

**Chairman's word:****CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN  
WORKING GROUPS 1 & 2**

The Madrid Seminar was the uncontested paramount event of our COST Action E19 during the past year. Professionally organised by our colleagues Dr. José Maria Solano-Lopez and Prof. Dr. Eduardo Rojas-Briales, it provided the opportunity for communication between regional forest planners from the Spanish Regions and the members of COST Action E19. On the prior day of the COST E19 Seminar on theoretical aspects of policy planning, the topic was 10 years' experience with regional forest plans in Spain. Simultaneous interpretation enabled the participants to understand the differences between the status quo of forest planning in most European countries and the ambitious objectives of national forest programmes (NFPs).

Traditional forest plans usually have a clear, straightforward objective, e.g., the promotion of forestry, whereas national forest programmes strive to ensure sustainable forest management (SFM). The notion of SFM as defined in the Forest Principles and Helsinki Resolution H1 is not an intersubjectively assessable objective. It is, instead, a model. Although the term SFM is vague in content and may be deemed an empty phrase, it functions to describe a desired final state and, therefore, indirectly governs and coordinates political-administrative and individual, private actions. For the planning process, this means that the objective of SFM is not yet operationally defined, but is undergoing a communicative, cooperative process. The outcome of this process will depend on the participating actors, their interests and empowerment, and above all, the context, such as policy style, institutional aspects, basis of knowledge, and innovative climate in a country.

There is another important difference which follows from the lack of a clear objective. The model of rational planning is no longer the means-ends approach with underlying linear cause-effect relationships. In this context the key instruments in the Spanish regional forest plans are above all financial incentives. Instead of

linear, sequential processes, the NFP adherents proceed from complex interactions of political actors, which require horizontal and vertical coordination. State and society are no longer regarded as separated entities; they are both represented in policy networks and mutually dependent in pursuing their tasks and interests.

The third difference that I recognised while in listening to the speakers of the Spanish and the COST E19 days refers to the significance of the basic principles of NFPs. Participatory mechanisms and positive coordination is given more attention in the development and implementation of NFPs than in traditional forest planning. The same might prove true for negotiation as the main conflict-resolution scheme, long-term iterative planning and the holistic, intersectoral claim.

The basic principles and procedures constitute the main characteristics of NFPs in comparison to existing policy means. These are the research topics of Working Group (WG) 1. If WG 2 is looking for impeding and supporting factors of substantive NFPs, close collaboration between both working groups will be unavoidable. WG 2 even needs an a-priori description of the basic principles in order to fulfil its tasks. With time these understandings may be modified in accordance with the progress of work in WG 1. These and other notions were contemplated during and after the Madrid Seminar and were finally thoroughly dealt with by Karl Hogl and Michael Pregernig in a working paper. This could form the basis of co-operation between both of the working groups.

Peter Glück

**MADRID SEMINAR, 18-21 October 2000****Acknowledgement**

The first scientific seminar of COST Action E19 took place from 18-21 October 2000 in Madrid in the premises of the Faculty of Forestry of the Polytechnical University of Madrid. The main objective was to scrutinise and strengthen the theoretical basis of forest policy planning which

could serve as a framework for the future work programme of the Action. This purpose was congenially supplemented by the Pre-seminar "10 years experience of regional forest plans" in Spain because it provided the empirical basis of the theoretical topic and the platform for fruitful discussions. The seminar concluded with an unforgettable excursion to a private forest estate in Extremadura.

Many people have been involved in the preparation and realisation of the Seminar. Our special thanks goes to the Spanish Ministry for the Environment for the willingness not only for hosting this event, but also for making seminar proceedings possible. Particularly the overwhelming hospitality, excellent guidance and infinite patience of the local organisers under the direction of Dr. José-Maria Solano-Lopez and Prof. Dr. Eduardo Rojas-Briales, made the seminar a great success. Without their support the goals of the scientific seminar would have remained only an empty promise. Furthermore, we thank the forest owner Mr. Miguel Cremades for his kindness and the professional guidance during the excursion.

### **Comments of WG1: The theoretical impossibility of a NFP-blueprint**

The task of working group 1 has been described in the MoU of the action as follows: "The specification of the elements and procedural requirements of an NFP, which could serve as a blueprint for an individual European country". In principle a clear task, which should be easy to fulfill for a European wide network of forest policy researcher set-up for four years, if not two major problems would remain: 1. the lack of a commonly recognized and operational definition of national forest programmes, and 2. the rather vague and political nature of the existing characterizations of elements and guiding principles.

