

## GWP SPONSORING PARTNERS

16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners

to the Global Water Partnership Organisation

Stockholm, Sweden

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

### MINUTES

*(approved electronically as of 18<sup>th</sup> August 2017)*

### 1. Welcome and Introduction & Confirmation of Agenda

The GWP Chair, Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren, opened the meeting by warmly welcoming all participants and thereafter invited everyone to a round the table introduction. Thereafter, the GWP Chair handed over to the Chair of the Sponsoring Partners (SP) Meeting, Ms. Inger Buxton, Deputy Head of Department, Global Agenda Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden. The SP Chair also warmly welcomed all to the meeting and said that since the number of participants present stated a quorum, decisions to be made would be eligible.

The Sponsoring Partners not able to attend the meeting were Denmark, Jordan, Pakistan and WMO.

The agenda was then confirmed.

**Decision: The meeting Agenda was confirmed.**

*The attendance list is appended to these Minutes.*

### 2. Matters arising from Minutes from the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners in Stockholm on 9 June 2016

According to the procedure of electronic approval of the SP Minutes on a no objection basis after each meeting, the Minutes from the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual SP Meeting had already been approved as of August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

The GWP Executive Secretary gave an update in relation to the following decision made at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Sponsoring partners:

*Decision: The draft ToRs for reviewing the GWPO Statutes, to be undertaken during 2017, and any other governance aspects needed to be looked at, shall be circulated to the Sponsoring Partners for their input. A well-defined process and timeline for the review of the statutes shall also be provided to the Sponsoring partners before the next SP meeting 2017.*

The GWP Executive Secretary said that within the whole Change Agenda process, it is still not mature to look at reviewing the GWPO statutes since there is a lot of other work to be done first. When appropriate the GWP Secretariat will circulate the process and timeline for the review of the GWPO Statutes. Since GWP also needs to understand the legal and bureaucratic processes a possible change of the GWPO Statutes would entail for each Sponsoring Partner member, the GWP Senior Legal and HR Officer will contact each one of the Sponsoring Partner members to clarify this.

**Action: When invitations for the next Sponsoring Partners meeting will be sent out, an update on action points/decisions made during the last meeting, will be attached.**

The Ambassador of the Republic of Argentina in Sweden conveyed the following input on behalf of the Government of Argentina, in relation to the Minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners:

- Argentina would like to know in detail the status of the reform of the structure of GWP
- Argentina is concerned about the GWPO reform without the visible control or participation of the Sponsoring Partners. It was agreed in the last meeting of the Sponsoring Partners that a draft of the Terms of Reference to Revise the Articles of the GWP (which would be made in

2017), as well as any other topic related to the governance of the GWP, has to be previously submitted to the Sponsoring Partners in order to assure effective participation and approval. At the same time, it was agreed in the last meeting that there is a need to define the process with timelines for the revision of the Statutes. It was also agreed that all this information has to be circulated previously to the meeting. Argentina had requested to take part in any group established in order to address this process. Argentina has not received any information with regards to these topics.

- Argentina, as a member of the GWP, would like to reiterate the request that this process has to be carried out by the participation of all the Sponsoring Partners and that any proposal, decision or action plan to address this reform, has to be communicated in an official manner.
- Argentina would like to encourage the Secretary of the GWPO to make a communication effort with the Sponsoring Partners in order to establish this interaction between the meetings of the Sponsoring Partners. We encourage the necessity that this process is addressed in a participatory, transparent and ordinate way.
- Argentina submits that the Sponsoring Partners are the highest governmental authority of the GWP and the ones that ensure the intergovernmental character of the Organization. In this way, they are a crucial and decisive part in the decision making when concerning the nature of the organization and any substantial modification of its structure.
- Argentina still submits that any reform has to guarantee the objectivity, transparency and impartiality of the GWPO and regrets any reform against these principles.
- Argentina submits that even though the Financial Partners hold the character of Partners of the GWPO, they are not part of the governmental structure, in order to avoid power disequilibrium due to this character.
- The entrance of the new Sponsoring Partners to the Organization should be analyzed thoroughly and considering its implications. The entrance of a Sponsoring Partner based exclusively on its capacity of donor or contributor of funds to the Organization puts at risks its transparency and equilibrium. It will also be clarified that the Sponsoring partners should preferably be Sovereign States or Intergovernmental Organizations with international legal personality and no other type of entities.
- Argentina regrets that some of the observations made previously were not taken into consideration. In this respect we can mention the little reference that the term Integrated Control of the Water Resources has had in the strategy of the Organization. The same happens with regards to the notion of river basin.
- It is seen with worry the inclusion of terms in the GWP strategy and in other documents of the Organization that are not accepted by the country as the transversal inclusion of the term Water Safety in the Strategy, and the definition that it takes, which does not enjoy consensus on global level. Argentina encourages the definition of Water Safety that is found in the Strategy for the International Hydrological Program. The country neither supports the use of the term World Water Architecture. This does not enjoy global consensus and its scope and implications are unknown.

