



## **ASSITEJ Executive Committee Meeting: Online, 30 June 2025**

### **Present members of the Executive Committee:**

Susan Jessica Giles, *President*, Australia (Sue)  
Louis Valente Sørensen, *Secretary General*, Denmark (Louis)  
Seok-hong Kim, *Vice President*, South Korea (Seok-hong)  
Paulo Ricardo Merisio, *Vice President*, Brazil (Paulo)  
Carole Umuliga Karemera, Rwanda (Carole)  
Gonzalo Moreno, Spain (Gonzalo)  
Julia Dina Heße, Germany (Julia)  
Shoaib Iqbal, Pakistan & New Zealand (Shoaib)  
Stavros Stavrou, Cyprus (Stavros)  
Theis Håvard Fincekhagen Campbell Irgens, Norway (Theis)  
Yannick Louis Marie Boudeau, Belgium (Yannick)

### **Absent members of the Executive Committee:**

Émilie Robert, *Treasurer*, France (Émilie)  
Selloane Mokuku, *Vice President*, South Africa (Lalu)  
Jonathan Dafydd-Kidd, UK (Jon)  
Maria Luisa Labuhn, Young Dance Network (Bebê de Soares)

### **Present staff members:**

Christopher John Blois-Brooke, *Staff Member*, UK (Chris)

## **Online, 11 July 2025**

### **Present members of the Executive Committee:**

Susan Jessica Giles, *President*, Australia (Sue)  
Émilie Robert, *Treasurer*, France (Émilie)  
Paulo Ricardo Merisio, *Vice President*, Brazil (Paulo)  
Carole Umuliga Karemera, Rwanda (Carole)  
Gonzalo Moreno, Spain (Gonzalo)  
Jonathan Dafydd-Kidd, UK (Jon)  
Julia Dina Heße, Germany (Julia)  
Maria Luisa Labuhn, Young Dance Network (Bebê)



Stavros Stavrou, Cyprus (Stavros)  
Theis Håvard Fincekhagen Campbell Irgens, Norway (Theis)  
Yannick Louis Marie Boudeau, Belgium (Yannick)

**Absent members of the Executive Committee:**

Louis Valente Sørensen, *Secretary General*, Denmark (Louis)  
Selloane Mokuku, *Vice President*, South Africa (Lalu)  
Seok-hong Kim, *Vice President*, South Korea (Seok-hong)  
Shoaib Iqbal, Pakistan & New Zealand (Shoaib)

**Present staff members:**

Christopher John Blois-Brooke, *Staff Member*, UK (Chris)  
Marissa Garay, *Staff Member*, Mexico (Marissa)

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## Agenda

- 1. Welcome from President**
- 2. Regularity of the Meeting**
- 3. Present, Absent, Number of Voters**
- 4. Proposal and Approval of Agenda**
- 5. Conflicts of Interest**
- 6. Regional Cooperation Programme**
- 7. Staff Roles**
- 8. Discussion and Approval of the Budget Proposal**
  - 8.1. Risk Fund
  - 8.2. Projected Contribution to the Reserve Fund
  - 8.3. Staff Costs
  - 8.4. Contribution to Secretariat Office Costs
  - 8.5. Budget for External Auditor
- 9. Approval of Financial Policy**
- 10. Decision on Next EC Meetings**
- 11. Membership of Culture Action Europe & On The Move**
  - 11.1. Discussion of CAE & OTM
  - 11.2. Other Relevant Memberships
- 12. Any Other Business**

## **1. Welcome from President**

Sue Giles welcomed the EC.

## **2. Regularity of the Meeting**

Sue, in her capacity as President, confirmed the regularity of the meeting, complying with the provisions of Article 10.2 of the Constitution, to discuss and deliberate on the presented agenda.

## **3. Present, Absent, Number of Voters**

Apologies from Lalu Mokuku, Jon Dafydd-Kidd, Émilie Robert, and Bebê de Soares, who were unable to attend the first day (30 June).  
11 voters present.

Apologies from Louis Valente, Lalu Mokuku, Seok-hong Kim, and Shoaib Iqbal, who were unable to attend the second day (11 July).  
11 voters present.

## **4. Proposal and Approval of Agenda**

Sue went over the official agenda for the meeting, which the EC approved unanimously by a show of hands.

## **5. Conflicts of Interest**

Louis Valente Sørensen declared a conflict regarding discussions on staff remuneration in the Budget Proposal (as he is a salaried staff member funded through the budget). It was agreed that Louis, Marissa Garay and Chris Blois-Brooke would recuse themselves or abstain during those specific discussions or decisions.