With the background of the experience, that "there is no standard of national or regional forest programmes acceptable by everybody, and the only issue to be raised is the need for using concepts and theories which can be appropriate", as stated by Gérard Buttoud in his presentation, the logical step of the Madrid-seminar was to focus on the underlying rationality of NFPs, namely that of policy planning, when elaborating on a theoretical basis, which could serve as a

framework for the scientific working programme of the action over the next four years.

The two-day seminar in Spain was designed to focus explicitly on a revision of the theoretical aspects of policy planning and policy-coordination in the light of natural resource conservation policies. Out of the various presentations during the Madrid-seminar it became very clear, however, that no single theory, nor an consistent set of theories on policy planning does exist, which could serve as a framework for the working group and its working programme. In contrast, it had to be realized that the invited presentations represented only a more or less arbitrary selection of the bewildering varieties of concepts and theoretical issues underlying the political vision of national forest programmes. The hope that the invited presentations could provide simplicity and orientation in analysis was impressively replaced by a feeling for the theoretical complexity of the task of the COST-action.

This theoretical complexity had been taken up in Madrid in the subsequent working group session by marking the width of the theoretical framework for further analysis of elements and procedural requirements through identifying key words of relevant theoretical concepts. The identified keywords will give structure to the discussions and elaboration in the following working group meetings on the core essentials of NFPs.

In that respect, working group 1 faces two challenges in its further work: first, not to analyze the core essentials of NFPs – namely participatory approaches, collaborative approaches, intersectoral co-ordination and communication and information - in isolation, but in the integrated way of the overall frame of the NFP characteristics as described in the political processes. And second, trying to use the differences in underlying theoretical concepts and paradigms in order to get the most comprehensible specification of elements and procedural requirements of NFPs. It needs to be checked very carefully what these challenges imply for the type of results and type of "products" that the working group is supposed to deliver at the end of the action in 2003. Two possibilities seem to be most likely in this respect: a. the provision of a list of (hypo) theses

as regards the elements and procedural requirements. And b., to develop different ideal types of NFP-frameworks based on a discussion of their wider capabilities and features in different societal, natural, political, and cultural settings. What seems completely impossible and probably also not desirable, however, is the provision of a blueprint for NFPs.

Heiner Schanz

### **Comments of WG2: The gap between theory and empirical evidence**

Apart from affording an opportunity for personal contact, the conference in Madrid provided a forum for exchange on the theory of NFPs and empirical evidence giving insights into the progress in the implementation of NFPs. The conference programme was rich and varied and contained a lot of theoretical inputs on topics such as the state of the art of policy planning, the design of policy change in institutionalised policy networks and the lessons learned from national strategies for sustainable development.

However, the discussion in Working Group II on the factors that impede and support NFPs revealed that the definition of clear links between the general theoretical inputs, the ongoing research on NFPs and existing experiences on programmes in different countries remains a challenge.

Working Group II stated that a common analytical framework and a shared definition of national forest programmes still need to be developed. Due to the lack of a common understanding of key variables, the hypothesis on factors that impede and support NFPs remain unclear. Thus, it would be premature to go ahead and draw conclusions on what causes or triggers the introduction of substantial national forest programmes.

Nevertheless, some variables and hypothesis were discussed and the problems left to be solved can now be narrowed down more precisely. First of all, further discussion should try to clarify whether we conceptualise national forest programmes as a certain (participatory, decentralised, intersectoral, iterative ...) process and/or as an output of a political activity (standards, long-term commitments for some goals, etc.). It may also be possible to show later on

that a typology of national forest programmes can be developed, for example drawing a distinction between programmes which consist purely of procedures and those that contain general goals and programmes with clear goals, action plans and evaluation procedures.

Secondly, we still need to identify stronger hypotheses as to which factors could foster or hinder the national forest programmes to be formulated and implemented and, finally make a difference for national forest policy. So far we assume that such fostering factors could include the international harmonisation of forest policies, widespread public ownership of forests, consolidated forest policy networks, deliberative negotiation with stakeholders and the inclusion of expertise and social software in the formulation process. On the other hand, community networks and asymmetric networks may hinder the establishment of NFPs.

Working Group II also decided to develop an questionnaire and collect data and material on the national NFP processes in European countries. The survey will be carried out in February 2001 and first results will be presented at the spring meeting in Aberdeen.

To conclude, we can say that a lot of work still lies ahead. Hypothesis have only been roughly outlined, it is unclear which theories should be concentrated on and a common understanding of NFPs still is far from being established. We believe that these different tasks should be tackled simultaneously and that their solution should go hand in hand.

Ingrid Kissling and Kurt Bisang

### **THE WORK OF THE MCPFE ON NFPS AND COST ACTION E19**

The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) follows an active approach towards future-oriented forest policy issues. In this respect the issue of NFPs has gained importance also in Europe. The aim of the MCPFE is to further develop a common understanding of the concept as well as the principles and elements of NFPs in the pan-European context. During the last two years the discussion in Europe has been intensified and future steps of the MCPFE are already in preparation.