*The complete note with statements from the Embassy of the Argentine Republic is appended to these Minutes.*

The GWP Chair thanked Argentina for their contribution and promised that a written reply to the statements/questions will be sent.

**Action: The GWP Secretariat will give written feed-back on the input from Argentina to all Sponsoring Partners.**

The GWP Chair added that for the development of the next GWP Strategy some good thinking around terminology needs to take place.

### **2.1: Update on decisions taken since last SP meeting**

The SP Chair said that one decision had been made electronically by the Sponsoring Partners since the last SP meeting:

- The Sponsoring Partners approved the appointment of three new Steering Committee members.

## **3. Information and Approval of GWP Reports**

### **3.1: GWP Annual Activity and Financial Reports 2016**

The GWP Executive Secretary used GWP in Action 2016 as the framework for giving an update on the progress made during 2016. In going through various sections of the report the Executive Secretary highlighted that the text has been enriched by views from a number of key partners and some challenges that GWP has faced have been brought in. The report also shows 2016 highlights per Region and Globally as well as Regional impact stories throughout the rest of the report. GWP believes that water is an enabler of implementing the SDGs and where GWP sees itself having an enabling role. The 2016 Financial Report is to be found at the end of the report.

The Head of Finance and Administration continued by presenting the financial status for 2016. The income for 2016 was €14,1m of which globally raised was €11,1 and globally raised designated €1,7m. The locally raised funds came to €1,3m (main contributors West Africa and Mediterranean) which is significantly lower than 2015, mainly due to an absorption capacity issue + being the end of a 3 year cycle 2014 – 2016 and the lack of planning/initiatives for the next 3 year cycle 2017 – 2019. The "In Kind" contribution, which is not audited and therefore can not be included in the financial reports, came to €3,7m. 80% of the total budget goes in to Programme activities. For 2017 the funding agreements with Netherlands and Switzerland are still pending.

Comments/questions from the Sponsoring Partners included:

- The GWP in Action 2016 is a very well-produced report, concrete and easy accessible.
- How is funding distributed related to core and regional activities?

The Head of Network Operations responded the following to the question related to distribution of funds:

- ✓ Core Institutional: activities delivering the partnership at global, regional and country level (including 200k per region)
- ✓ Core Programs: system wide or continental programs on key thematic areas, with potential leverage (from a few 10k to a few 100k)
- ✓ Complementary programs: leveraged by the core programs (various sizes from a few 10k to a 1/2 M Euros)

The Executive Secretary further said that it might be a good idea to include the above three bullets in the GWP in Action 2017.

- The Hungarian Ambassador said that there is close co-operation between GWP Hungary and the Hungarian Government and during last years' Budapest Water Forum, the successful co-operation on the Youth Forum took place. The President of Hungary, who is well known for his engagement in and commitment to water related issues, will participate in this years' Stockholm World Water Week.

- The Argentinian Ambassador said that also the Under-Secretary for Water issues within the Government of Argentina will participate in the Stockholm World Water Week.

The GWP Chair said that it would be an honour to have the President of Hungary and the Argentinian Under-Secretary for Water issues present at and co-hosting the "Accelerating SDG delivery through financing Water Security" event GWP is conducting as part of the SWWW, in the morning of August 29<sup>th</sup>. It would be very important for GWP Sponsoring Partners to be present.

