

GEN-EUROPE COUNCIL MEETING

30.Nov. - 3 Dec. 2004 in Ankara/Turkey
Middle East Technical University Culture and Convention Centre

Participants:

Council Members: Inci Gokmen, Mari Hollander, Andy Langford,
Geza Varga, Achim Ecker

Staff: Ina Meyer-Stoll, Deniz Dincel

Subjects:

1. **GEN-History, overview, role of the council**
2. **Budget overview 2004 /5**
3. **GEN-E Strategy discussion, clarification of vision/mission statement**
4. **Publication of the new flyer**
5. **Work programme 2005**
6. **General Assembly**
7. **Membership status discussion and approval of applications**
8. **Footprint-grant request from Jonathan for Findhorn**
9. **Excellence Award team**
10. **Contact with rural sustainable networks**
11. **Events in 2005**
12. **Funds and new financial sources**
13. **Next Council meetings**

Wednesday, 1st Dec. 04

1.) GEN-History, overview, role of the council

The meetings began with some overview information from Ina about the development of the council within GEN Europe from 1998 till today. The council agreed not to change the council decision from Oct. 2002 concerning the voting right of the executive secretaries. This was a proposal from Jean Michel Pochat, ex-council member. The new council does not see a necessity to change the policy of this decision at this time. This is the status quo: "The General Secretary does not belong to the Council but participates in all meetings

and carries a vote in all Council decisions except those relating to conditions of employment."

The new council will prioritise developing a clear overall strategy for GEN - Europe.

2.) Budget 2004 – 2005:

Ina gave an overview of the 2004 budget situation. The calculated total budget is Euro 140'715. The EC supplies 70% of this budget by the annual grant. 30% comes from other sources (this are the matching funds). Most of this money is already allocated for a special purpose. The EC will give 60% of this 70 % money in the year applied and 40% in the following year (balance). The challenge with the EC grant is that the whole GEN-E budget is calculated with the full amount of the EC grant though we'll receive just 60 % in the current year. The open 40 % will be given in the following year. That leaves us with a cash flow gap, which so far is covered by private loans. Ina pointed out the importance of finding the amount of money to pre-finance the first month of the 2005. She mentioned that Jonathan gave two loans of 5000 GBP and 20'000 GBP to use up in December and January 2005.

This year GEN-E is still waiting for the balance of 2003, which is about 20'000 Euros and has not been paid due to some problems on both sides (EC and GEN-E). Ina is in constant contact with the EC and the money should be paid soon.

There are different ways of income for GEN-E. In 2004 there have been more membership applications than in 2003 so this was a little more income than expected. Also selling books is one source of income for GEN-E. It is clear that for 2005 we need to increase the sources of income for GEN-E.

Review of the budget of 2004 (till 30.11.04) by Ina

The council went through all budget lines and compared the proposed budget with the real income or expenditures. Some budgets are already over their limit for example the budget for council meetings (this year we included the costs for the staff meeting to the budget for the council meetings. Ina will sort all costs for 2004 in January with the bookkeeper consultancy to check that we will not overspend some budgets too much. Also the costs for having 3 offices is higher than calculated. More or less we have spent the calculated budget for 2004 completely.

Suggestions:

Geza suggested having a clear business plan before asking for money. One idea is to ask GEN-E members for the money gap that GEN-E has to fill each year. Inci and Geza asked about private loans and the interest. Ina mentioned that so far no interest was paid because close friends gave all the loans.

Geza suggested that the council should prepare the 2006 budget proposal for the next General Assembly and introduce this at the GA to the members. This would include the members more into the process and the budget calculation would be a more communal process. Ina thinks that this would be a good support for Jonathan and her.

Inci suggested instead of discussing all numbers in the GA, they can be circulated by emails and new suggestions could be discussed before the GA. Clear is that at the next council meeting the council will start to prepare the budget proposal for 2006.

Other ideas are to ask the members as early as possible to plan their activities for 2006 if they want to apply for funds.

We could encourage the full members to offer as many of their programmes as possible on behalf of GEN, this should be discussed further at the next council meeting.

Discussion of the 2005 budget

The whole proposal for 2005 is very similar to 2004. This year GEN-E applied to the EC for 102'948 Euros. The 30 % matching funds for the grant are generated by Permaculture Magazine (22'000 Euro), by the Findhorn Ecovillage Training (15'000 – 20'000 Euro) and by Gaia Trust (expected are 16'000 Euro for the Ex. Award and the TOT). This money is already earmarked and will not offer a financial flexibility for the association.

The balance for 2004 is about 38'000 Euro and will be used to pay back Jonathans loans of 25'000 GBP and to start to build some reserve funds. So far GEN-E has not saved reserve funds and to generate these reserve funds was seen as an important necessity.