## **6. Regional Cooperation Programme ( June 30)**

Sue opened the discussion of the Regional Cooperation Programme, noting that this is the first time *ASSITEJ International* is directly funding projects, making the process both complex and significant. She thanked all members of the RCP Selection Committee for their extensive work, as well as the external evaluators involved. Sue announced that, after a



rigorous selection process, two projects have been chosen for funding under the RCP: the “Wanderlust” project (a collaboration led by *ASSITEJ Mongolia* with *ASSITEJ Indonesia* and *ASSITEJ Nepal*) and the “African Voyage” project (a collaboration between *ASSITEJ Côte d’Ivoire*, *ASSITEJ Burkina Faso* and *ASSITEJ Senegal*, with partners) – these two were the highest-ranked proposals and fell within the budget available. She invited comments, questions, and feedback on the selection report and the process.

The Executive Committee each offered feedback and there was detailed and frank discussion. Some of the recommendations that arose include:

- Inclusion of new *ASSITEJ* member countries and regions – for example, bringing in Mongolia (a relatively new member in Asia) and Senegal (new in Africa) as lead partners.
- The committee had identified and considered any issues and this was clear in the report
- The report not only justified the selections but also pointed out the questions the committee had grappled with, providing transparency on criteria and reasoning.
- As this was the first time *ASSITEJ* was acting as a grant-maker, there were lessons to be learned about the selection mechanism eg: defining criteria and processes more clearly in advance so that there are no “hidden criteria” or unclear expectations; considering an entirely external selection panel with the EC taking an advisory or ratification role.
- The inclusion of external evaluators (Jennifer Andersen and Richard Sallis) was recognised as a good decision and could have been earlier in the process.
- Emphasised the importance of providing feedback to all applicants
- The grant process, even for those not selected, should be seen as a first step or “seed funding” experience, not an endpoint. Applicants should be encouraged to continue developing their ideas, potentially leveraging the *ASSITEJ* feedback to seek other funding.
- Agreements with the funded projects should clarify mutual expectations.

- *ASSITEJ* should ask funded projects to consider their strategy for sustainability and capacity-building.
- Evaluation of impact should be part of our role as the EC
- In response to the inclusion of an external coordinator for African Vogue, it was urged that it should be done in a way that builds local expertise rather than creating dependency. The project should consider engaging a local “understudy” or trainee from, say, *ASSITEJ Senegal* to work alongside the external coordinator.
- final reports to the EU and any public documentation be clear to an outside reader to ensure transparency eg: always explain acronyms
- In reference to the lack of project supported from IberoAmerica, there were feelings of disappointment that no project from the Americas was selected with hopes that this RCP funding could have been a way to bring a project to their region. After significant efforts to unify the region, it was frustrating to see that work not rewarded this time.
- Clarification was sought on whether the concern was that the lack of *ASSITEJ* funding for the Americas project will prevent it from happening at all (due to no seed money to leverage other funds), or that *ASSITEJ* is only supporting “new” inter-regional initiatives and not sustaining the existing inter-regional collaboration that the Americas network has been building: a practical funding issue and a symbolic issue of continuity.
- It was asked whether the co-funding was one of the key issues in decision making: co-funding was *not* a deciding factor in the selection committee’s decision. The call guidelines had framed co-funding as a possibility, not an absolute requirement, and the committee treated the scoring on co-funding and sustainability as just one part of a holistic review.
- The budget for the project was reduced in the review of the operational budget for the four of funding from the EU, so deciding on two projects instead of three meant that the projects had a better chance of success. The call had always said “between one and three projects”
- EC's capacity to manage the projects was identified as a factor - the oversight and support needed are significant