**Decision: The GWP Annual Activity Report 2016 and the GWP Annual Financial Report 2016 of the Steering Committee to the Sponsoring Partners were received and approved.**

### **3.2: GWP Audit Report 2016**

The GWP Head of Finance and Administration presented the GWP Audit Report 2016, which came out as an overall Unqualified Audit Report, the best audit opinion to be received. There was however a Qualified Audit report for GWP Central America due to issues with the Host Institution "Fundacion Vida". GWP has taken the decision to search for a new Host Institution since it is not possible to continue with the present set up. This did not affect the overall outcome of a 2016 GWP Unqualified Audit Report.

**The GWP Audit Report 2016 was received and considered.**

### **3.3: Discharge of liability of the Steering Committee Members and the Executive Secretary**

**Decision: The recommendation of the GWP Auditors to discharge the GWP Steering Committee Members and the Executive Secretary of liability for 2016 was approved.**

*Presentation made is appended to these Minutes.*

## **4. GWP Chair Annual Report**

The GWP Chair reported back from the time she entered in to the GWP Chair position, as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Her report included:

- ✓ 2 GWP Steering Committee Meetings have been conducted, December 2016 in Stockholm and May/June 2017 in Johannesburg/South Africa. Back to back with the Steering Committee meeting in Johannesburg a High Level event on valuing Water took place. The High Level Panel on Water has reached out to GWP to be a partner in the HLPW Valuing Water Initiative where 5 Regional Consultations (in Bangladesh, Mexico, Senegal, South Africa and Tajikistan) will take place, the first one in South Africa on May 30<sup>th</sup>. The initiative aims to "build a global consensus and common language to guide better approaches to valuing water across three critical dimensions – social and cultural, environmental and economic". Its key aim is to develop a set of shared principles to motivate and encourage governments, business and civil society to consider water's

multiple values and to guide the transparent incorporation of these values into decision-making by policymakers, communities and businesses.” GWP will organize the “listening-ground truthing” exercises using its multi-stakeholder platform and feedback to the HLPW. It is a good opportunity for GWP to further test its Multi-stakeholder function.

- ✓ 2 GWP Financing Partners meetings have been conducted, one of the main messages received from the FPG members - GWP needs to focus and prioritize its strategic directions.
- ✓ The GWP Regional Days took place in Stockholm on May 10th - 12th 2017, including the GWP Network Meeting on May 12th. The GWP Chair said that she created a small Task Force to work on how to conduct the yearly GWP Network Meetings in the future to engage the Partners in a more participatory and constructive way. The aim is to get the Partners to have a more meaningful ownership of GWP. The recommendations will be finalized in the Autumn.
- ✓ Increased and focused participation at international events with the aim of influencing and shaping the thinking and policies. Lot of work and progress made within the areas of the SDG Preparedness Facility, WACDEP; Urban waters, Flood and Drought management and Youth and Gender etc. On June 19th, GWP together with DFID and the Institute for Sustainable Futures of the University of Technology of Sydney, conducted a successful High Level Meeting on Gender Equality and Inclusion in Water Resources Management – one of the strategic directions for GWP’s future focus. The UN Decade for water was endorsed in Dec 2016 and will start in March 2018. There are question marks within the UN system on the necessity of a new architecture for water; on the content of the new decade and who will be acting as Secretariat for the decade. Once some of these are clearer, GWP is ready to get involved in the implementation of the main actions of the decade. GWP actively participated at the UN working level dialogue on the new architecture and will raise our voices during a number of events at the HLPP in July.
- ✓ GWP needs to align itself with everything that is happening on the ground - emerging challenges need to be met. We need to thoroughly think through the strategic directions for GWP, realigning and repositioning, building on what is there already. Need to promote GWP's valuable asset of being the major stakeholder platform for better water management. Will need the input from the Sponsoring Partners about both the re-alignment and the next strategy.
- ✓ Related to the GWP Change Agenda we need to answer the questions on what our focus for the organisation is since we can't be everywhere. A Rapid Country Level Assessment has been undertaken (mapping all CWP's through assessment and analysis) to find out about and understand Country needs and capacity in moving forward.
- ✓ The SDG Preparedness Facility is the way GWP is taking to help implement the water-related SDGs at country level (initial work within 15 selected countries). It would also be an important exercise to check the other, not directly water related SDGs, as well. Water Resources Management is a mean to achieve also the other SDGs. Water dimensions are visible throughout the SDGs and water is an overarching issue. It is high on the radar of potential risks and challenges, for decision-makers both at the country and the international level. Unless it is managed well, water resources may potentially become one of the biggest limiting factors for the implementation of Agenda 2030. Compared to a few years ago, there is much more attention from both government decision-makers but also private sector to water governance and water security issues compared to a few years ago. GWP has made, in the last 20 years, significant investments in knowledge, expertise and networks to advance solutions in water sector. There is a sense of urgency and responsibility for organizations such as GWP, to deliver the solutions and good water governance.
- ✓ The Steering Committee took a decision at its May 2017 meeting to recruit a new Executive Secretary as the current Executive Secretary, Rudolph Cleveringa, will finish his term as ES at the end of 2017. Mr. Cleveringa has agreed to remain in office until end of April 2018 to give GWPO the time to find a new ES.