For 2005 GEN-E has calculated to build up reserve funds of about 12'500 Euro.

3.) Strategy and membership discussion:

The council discussed the strategy paper that was circulated by Jonathan some weeks before ("Marian's onion rings"). The questions varied between what is an ecovillage, do we need to fix a certain number of at least 8 members to call a project an EV? The core of GEN is to promote the idea of existing ecovillages as models for a sustainable future. This will never become a full mainstream approach and will reach more or less the ones who are already "converted" or who are already looking for new solutions. The idea to add a subtitle to GEN was seen as a possibility to integrate sustainable settlements.

Geza suggested that GEN-Europe could become a body like IFOAM "International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements". www.ifoam.org

He also suggested using the ecological footprint analysis as a tool to describe how ecological villages or communities reduce already the consumption of energy.

The council started to discuss the membership status and various questions connected with this issue. Up to now there are two different levels of membership in GEN-E.

Andy suggested a research to find out if GEN-E members are interested in business, like social entrepreneurs.

Achim suggested raising the membership fee could be a way to avoid one-person ecovillages and help to clarify the full and supportive membership status. He also suggested that the council could create another type of membership to integrate networks or ecological settlements to support them but not to make a full-member.

Summary of the discussion

Four levels of membership status could be possible:

- Established ecovillages,
- Small groups, initiatives,
- Large, bioregional networks – affiliated members
- Social entrepreneurship – affiliated members

The council intends to discuss more about the types of membership and to evolve progressive criteria to become and stay a full member of GEN-E. We will work further on identity, support and criteria in our next meeting. We want to develop policies to strengthen national networks like to organise a fundraiser, host an annual meeting and file a report annually.

A- Full-membership of GEN-E is for established ecovillages projects, and for national networks. Smaller grassroots organisations can become members of a national network and relate to GEN-E through their national networks.

B - Supported membership

Decision: The council decided not to alter the current membership pathways at this time but perhaps sees the full ecovillages and national networks as 'supporting' and newer initiatives as supported.

Thursday, 2nd Dec. 04

Conclusions of the strategy discussion:

The council decided to unify the existing definitions and criteria for ecovillages, according to the strategy of GEN-Europe for the new flyer.

The council decided to leave the GEN vision statement as it is:

“We envision a planet of diverse cultures of all life united in creating communities in harmony with each other and the Earth, while meeting the needs of this and future generations.”

New Mission statement:(in alignment to the log-frame 2005 purposes):

“GEN-Europe promotes the development of sustainable settlements in Europe, Africa and Middle East.

GEN Europe communicates the benefits of the ecovillage experience to wider society, to professionals in government, the private sector, and other NGOs.

GEN Europe works to strengthen the capacity of individual ecovillages as well as the national ecovillage networks.”

The council discussed the definition of an ecovillage and decided to define an ecovillage as:

“Ecovillages intend to become sustainable human settlements that practice voluntary simplicity in order to lower and/or modify their consumption -ecological footprint- for the benefit of all beings. Ecovillages are communities with coherent social structures, united by common ecological, economic, social and spiritual values”

The council discussed the characteristics for an ecovillage and agreed the following areas would be addressed in that:

“Ecovillages are living and learning centres and move toward greater sustainability by prioritising

Local organic food production

Local economic development

Complimentary currencies

Cooperative, social economies

Permaculture design principles

Building community & trust

Inclusive decision making processes

Conflict resolution

Ecological building

Renewable energy systems

Celebrating cultural and spiritual diversity

Holistic 'whole person' education

Integrated holistic healthcare

Personal development

Service to local community

4.) Publication of the new flyer:

GEN-Europe Twin Offices

ZEGG Ecovillage (Germany) and Findhorn Ecovillage (Scotland)

Contact details: Rosa-Luxemburgstr. 89, D-14806 Belzig, Germany

+49 (0) 33841 44766, 44768 fax info@gen-europe.org - <http://www.gen-europe.org>

The idea and draft of the new flyer was welcomed and a few changes recommended. The new texts (see above) should be integrated and when the English text is ready for publications the flyer should be translated into the languages of all full members.

Recommended that besides the addresses of the two GEN-E offices each country could add the address of the national network for further contacts in this special country.

5.) Work Programme 2005:

The council read and agreed to the GEN-Europe Logical Framework 2005. Ina informed the council about the idea of twin-village programmes. This idea is not only of interest between Africa and Europe but also for Middle East and/or East European countries and European ecovillages. The whole work programme is similar to the 2004 work programme. The more the strategy for GEN-Europe becomes its profile the easier it will be to outline the programmes for the next years. The idea to prepare the budget for 2006 rather early will surely have an impact on the coming work programmes.