- The committee was acutely aware of the important work and potential impact of many proposals that they ultimately could not fund.
- The committee felt regret at not being able to support other projects – they acknowledged that those regions still need attention. The EC needs to think creatively about how to continue working with the non-selected proposals and the regional networks. The idea of regional projects is tied to a broader conversation about how *ASSITEJ* supports its Regional Networks in general. The EC must mitigate any negative fallout by engaging in proactive communication and promoting inclusivity moving forward.
- It was strongly felt that the EC should treat all the proposals as part of a pipeline of ideas – some funded now, others possibly later - creating a catalogue of the proposals that were submitted; this could be used to seek other funding or partnerships for them.
- It was felt that the mix of national centres in the applications was positive and unusual, often mixing more established centres with new ones.
- the Membership Working Group of the EC can collaborate with these centres (Nepal, Senegal, etc.) on organisational development, thereby maximising the impact of the RCP funding on *ASSITEJ*'s membership growth.
- There is a “co-creation phase” at the start of project implementation, deliberately built in to allow *ASSITEJ International* to work with the selected project teams to refine or expand their plans before full roll-out – the goal is to empower, not control, the project teams.
- Feedback on the unsuccessful projects was requested
- The Selection Committee had drafted a substantial narrative evaluation for each proposal during their process.
- Suggestion to explore how to fund more of these sorts of projects more often.

It was agreed that the full Executive Committee must formally approve the Selection Committee's process and outcome. Given that four members were absent, the EC decided to conduct an online vote



following the meeting so that those not present could cast their vote of approval.

***All EC members present indicated their unanimous support for the selection committee's process and recommendations, pending inclusion of the absentees.***

The EC agreed on the following plan to communicate RCP results to applicants:

- An official email will be sent simultaneously to all applicant teams. This email will announce the two selected projects and briefly describe the selection process that took place.
- The RCP Committee's report will be attached for full information.
- The email will offer each project the opportunity to receive feedback upon request.
- For the two selected projects, the email will outline the next steps: meeting with EC, draft partnership agreements, co-creation phase discussions and introduce the concept of EC liaisons.
- In the next ASSITEJ newsletter, we will announce and celebrate the selected projects.
- The EC will ensure that all messaging stresses that the programme is about improving connections with national centres and supporting regional collaboration, not about favouring one region over another.
- To further support consistent communication the EC will list common questions they might be asked by members and provide clear, concise answers from the EC's perspective.

Stavros shared a [document outlining the role of the EC contacts](#).

The EC contacts would be supported by the secretariat, who will be responsible for contracts, payment schedules and communications etc. . Louis reminded everyone that since these projects are third-party subgrants under ASSITEJ's Creative Europe agreement, ASSITEJ International must ensure all EU rules are followed.





*Due to the extensive discussion on the Regional Cooperation Programme the agenda items that were shorter were addressed in this meeting.*

## **7. Discussion and Approval of the Budget Proposal**

*(This item was adjourned until July 11 when the management working group were able to attend.)* Brief discussion of the potential for Marissa's role to be expanded to include the communication role with ASSITEJ Spain. Gonzalo Moreno commented that he did not view his dual role as a conflict of interest in this matter – the Memorandum of Understanding between ASSITEJ Int. and ASSITEJ Spain for hosting the Secretary's position is already approved, and any increase in support would go to Marisa's role, not to him or ASSITEJ Spain's benefit directly. The EC accepted this rationale. All further details of Marisa's relocation proposal, including necessary updates to the existing MOU with ASSITEJ Spain, and budget implications, will be discussed at the next meeting of the EC Management Committee and then with the full EC..

Detailed review of the budget was not undertaken in the meeting due to the absence of the Treasurer (Emilie Robert). It was noted that since the original budget was approved by the General Assembly some adjustments were needed (costs in certain areas increased and the RCP allocation was adjusted accordingly). The updated budget document had been circulated to EC members shortly before the meeting. EC members were asked to review it independently. Any questions or approval of the budget will be handled via email or at the next session when the Treasurer is available.

## **8. Approval of Financial Policy**

Sue shared the new [financial policy](#).

Bebê de Soares suggested that ASSITEJ should have a standardised form/slip for cash payments, where we can record the amount received in cash, and provide a document for members to sign.

Chris shared he has been doing some initial research into using Western Union (or a similar service) for those members paying in cash, so the money be deposited into the PayPal account directly.



Once approved, this policy comes into immediate effect and will guide all financial transactions and record-keeping. The Secretariat will ensure the policy is disseminated to those who handle finances (e.g. bookkeeper, project managers) and that EC members are familiar with it for oversight purposes.

**VOTE:**

*Is the EC in favour of the financial policy (with the provisor that they will see the final copy)?*

## **9. Membership of Culture Action Europe & On The Move**

### **9.1. Discussion of CAE (Creative Europe) & OTM (On The Move)**

Julia mentioned that both networks were very interesting and she was in favour of joining them, although she was surprised by the high fees. She also asked if ASSITEJ would actually have time to participate in everything that these networks offer and if it made sense to join both at the same time.

