indicators of progress against our social, environmental and economic impacts were presented – see slides 16 – 39.

SEG's recent suspension from ISEAL was discussed, including the reasons for suspension and what SEG is doing to remedy the situation. SEG will make a public announcement and write to members to explain the position as soon as a statement has been agreed with ISEAL.

Andrew Kerr stated that whilst suspension was disappointing, SEG is determined to continue improving its system, to rectify any errors, regain its ISEAL status and provide a credible standard system for the sector. A credible standard system is essential to maintain integrity in the European Council and to continue a responsible and well regulated eel sector.

Willem Dekker described the recent unchanged ICES advice and SEG's response to that. Valentin Lonni stated that in France they had tried to demonstrate to ICES that their fishery data indicated a significant improvement in glass eel arrivals over the past 10 years in the Bay of Biscay and that these should be taken into account. The data weren't used by ICES – maybe they will next year? Despite the improved recruitment data the French Govt. has reduced the quota from 55t to 43t in 2026 and is aiming to buy out voluntarily the number of fishers in 2026.

Willem also described SEG's leadership of a side event at the forthcoming COP20 in Samarkand for the CITES listing of *Anguilla* species. The aim is to list ALL *Anguilla* species to at Appendix II – so that all 'Look alike' similar eel species are provided with the same protection from illegal trade. The vote will be on 27 November and 66% of the vote is required to support the proposal for this change to be successful.

7. Any other business

Richard Fordham asked if the eel was classed as 'susceptible' to IPN in other parts of Europe, as it is in Sweden, which has quite strict quarantine procedures to protect it from importing notifiable diseases.

Alexis Pengrech said that there are similar measures in France to protect from spreading diseases within France. David Bunt said that the UK has measures to aim to stop the spread of Herpes and Evex viruses. IPN is a notifiable disease in the UK, but he was not aware of specific protection measures for eels and IPN.