Suggestions:

Geza suggested limiting the staff's financial decisions by decreasing the amount of money to 1500 Euro or lower. This will create more transparency, trust, and also more background support of the council for the distribution of the different budgets. And it will empower the council.

Andy suggested making a policy meeting to look at the GEN-Europe's policies in all areas.

Mari suggested circulating the staff job-descriptions to the council for clarification and for more transparency who is doing and responsible for what.

Decision:

The council decided to get more information about the staff's job-description and responsibilities and will discuss the issue about the staff's financial decision-making policy in the next council meeting.

6.) General Assembly 2005:

LOES (the Danish Ecovillage Network) sent a letter of intend to the council to invite the next GA to Christiania.

Decision:

The council decided not to have the GA in Christiania with consensus and discussed about organising the GA in other ecovillages in Denmark or in Galgafarm. Ina will get more information about other ecovillages in Denmark, if it is possible to find another EV that could host the GA. Instead of a workshop we

could offer an ecovillage tour to visit different ecovillages in Denmark and Christiania would be one of the visited EV.

Reasons:

- Not a contained space for a meeting for GEN-E members
- Too confused energies especially during the summer months with all the tourists coming to Christiania.
- Christiania is not a member of GEN-Europe.

Geza offered to have the GA in Galgafarm in case of an emergency in 2005 and he offered to have the GA 2006 in Galgafarm if we manage to organise the GA in Denmark in 2005.

The council decided to promote having the GA in the period of 1st –10th of July 05.

Friday, 3rd Dec. 04

7.) Membership situation and approval of applications:

Ina informed the council about the current membership situation. She explained that GEN-E has 17 national network members and GEN-E supports the annual meeting of national networks with 300-500 Euros per year. The council pointed out the importance of having at least one meeting a year.

From next year on Gabriele will provide an extra regular e-mail newsletter with information only for our members to improve the close contact. Besides this all members receive the GEN-E newsletter twice a year.

The council discussed the two new membership applications of Bugday from Turkey and Jean Michel Pochat from France.

- For the application of Bugday, the council recommended to organize a national network meeting to elect a new and active Turkish National Network, which could be well done by Bugday in the future. Right now it is not possible to accept Bugday as a full member because Bugday is neither an established national network nor an established ecovillage. The council appreciates the presence of Bugday and its important work in Turkey and sees Bugday as a good option to become the Turkish national network. But this has to be decided by the active Turkish EV people, not by the GEN-E council. The council decided to write a letter to the current inactive Turkish National Network Ekilat to suggest having a meeting to elect an active national network in Turkey.

- The second application was from Eco-hameau du Foran by J.M. Pochat and Chantal Guignier. The council accepted the application and welcomes Eco-hameau du Foran as a new full member of GEN-E!

8.) Footprint-grant request from Jonathan for Findhorn

Ina informed the council about Jonathan's request for financial support for undertaking the ecological footprint study in Findhorn. Jonathan is asking for about 3000 Euro support, the Findhorn Foundation will cover the other costs.

Decision:

The council decided to support this study with at least 1000 Euros. For the rest of the budget, Mari suggested to ask the wider community of Findhorn for financial support, she would introduce the study to the community of Findhorn. The current GEN-E budget does not allow larger expenditures as there are other requests from GEN-E members for supporting some of their activities. To undertake Footprint analyses and to publish the results were seen as crucial important for the work of GEN-E.

Geza suggested to contact the EC DG research and framework programme and keep GEN's contribution as seed money for this.

Andy suggested building a team in Findhorn and train people, the volunteer and students, for more ecological footprint studies.

Ina suggested asking one of the footprint researchers in Germany to visit Findhorn and share the information that has been built up.

Geza was encouraged to organise a 10-page summary of the footprint research of Galgafarm to find translation into English.

9.) Excellence Award:

So far no one replied to Jonathan's call to be part of the Ex. Award team for 2005. Jonathan and Geza are committed to be in team, each year the price winner should be part of the team for the next year. We have the idea to invite Nicole Grosperre to be part of the team, as she participated in the first award team. Mari backs up if Nicole is not able to attend; in emergency cases Ina is willing as well to be part of the team. The GEN photo exhibition could be presented at the winner's EV to promote GEN-E and the award winner.

Identified tasks for the team:

- To set up a structure
- To find out the next winner for 2005

Additional information: Nicole agreed to be part of the team!

10.) Contact with rural sustainable networks:

Geza informs the council about the existing networks he is involved with, in Europe there is **Forum Synergy of Europe** (a network for rural sustainable

development) registered in France. Geza is the treasurer of the network, one activity is to organise youth exchange to organic/eco-farms in Europe. Geza will contact PM for writing brief information about this exchange.