### **5. Three Year Work Programme 2017 - 2019 - update on progress related to the 4 Change Agenda areas:**

The Executive Secretary introduced the topic with a reference to a rapidly evolving global developing landscape which has led to new GWP ambitions and approaches since the current Strategy was initiated:

- 2030 Development Agenda and SDGs
- Paris Agreement
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Habitat III New Urban Agenda
- Emerging Priorities (e.g migration)

The Head of Network Operations then gave an overall presentation of what has happened during the last six months in relation to the present 6-year strategy and the 3 Year Work programme 2014 – 2016 as well as looking forward on plans within the 2017 – 2019 Work Programme. 150 water governance outcomes have been influenced by GWP since 2014.

The Head of Network Operations then moved into presenting the first of the four Change Agenda focus areas:

#### **a) Strengthening the Country Level**

A Rapid Country Level Assessment has been undertaken (mapping all CWP's through assessment and analysis) to find out about and understand Country needs and capacity in moving forward. Approximately 60 out of 80 Country Water Partnerships are GWP accredited. The Head of Network Operations presented a couple of slides showing the level of operational support capacity and Multi-stakeholder capacity per Country. SDG Preparedness Facility implementation proposals have been received from 12 countries.

#### **b) Improving Sustainability of Financing**

The Resource Mobilization & Partnership Manager continued by giving an update on the progress with GWPO's Partnership & Resource Mobilization Strategy – both from an inward looking as well as from an outward looking perspective. The mission being Strengthened Partnerships as a key mechanism to improve GWP's financial sustainability with the objective of Secure new, diversified funding while maintaining long-term funding from traditional sources.

The inward looking part of the PRM strategy working to strengthen the Network and GWPO's capacity to develop strategic partnerships and raise funds. The outward looking part working to elevate the Network and GWPO's profile, to be a partner of choice and add value to strategic agendas. Need to work with the Regions and Countries on having Resource Mobilization components and planning coming in early in the process of locally raised funding options. GWP needs to focus more on non-European donors and further drill in to how to engage with the private sector. The "GWP marketing meeting" *Accelerating SDG delivery through financing Water Security* scheduled for August 29<sup>th</sup>, as part of the SWWW 2017, is planned to be repeated during the Asia Pacific Water Summit during the Autumn of 2017 and in Brasilia 2018 as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.

### **c) Improving Corporate Knowledge Management**

The Head of Communications continued by giving an update on the Knowledge and Learning component.

The 2015 PEM Report (an external review of GWP's Knowledge and Learning function) stated that GWP should focus on developing its Knowledge Management approach, strengthen links across the Network so that Knowledge and Learning is valued, captured and disseminated, which was taken up and now being included in the 3 Year Work Programme. Regions are co-leading other Regions in knowledge sharing. GWP is now at a stage where the Knowledge Management approach should be operationalized in practical terms. A Consultant has been hired to work on the Knowledge and Learning Framework (identifying the institutional processes, behaviours, tools and activities that will ensure learning is successful) to be applied on Global and Regional levels in the 3 Year Work Programme over the next 6 months.