Stavros shared that his organisation had recently become a member of both networks, and he had met with the Deputy General Director from OTM and the General Manager of CAE, and they are both interested in having ASSITEJ join.

Yannick noted that it seemed very European but emphasised the importance of becoming members to learn more about mobility and advocacy, which would enable us to share insights with our own members. Bebê agreed that the information would be useful and interesting to ASSITEJ members around the world, and it would help other networks learn about ASSITEJ.

Paulo pointed out it is important that the reasons for joining are clear to the ASSITEJ membership so they understand why we are using money to be a part of European networks and not for other activities.

Sue agreed and said it is also important to look into other possible networks around the world, not only Europe.

*Action: Yannick and Bebê will prepare a document that explains the synergies and possibilities that could come from joining OTM and CAE.*

## 9.2. Other Relevant Memberships

UNIMA was also mentioned as a possible partnership. Various EC members have connections with this organisation and will explore the possibilities. Other international and global organisations will be explored.

## July 11 meeting minutes

### 10. Staff Roles

The EC were informed by Sue Giles that the position Marissa was considering with ASSIJ Spain as Communication Coordinator was proven too difficult for her to undertake at this time. She gave the role thorough and careful consideration and was eager to assist ASSITEJ in this way, but the challenges of the move and the extent of the role was something that eventually she couldn't afford to do. Sue Giles informed the EC that Marissa was at all times dedicated to her role with ASSITEJ and this was her preference. This means that the Communications role with ASSITEJ Spain will be re-visited, drawing on previous candidates for the position.

### 11. Discussion and Approval of the Budget Proposal

#### 11.1. Risk Fund

Treasurer Emilie Robert took the EC through the Operational Budget and explained the risk fund – a sum of money set aside as a secondary dedicated reserve, to cover any audit requirements that may occur in the future with the European Union grants.

#### 11.2. Projected Contribution to the Reserve Fund

The EC were made aware of the contribution to the reserves being lower than expected, positing a deficit for the next year but overall, in the period of the funding for Creating Cultural Equity, a surplus for the Association.

#### 11.3. Staff Costs

The proposal is for the ASSITEJ Staff to receive pay increases beginning January 2025 and encompassing the period of Creating Cultural Equity 2025 – 2028.



These pay levels are already in the Operational Budget which was shared with the EC before the meeting.

EC members expressed their support of salary increases for staff, acknowledging the enormous body of work that happens within a very small team, and the importance of ensuring good wage conditions in an unusual and often challenging workplace. Remote work and the complexities of ASSITEJ as an association requires excellent communication and collaboration in the team and the EC thanked staff for their dedication and professionalism.

Because of the complications existing in this first part of the year (the Italian regulations and the move of the seat to Denmark) we propose back payments to Louis, Chris and Marissa to make up any difference in their wages.

The proposal also acknowledged that at the World Congress this situation will be reviewed by the new EC as the leadership of the Association and potentially the project as well will be different.

#### 11.4. **Contribution to Secretariat Office Costs**

The request has been made to ASSITEJ to assist with the costs of hosting the secretariat at the offices of ASSITEJ Denmark, at the very modest sum of 2,000Euro per year. This has been included in the budget.

#### 11.5. **Budget for External Auditor**

Also discussed and included in the budget for approval.

***Vote: do the Executive Committee approved the 2025 - 2028 Operational Budget for presentation to Members?  
Unanimous vote in favour (11 votes)***

### 12. **Decision on Next EC Meetings**

The following Centres responded to the call for EC meetings: ASSITEJ Mongolia (dates TBC), ASSITEJ Senegal (June 2026), ASSITEJ Chile (August 2026), and ASSITEJ Mexico (March 2026).

The general feeling was that a meeting in Mexico would be a great option because of the connections to World Day and because it could gather people from Central America and the Caribbean, which is one of the regions needing the most support. It was argued that even though it is



technically North America, and the EC will meet in Canada in November 2025, it is culturally a completely different region.

**VOTE:**

***Is the EC in favour of holding an EC meeting in Mexico City in March 2026?***

***Unanimous vote in favour (11 votes)***

**13. Any Other Business**

Sue gave an update regarding ASSITEJ's transfer of Seat.

Members will need to vote on the financial statement in the following week and approve that ASSITEJ removes itself from RUNTS. This is a technicality necessary to leave Italy and will be a simple online vote.

There will be a General Assembly in 2026 for the approval of statements.

**The meeting was closed at 10pm AEST**