Via Campesina is the worldwide organisation of family farmers; we should build a bridge to GEN. They have a strong socialist emphasis, which can become rigid. Geza will think of how it makes sense to build the contact.

<http://www.viacampesina.org>

Another network is **ECOVAST** "European Council of Villages and small towns".

<http://www.ecovast.org>

EC DG Agri has an advisory board composed of 40 members and meets twice a year. Andy and Geza know some people personally and Geza will write a letter to find out how it is possible to become a member of the advisory board of rural development (DG Agri).

At the next council meeting we will continue this questions and get more detailed information. Generally the council thinks that GEN is an adequate partner to cooperate more closely with this kind of network (s) in the future.

11.) Events 2005:

Important for GEN-E is the **Green Week in Brussels from May 31 – June 3**. This year's issue is "Climate change". Jonathan and Ina are in contact with the organisers and our chances to participate could increase if we come up with some attractive ideas how to present this issue of climate change. In 2004 GEN-E did not participate due to lack of space in the exhibition place, too many new exhibitors registered for GW. The organisers did not manage to find a new, bigger place for the GW, so this challenge of getting a stand remains the same for 2005. So good, hands-on, visible ideas are more than welcomed!

Part II, brainstorming on the bus:

GEN-E shows models for sustainability, shows how to reduce the emission of CO₂, and shows how to reduce energy costs and consumption and gives examples of abundance. Eco delight! Our core input would be the information about the footprint analysis of EV concerning: building/insulation, heating/energy, generating hot water, food costs/transportation/package costs, transportation costs (mobility). We have got already 3 researches done, two in Germany and Galgafarm. Findhorn will be right in the middle of the research and could also contribute with information. Deniz could prepare some papers and simple information, which can be discussed and developed at the staff meeting. Mari mentioned there could be some papers/posters left from an exhibition in London, which could be used by GEN as well.

- We could bring models of ecovillages, like Galgafarm. Do we have other EV models?
- Place an emphasis on eating local food
- Solar toys or solar machines, if available
- A big Mandala roof construction to walk on
- A yurt as our exhibition place outside?

Ina will follow up with us in emails.

Green Week Berlin, 21 - 30 January 2005, Exhibition for Food Industry, Agriculture and Horticulture. All big trusts will be present there and GMO will be an important issue. Geza will participate in this exhibition and the council supported his interests. <http://www.gruenewoche.com>

International Permaculture Convergence 7 in Croatia: Several events are planned, the final conference will be held in Zagreb, June 13th- 15th. Andy and Jonathan are already registered; Achim, Geza and Ina are interested as well. Maybe a participation in this event can be combined with the TOT.

GEN + 10: in 2005 is the 10th birthday of GEN; so far different options to celebrate are possible. Findhorn reserved the first week in October for an ecovillage event, more details about the event will be published by Jonathan as soon as there is more planned.

ToT Training of the Trainers: the council suggests having the ToT for the ecovillage education in Galgafarm from June 5th – 23rd, we could participate in the Zagreb conference of IPC7 in between and come back to the TOT afterwards.

12.) Brainstorming about Fundraising:

This brainstorming happened on the bus during our trip to Konya, which was a new and inspiring form of meeting too!

It is important for GEN-E to find extra financial sources; one big question is who is able to work for a professional fundraising? Maybe Jonathan? The staff needs to set up their work priorities during the coming staff meeting in February and will circulate their job descriptions to the council before.

- Ina agreed to contact Heinrich Böll foundation in Germany to find out funding possibilities.
- She will also contact Maria Vazquez from RIE again, to ask if Maria could support GEN-E.
- We think it is helpful if Jonathan could write an article for PM that GEN-E is looking for funds, donors and active support in raising funds.

- National Networks could be encouraged to organise one bigger event per year, like a concert, or theatre play...and some percentage of the income will be shared with GEN-E.
- The EV-tourism idea came up again; the council recommends strongly promoting this idea. Although the realisation was not successful in previous years the little catalogue was well appreciated. We should produce a similar, updated version of this catalogue and offer a kind of ecovillage label like quality insurance. We should negotiate with all ecovillages who are represented in the catalogue that some percentage of the income will be given to GEN-E. Andy proposed to write a paper on EV tourism and the idea of entrepreneurs.
- producing an informative calendar was another idea....

13.) Next council meetings:

Spring council meeting in Galgafarm: 1st – 4th April 05

Autumn council meeting: (Findhorn maybe) 8/9th – 11th of October, if the ecovillage event in Findhorn is going to happen some of us could participate in this and stay for the council meeting. This will be fixed at the next council meeting in spring.

Ina and the council recommend that at least two staff members participate in council meetings, to share more responsibilities during the meeting.