### **d) Increasing Institutional Performance:**

The Executive Secretary continued by presenting the fourth and last of the Change Agenda focus areas. This area is related to achieving a more diverse and better governed Network. The GWP Secretariat will enforce a 3 year rolling agreement with the Regions to sharpen the relevance of the Network and to encourage the Regions to take greater ownership locally of the programmes they are implementing. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) will be reflected in the Management Letter – an agreement between the GWP Executive Secretary and each of the Regions. 7 out of 13 Regions have explored a self-assessment on a number of key performance indicators to get a more informed understanding of the present situation. The KPI work is being implemented vertically throughout the Network, as well as horizontal between Regions/Countries and the Secretariat, i.e also including the Executive Secretary.

The GWPO Anti-Fraud and Corruption work was also mentioned as being part of the larger GWPO Control Environment. The GWPO Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy was introduced in 2015 and is a comprehensive policy setting out that GWPO has zero tolerance for fraud or corrupt behaviour as well as the mechanisms which are used to ensure that fraud and/or corruption does not occur. At the Regional Days 2017 a specific session on fraud and corruption was being held for the Regional Chairs and Coordinators.

Some of the comments/questions raised by the Sponsoring Partners were:

- A very good picture of the GWP Network functioning has been given. What are the matrix components you hold each other accountable with?

The Head of Network Operations responded that all entities are aligned with the Results Framework and regular Regional "health checks" are being made with the Regional Chairs, Coordinators, Steering Committees etc.

- Is south-south co-operation/learning driven by the Regions themselves or incentivised by the GWP Secretariat?

The Executive Secretary responded that a lot of the south-south co-operation/learning is driven by the Regions themselves.

- Where is the urgency - can GWP afford to ignore what is happening around in the world today? GWP in Action 2016 does not express urgency. GWP needs to see opportunities arising to stay relevant. Technical Committee products need to be relevant in time and very important to have regional input. NAPAS are important. Implementation is a key success factor - how can GWP broker the adaptation plans and the real implementation? GWP could turn to Regional Development Banks for adaptation funds.

The Executive Secretary said that with the new Chair of the Technical Committee there will be much more Regional involvement and activity, including Regional Thin Tanks etc.



The Ambassador of the Republic of Argentina in Sweden conveyed the following input on behalf of the Government of Argentina in relation to the Three Year Work Programme 2017 - 2019:

The Argentine Delegation will comment with respect to the document Network Status - GWPO Brief Update Note (Allies Dashboard) the following:

- ✓ Argentina does not form part of the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace. With respect to this it will encourage that the country opposes to the following definition of Water Security: "Capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne population and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability".
- ✓ It will be clarified that Argentina encourages and support the definition of Water Security in the International Hydrological Program of UNESCO (PHI) in which the country is member and participate historically. It is considered that this is the only one that enjoy of big consensus up until now.
- ✓ It defines water security in the following way: "Water security is defined as the capacity of a population to safeguard access to adequate quantities of water of acceptable quality for sustaining human and ecosystem health on a watershed basis, and to ensure efficient protection of life and property against water related hazards - floods, landslides, land subsidence, and droughts".

*Presentations made are appended to these Minutes.*

**6. Update on process for evaluating the GWP Strategy 2014 - 2019 and planning for the next strategy period:**

The Executive Secretary made a presentation where he started off with looking at 2030 and what we as GWP want to have accomplished and then worked backwards to see what needs to be done between now and 2030.

| 2030         | Success                   | Water-related SDGs accomplished<br>Climate Change agreements executed<br>Disaster Risk Reduction enacted   |
|--------------|---------------------------|--|
| 2030<br>2020 | New strategy              | Periodic checks and balances<br>Global: High Level Panels; UN Commissions (CSW, CSF)<br>Regional: Economic Commissions<br>Country: SDG 6, Water<br>Governance/Security, NDC/NAP            |
| 2020         | Change Agenda on track    | GWP Strategy: Network for 2030<br>SDG 6 GEMI monitoring (UNEP-DHI/GWP)<br>SDG 17 implementation support (MSP, add value)<br>Country access to 'innovative finance'                         |
| 2018         | Mid-point Strategy 2020   | Evaluation of Strategy 2020<br>Process to develop new Strategy 2030<br>Assessment of RWP/CWPs<br>Evaluation of GWP flagship/thematic areas<br>Organisational/business model fit for future |
| 2016         | Setting the Change Agenda | Partners first<br>Impact delivery modalities<br>Roles, responsibilities, and roadmaps<br>Governance and Finance  |

