

UNIFIED WATER LABEL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING & OPEN FORUM

14 DECEMBER 2023

**ROCA GALLERY, BARCELONA AND MICROSOFT TEAMS PLATFORM
MINUTES**

31. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION BY PRESIDENT

Mr Velazquez welcomed all to the meeting either in person or via the team's link. Mr Velazquez provided an overview on UWLA activity giving praise to members and supporters who continue to influence the UWLA and its success.

He congratulated the Secretariat on their achievements which has led to the UWLA being recognised on the Global platform alongside the Australian and American water labelling programmes.

He urged members to help the UWLA meet the challenge of raising visibility of the label in the marketplace and enhance the portfolio of product registrations.

He thanked all for their continued support and due to work pressures handed the meeting over to Vice President Georg Taubert and UWLA MD Yvonne Orgill as he had to leave the meeting.

32. LEGAL COMPETITION RULES

Members were referred to the competition rules and the Association legal statement. Members who did not agree to any aspect of the discussion path, to formally notify the Chair who will immediately cease discussion and ensure the minutes reflect any concerns raised.

33. AGENDA

Mrs Orgill requested any further items to be added to the agenda under any other business. There were none and the agenda was agreed.

34. MINUTES

The minutes from the AGM 2022 were approved as a true reflection of the meeting.

Mrs Orgill stated that the full AGM, Open Forum presentation will be made available for all from the Association website following the meeting.

35. FINANCE

Mrs Orgill gave an overview of the financial position of the UWLA. It was reported that following the departure of the Accounts Executive at the end of April 2023, the accounts' function is now outsourced. Several issues had been identified that are currently being rectified but may have implications on 2023 budget. All necessary actions to limit these are being taken.

Mrs Orgill reported that the Board had approved the 2022 full year accounts at their May meeting.

Mrs Orgill tabled the proposed 2024 budget, details of which are within the presentation. Growth is anticipated. It is proposed that during 2024 a review on audit costs and membership will be reviewed and discussed at the Forum meetings scheduled for June.

Following the correspondence with the membership in November full support for the continuation of the UWLA received full support, this was ratified at the AGM.

36. PROGRESS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Mrs Orgill reported that the UWL continues to grow as more brands and supporters join. Discussions are ongoing with many retailers, merchants and manufacturers who sell across European markets. It was noted that approximately 16,400 individual products are registered with many seeking full registration of their applicable products.

Data from the scheme indicates that market transformation is happening with greater percentage of products moving from the red and orange bands to the green bands. 68% of taps are listed within the green bands including kitchen taps. The scheme identifies this is the trend for other categories.

Mrs Orgill gave an overview of activity, presentations delivered, and events attended during the year. The aims and objectives for 2024 will focus on raising market representation, increased visibility across all markets and enhancement of the scheme with new criteria embracing repair, recycle and reuse aspects.

Mrs Orgill informed members of additional facilities on the website which include API, improved aesthetics, classification report functionality. It was also reported that early 2024 will see label available in different formats, bulk download of labels and the inclusion of Anqip label.

BIM Object presented a proposal of how the UWL database can link to BIM Object database providing water information. A proposal to have reciprocal links between the two databases would be beneficial to manufacturers who have registrations on both schemes. Members present supported the proposal to further this initiative.

37. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Mrs Orgill reported that following the departure of Mr Taylor Hamlin from the industry, Mr Kopka had been acting chair of the Technical Committee and the Secretariat as Chair of the Marketing Committee.

Members fully supported Mr Kopka being elected as Technical Chair.

Mrs Orgill reported that she had received two nominations for the vacant Marketing Committee chair, due to limited time, these had not been circulated. It was agreed that the Secretariat will hold the Marketing Chair position until June when a ballot will be held prior to the next Open Forum meeting.

38. PROGRESS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES, 2023 ACTIVITY, 2024 ROAD MAP

Mrs Orgill ran a PowerPoint presentation (copy can be found on the UWLA website) capturing the 2023 activity. Members present congratulated the Secretariat on the coverage and activity undertaken.

The AGM presentation provided a breakdown of products registered into categories and bandings; these breakdowns identified market transformation to greater efficient products is happening as more products continue to be registered in the efficient bands.

Mrs Orgill reported heightened interest across Europe and Chinese companies who sell into Europe this interest aligns with 2023 focus on raising visibility and representation.

Mrs Orgill reported that Adene in Portugal had undertaken research on consumer understanding of labels that exist in the marketplace and if labels influence choice. The findings of this project identified that consumers do find labels useful, with the UWL being an easy label to understand. The negative aspect of the research identified the lack of visibility of the label in the marketplace.

Mrs Orgill reported on the proposal from the Marketing Committee on 2024 activity. The focus for 2024 will remain as raising visibility and increase market representation. Activity will be supporting a series of training webinars - the BMA kindly volunteered to help, translation – Confindustria Ceramica volunteered to help to ensure translation is correct, and improved communication and literature.

Members fully agreed with the focus for 2024.

39. TECHNICAL ACTIVITY

Mr Kopka provided an overview of activity undertaken and proposed activity for 2024. He reported that the Technical Committee will be meeting the following day.

Mr Kopka reported that the Spray Seats and WC WG is progressing in their development of a new criteria, with their next meeting schedule for 21 and 22 February at the offices of Geberit in Jona, Switzerland. The draft is currently with the WG for field testing with the Secretariat developing the 1st draft of a potential label, following the style of the others.

Mr Kopka gave an overview of the development of the CEN Functionality Standard, now referenced as prEN 18021 which is out for internal comment, no major amendments are expected. Mr Kopka stated that the Technical Committee will discuss this in full at their meeting the following day.

Mr Skinner gave an overview of the 2023 audit and was pleased to report a more positive response and knowledge on what the audit entails. Any failures identified were rectified. Following comment received from several members, that if a full portfolio of products is to be registered then the audit fee becomes a cost barrier. The Board of Directors had agreed at their earlier meeting to investigate alternative methods to reflect full portfolio registrations. A proposal will be drafted for discussion at a future meeting in 2024.

Mr Kopka reported that he is undertaking a review of the technical criteria, improved navigation and address any issues of a technical nature. This would be discussed fully at the technical committee meeting the following day. Several comments had been received.

Mr Kopka advised that all aspects of merging Anqip and UWL had now been addressed with a transition period of 2024, this will be reviewed during the latter part of 2024.

40. POLITICAL OVERVIEW

UK Legislation

Mrs Orgill provided a legislative update on UK political activity. Mrs Orgill reported that the findings of DEFRA's consultation were issued early October and identified from the responses that a mandatory label was preferred. Several bodies questioned the findings as it did not reflect all respondents' responses with the consultation findings reflecting the certified UWL scheme.

DEFRA advised a series of workshops will be held to develop a scheme with stakeholders. The UWLA informed members of these decisions, who unanimously agreed to continue with the UWL as it was believed it is the correct solution. It was reported that following subsequent meetings with DEFRA they agree to work with the UWLA to identify a solution that uses the UWL and meets UK government objectives.

Mrs Orgill urged members to display the label demonstrating that the UWL has visibility and is the solution.

EU Legislation

Mrs Orgill provided an update that sees the European Commission activity focus on 'Green Economy' with a series of new directives currently under discussion that will influence the manufacture of sustainable products being introduced as 'the norm' across consumer products, provide greater confidence for consumers to purchase such products and reduce the amount of unsubstantiated green claims. The European Commission goal is to see only sustainable products available in the market. Mrs Orgill reported that the new directives will outlaw certain materials and enhance reuse, recycle, repair aspects, thereby reducing waste. A package of green incentives will use these directives for their initiatives.

The current directives are Environmental Green Claims, Environmental Labelling, Consumer Protection.

It was agreed the UWLA will form a Working Group to develop a position paper that will form part of the UWLA Lobbying activity.

41. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the UWLA Open Forum will be held mid year at the offices of Anqip, Portugal, date to be confirmed.

SECRETARIAT NOTE: The next Open Forum meeting will be held 2/3 July at Anqip in Portugal.

42. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting and wished all a pleasant festive break.

ATTENDEES – AGM

In Person:

Carlos Velazquez, Roca
Georg Taubert, Geberit Group
Timo Kopka, Laufen Bathrooms
Yvonne Orgill, UWLA
Mike Fox, IKEA
Thomas Kempf, Oras Group
Elmer Esser, IAPMO
Ramon Guiza, Sedal Group
Henk Gieskens, Lyrical Communications
Anne-Claire Bruant, FECS
Carla Rodrigues, Anqip
Alfonso Da Silva, Anqip
Judit Almunia, Roca
Jon Schroder, BIM Object

Via Teams

Belan Bailera
Marc Navarro
Jordi Bertran
Francesca Ebaldi
Paolo Ravizzotti
Jon Weigand
Tom Reynolds
Andy McLean
Michael Klueh
Joao Viera
Maite Serra
Francesco Balducci
Martin Hartmann
Tim Woelfle
Christian Longhorst
Yasemin Ercetin Akyar
Owain Richards Green