At the Third Ministerial Conference, convened in Lisbon/Portugal in June 1998, NFPs were considered as an important policy tool for sustainable forest management. In the follow-up work of the Lisbon Conference the First Expert Level Meeting, held in Vienna/Austria on 31 March and 1 April 1999, decided to give NFPs thorough consideration.

The MCPFE developed a Work Programme to implement the decisions of the Lisbon Conference as well as all decisions of the previous Ministerial Conferences. This Work Programme contains 12 elements and 41 actions for implementation. NFPs constitute one important element and are dealt with through 3 actions at the pan-European level.

In order to move towards a coherent pan-European perspective on NFPs, a first MCPFE workshop on NFPs was convened in September 1999 in Tulln/Austria<sup>1</sup>. Its results revealed that the core elements, i.e. participation, holistic and intersectoral approaches and an iterative process, were identified as being important for the NFP discussion in Europe. However, also all other elements identified through IPF/IFF and FAO should be considered. Nevertheless, NFPs will always have to be designed within the specific national context and have to be adaptive to national and sub-national situations and case specificities. It was also stated that NFPs are different from national plans. NFPs constitute a long-term, iterative process with a different underlying rationale to planning.

Some strong arguments were made at the Tulln workshop on why a pan-European discussion on NFPs is important for the European countries. A common European understanding of the policy tool NFPs would be beneficial for the communication among the European countries on the one hand. On the other hand it could be a signal to other regions in the world on the positive endeavours of Europe to proceed with the issue. It was also considered important to highlight the relevance of NFPs and their elements in the pan-European context in relation to the global forest debate. Therefore, a

detailed discussion on the concept and the elements characterising NFPs is of importance.

At the Third Expert Level Meeting, held in Vienna/Austria on 25-26 September 2000, the participants decided to convene a Second MCPFE Workshop on NFPs in Norway (July 2001) in order to foster the pan-European discussion on this topic. This workshop will focus on the previously identified core elements of NFPs and aims to further define their meanings and dimensions in the pan-European context. The discussion of these elements in connection with all other elements identified as important at the Tulln workshop will build upon an exchange of experiences made in European countries on national and sub-national levels. Also countries' experiences with EU legislation should be communicated. In addition, the integration of scientific and technical knowledge, especially the work of COST Action E19 was considered as important for this second workshop.

As a goal for the second workshop the participants of the MCPFE agreed that the formulation of voluntary recommendations for NFPs in the pan-European region should be considered.

One principle of the MCPFE work is the collaboration with scientific and technical bodies. The work of COST E19 could therefore be an important contribution to the MCPFE work on NFPs. COST E19 could provide a scientific insight into the new planning paradigm underlying the concept of NFPs. In particular, COST Action E19 could facilitate the political discussion on those elements and basic principles which constitute essential requirements for NFPs. The core elements identified on the political level more or less match those ones identified by the scientific community in the COST Action E19. The scientific input into a complex but highly relevant discussion would be appreciated by all participants of the MCPFE, as stated in previous Expert Level Meetings.

Dr. Peter Mayer  
Head of the Liaison Unit Vienna

<sup>1</sup> "The Role of National Forest Programmes in the Pan-European Context". Presentations and outcomes of the NFP workshop organised by the MCPFE in Tulln/Austria, 13-14 September 1999. (The publication can be ordered on the MCPFE webpage: [www.minconf-forests.net](http://www.minconf-forests.net)).

## EXPERIENCES FROM SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM)

Evelien Verbij (Wageningen), Johannes Voitleithner (Wien), and Johan Barstad (Volda) took the chance of a STSM abroad. In the following the STSM of Mr. Johannes Voitleithner is described as an example.

Mr. Voitleithner was hosted by the Finnish Forest Research Institute in Helsinki, Finland for two weeks. The main goal of his mission was to get a deeper insight to the practical processes of regional and national forest programmes in Finland.

This goal was reached by carrying out interviews with 19 people who have been involved in the regional and national forest programme processes and by studying relevant books, articles and documents.

The Finnish Forest Research Institute supported the visitor and arranged most of the meetings, which included representatives of forest workers, forest industries, forest owners, environmental organisations and the government, as well as scientists.

A very positive effect of this Short Term Scientific Mission for Mr. Voitleithner was, that he got practical experience about a process, which he studied for many months mostly based on scientific papers.

These experiences are now presented in Austria and also for other members of COST Action E19. An additional effect of this Short Term Scientific Mission was the improvement of scientific contacts to Finnish researchers.

## NEXT MEETINGS AND SEMINARS

**29.-31.3.2001. Aberdeen, Scotland.** Management Committee and Working Groups.

**13.-15.9.2001. Norway.** Seminar, Management Committee, Working Groups.

Working Group meetings and Seminars are open to all interested researchers. For more information, please contact your national Management Committee representative.

## Provisional programme in Aberdeen

### Wednesday, 28 March 2001

Members arrive in Aberdeen

### Thursday, 29 March 2001

08.00-09.00 Registration

09.00-12.30 Plenary session

1. Political culture and NFPs (Kristine Kern, Berlin)

2&3. Participatory approaches (with an invited speaker)

4. Legal regulations (with an invited speaker)

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-18.00 Working Group 1 & 2 meetings

Evening: Talks relevant to position in UK at a time of devolution of forestry responsibilities (D. Henderson-Howatt, Chief Conservator for Scotland)

### Friday, 30 March 2001

08.00-12.30 Working Group 1 + 2 meetings

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-18.00 Field Trip

Evening: Joint dinner

### Saturday, 31 March 2001

08.00-12.30 Working Group 1 + 2 meetings

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00 Working Group 1 + 2 meetings

16.00-18.00 Plenary session (reports from WG 1 + 2)

17.00-18.00 Management Committee meeting

### Sunday, 1 April 2000

Members leave Aberdeen

## ORGANISATION OF COST E19

Professor **Peter Glück** from the Agricultural University of Vienna BOKU, Austria is the Chairperson of the Action. Vice-chairperson of the Action is director **Heikki Pajuoja** from the Finnish Forest Research Institute, Vantaa Research Centre, Finland. He is also the editor of the Newsletter. Professor **Heiner Schanz** from Wageningen University, Netherlands, is the Chairperson for the Working Group 1 "Elements and procedural requirements of NFPs"; the new chairperson of Working Group 2 "Significance of NFPs as compared to other policy means" will be elected in Aberdeen. These four chairpersons form the Steering Committee of the Action. Professor **Noël Lust** from the University of Ghent, Belgium is the Tutor of the Action. Senior researcher **Harri Hänninen** from Finnish Forest Research Institute is the editor of www-homepage of the Action.

## IMPORTANT LINKS

Homepage of the Action can be found at <http://www.metla.fi/eu/cost/e19/>

More information about COST can be found at <http://www.netmaniacs.com/cost/>.

## 18 COUNTRIES HAVE SIGNED

Until now, 18 countries have confirmed their participation to the Action. These countries are:

Austria	Germany	Netherlands
Belgium	Greece	Norway
Cyprus	Hungary	Portugal
Denmark	Ireland	Spain
Finland	Italy	Switzerland
France	Lithuania	United Kindom

According to COST rules, it is possible to join the Action also later. Interested countries should declare their interest through their National COST Co-ordinator.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG SCIENTISTS

Short-term scientific missions - the third call for proposals by March 15, 2001.

The purpose of a Mission is to to gain new experience from other countries within the topic area of the Action. Young scientists of a participating institute can visit participating public or private institutions abroad in any COST country that has signed the Action.

The duration of a mission must be at least 3 days and no more than 1 month. Successful applicants will receive a grant of up to EURO 1.500. Undergraduates are not eligible. Applications should be sent by 15 March, 2001 to Peter GLÜCK, University of Agricultural Sciences, Vienna, Gregor Mendel-Strasse 33, A – 1180 Wien.

More information on the COST E19 homepage <http://www.metla.fi/eu/cost/e19/missions.htm>.

## HOW RESEARCHERS CAN PARTICIPATE INTO COST E19?

*Management Committee meetings.* MC meets twice a year. There are one or two officially nominated MC delegates from each participating country.

*Working Group meetings.* COST E19 has two Working Groups: WG1 Elements and procedural requirements of NFPs, and WG2 Significance of NFPs. All interested researchers can participate into WG meetings. COST covers the travel expenses of one or two researchers per country.

*Seminars.* Seminars are open to all. COST can cover the travel costs of invited speakers and maxi-

mum of 4 researchers per country.

*Short-Term Scientific Missions.* Young researchers from participating institutions can benefit COST funding up to EUR 1500 for a mission abroad into another participating COST E19 institution. The duration of a mission can be from three days to one month. COST funding for these activities is coordinated by National MC members and the Steering Committee.

*National networks.* Because of limited funding, all interested researchers may not be able to participate into COST meetings and seminars. It is therefore recommended that MC members create national networks in order to assure timely flow of information to all interested researchers and institutions.

## CONTACTS

National delegates in the Management Committee are key persons for all inquiries about COST E19. They'll be glad to give further information.

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