The Executive Secretary continued with presenting a timeline for GWP's work relating to the Change Agenda and implementing the 2017 - 2019 Work Programme, including the assessment of the present Strategy and the development of the next one. The process for developing the next strategy will contain both internal deliberations as well as external input i.e it will be an inclusive and participatory process. Furthermore, the development process will build on a good assessment of the present Strategy. Possible modifications of the GWP Statutes will be considered further down the line to reflect the organisation's new directions.

The GWP Chair suggested that the GWP Steering Committee, Financing Partners and Sponsoring Partners meet during the Spring 2018 to brainstorm and discuss how to conduct the evaluation of the present strategy and the process for developing the next one. Time and money need to be invested in this exercise. Could possible also combine this meeting with a field visit to see concrete actions in a Region. To have the GWP Steering Committee, Financing Partners and Sponsoring Partners meeting together would yield more fruitful discussion and increase the synergy between the various bodies. Each body will still have their own statutory meetings etc. The suggestion was well received by the participants.

**Action: The GWP Chair and Secretariat will put together a proposal for the joint GWP Steering Committee, Financing Partners and Sponsoring Partners meeting to take place in the Spring of 2018 and circulate to the various bodies after Summer 2017.**

**Action: Create a link to the HLPW Valuing Water Initiative on the GWP Website.**

**Decision: The GWP Chair and Secretariat to update the Sponsoring Partners on strategically important matters once per quarter.**

The Head of Communications added that the Sponsoring Partners are most welcome to sign up for the GWP Monthly Newsletters to get information on what is happening around in the Network.

**7. Update on progress with nominations of new members for the GWP Steering Committee:**

The GWP Chair informed the participants that, like last year, the process of the Sponsoring Partners appointing new members for the GWP Steering Committee will take place electronically.

The GWP Partners received the nominations for new Steering Committee members in May and then have 3 months to consider and make comments. The Sponsoring Partners will therefore receive the nominations in August, for consideration and appointment.

**8. Any other business, date for SP meeting 2018 and Summary of discussions and decisions**

No other business was brought to the attention of the SP Chair.

1. The meeting Agenda was confirmed.
2. According to the procedure of electronic approval of the SP Minutes on a no objection basis after each meeting, the Minutes from the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual SP Meeting had already been approved as of August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
3. **Action:** When invitations for the next Sponsoring Partners meeting will be sent out, an update on action points/decisions made during the last meeting, will be attached.
4. **Action:** The GWP Secretariat will give written feed-back on the input from Argentina to all Sponsoring Partners.
5. One decision had been made electronically by the Sponsoring Partners since the last SP meeting:
  - The Sponsoring Partners approved the appointment of three new Steering Committee members.
6. **Decision:** The GWP Annual Activity Report 2016 and the GWP Annual Financial Report 2016 of the Steering Committee to the Sponsoring Partners were received and approved.
7. The GWP Audit Report 2016 was received and considered.
8. **Decision:** The recommendation of the GWP Auditors to discharge the GWP Steering Committee Members and the Executive Secretary of liability for 2016 was approved.
9. **Action:** The GWP Chair and Secretariat will put together a proposal for the joint GWP Steering Committee, Financing Partners and Sponsoring Partners meeting to take place in the Spring of 2018 and circulate to the various bodies after Summer 2017.
10. **Action:** Create a link to the HLPW Valuing Water Initiative on the GWP Website.

11. **Decision:** The GWP Chair and Secretariat to update the Sponsoring Partners on strategically important matters once per quarter.

**Meeting closure**

The SP Chair thanked everyone for their very constructive and active participation and closed the meeting.



Inger Buxton

Chair of the Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners