

## COST Action E43

*“Harmonisation of National Forest Inventories in Europe: Techniques for Common Reporting”*

### 6th Steering Committee Meeting

Minutes of the meeting

2nd - 3rd February 2006

Hosted by IFER and the Ministry of Agriculture

Prague, Czech Republic

**Participants** : Annemarie BASTRUP-BIRK (DK)  
Emil CIENCIALA (CZ)  
Gherardo CHIRICI (IT)  
Majella CLARKE (FI), secretary  
Adrian LANZ (CH)  
Nicolas ROBERT (FR), as an invited expert  
Klemens SCHADAUER (AT)  
Göran STÅHL (S)  
Erkki TOMPPU (FI), chair Cost Action E43  
Claude VIDAL (FR)

**Absent** : Marco MARCHETTI (IT)  
Jesús SAN-MIGUEL-AYANZ (JRC), an invited expert

#### 2nd February

The meeting commenced at 14:00. Prof. Erkki Tomppo opened the meeting and presented an outline of the most important outcomes which included the status of workgroups, the publication strategy and plans for future work

#### **Status of the Action**

##### **European Forest Monitoring Organisation and JRC Tenders**

Annemarie explained the general idea that Brussels present which activities and who will be involved with respect to data management, interpretation, reporting and response to the data which may generate new requirements. She explained that the plan is very generic (refer to diagram), also see all partners involved. The main partners will be data collectors and data providers involved in the reporting and include NFIs, forest fires, and forest ecosystems. The three main topics of focus are:

- 1) Climate Change
- 2) Forest Biodiversity
- 3) Protective functions of the forest

The reporting is planned for 2010. Further issues in this respect include how EU organises this. Robert Flies invited working groups to meet in Geneva, in the first week of March and produce a proposal for a pilot project by the end of May. COST E43 will conclude in 2008, so the proposal would be centred on ENFIN activities during 2007-2013 rather than COST E43.

MCPFE indicators will play an important role in the reports, and the use of remote sensing techniques at different resolutions should link the work with R&D. Because the European Commission has a responsibility to report at a global level, the commission should finance the work.

Claude Vidal noted that the JRC strategy in this respect is unclear and that there has been no official information on its motive. Annemarie explained that the JRC is under the European Commission, and therefore pursues the commission's strategy, but it is still somewhat unclear as to who will finance what. A data centre at JRC has been recently established employing 1-2 people.

Conclusions are that the organisation is still somewhat open. ENFIN will nominate a representative. The drafting team needs to determine the best practice for collecting and reporting information. Cost e43 Steering committee proposed Dr. Klemens Schadauer its representative for the drafting team. The proposal must be submitted per email to the Steering Group of ENFIN.

### **JRC Tenders**

Erkki Tomppo noted that the schedule for preparing the JRC tenders within the COST E43 action was extremely tight. Claude Vidal recommends a formal protocol for announcing the results of the JRC tenders within the COST E43 Action. It was decided that the main contractor of each tender, when informed, emails COST E43 chair, who will email the whole action.

### **Minutes from previous meetings**

Motion: Erkki Tomppo. Minutes from the previous SC meeting in Sölböle, Finland are on the COST E43's web-site. Minutes from the previous meeting have been accepted. Second: Adrian Lanz. Workgroup 1 minutes from the Freiburg meeting are currently on the "draft pages". Motion to move these minutes to the public web-page. Scientific reports from STSM can be sent to the COST office for WG1. Second: Claude Vidal. All minutes from WG2 have been received.

No minutes for the Freiburg meeting have been presented from WG3. Annemarie explained that WG3 worked in small groups in Freiburg to produce the second questionnaire. Hence the motion for the 2nd questionnaire of WG3 in lieu of formal minutes from Freiburg. Motion was accepted by the chair. Majella Clarke noted that all persons present must be listed on the minutes. 1/2 page update of WGs will be sent to the chair on the 30th May and the 30th November 2006. Motion was accepted by the chair.

### **General Activities within COST E43**

The Annual Report for 2005 was handed in early. WG2 did not officially apply for money for an internal STSM held in Prague. The internal STSM was funded through institutes own activities and resources.

A training school was excellently organized in Prague in conjunction with IFER with positive results. Output is summarised on the leaflet. Maybe the COST office could print the brochure. Motion: Emil Cienciala will approach the COST office before March for printing the leaflet of the training school. Portugal is also on board the COST action since November 2005.

## **Budget**

Klemens reported that the situation has not changed. COST strictly asked that no more reimbursements will be possible other than those outlined in the email by COST office by the Science Officer, Mr. Günter Siegel email. The budget is a yearly quota with 90 reimbursements for 2006. However some margin of freedom is possible within the Action. For example, 50 reimbursements for Bordeaux but then only 40 for the 2nd yearly Management Committee meeting. No money can be allocated to STSMs. We can not change the 110€night reimbursement fee. However if we need 3 nights, we can claim only 2 nights and reimburse 220€for the three nights. It was proposed that if COST E43 was to decide to have 10 less present at the MC meetings, it could then have STSMs. There could be some flexibility in the second half of the year. Further SC meetings will have to coincide with MC meetings for 2006.

The motion was passed to have a list of reimburses before each meeting, which will be sent to the COST office so that reimbursements are secured.

## **Workgroup 1**

Current status and yearly plan for WG1 was presented by Claude Vidal. Nicolas Robert presented the task for building bridges into acceptable references and a methodology to build bridges with the metadata. There are 2 possible strategies open to WG1. 1) Focus on a few variables and analyse thoroughly OR 2) analyse many variables without too much detail. The strategy will depend upon resources and the priorities defined - the key variables and parameters will be further defined on day 2 of the meeting. It was noted that one STSM this year would be very important to WG1. The plans for 2006 were presented.

## **Bordeaux meeting**

Erkki noted that the involvement of all COST participants is important. If countries feel they are left outside the group, then the goal of COST fails. The resolution was that at least one large meeting a year has to be organised. But also, because of lack of funding, add small workgroup meetings to advance the work. It was noted that Claude Vidal requested to please avoid using the same people on a voluntary basis.

## **Workgroup 2**

Presented by Göran Ståhl. The current status of WG2 is similar to that of WG1. First questionnaire on the use of NFIs for carbon reporting and definitions used in relation to GPG recommendations. The report for the first questionnaire has been compiled, but could be a scientific article. Work has commenced with reference definitions and methods for NFI based reporting to UNFCCC/KP. A revised questionnaire has been submitted and should be due on the 7th of February. A total of 19 responses were evaluated in the first questionnaire. Plans for 2006 were presented.

Erkki noted that if we can establish a reference for LULUCF, it would be good to show the differences in definitions and what they mean in CO2. GPG is not altogether clear. NFI society was to agree in how to report with respect to GPG it could be easier. It was noted by Gerardo Chirici that the information that we collect gets outdated quickly, so compiling an article in the near future would be optimal. If funding becomes an obstacle, WG2 will merge its work with WG1 to be as efficient as possible.

### **Workgroup 3**

Annemarie presented the results of the first questionnaire from Freiburg. The final selection of core variables for the second questionnaire (comparison of definitions and methodology) is complete. The templates for the following selected variables have been compiled: forest type, species, regeneration, forest management system, stand structure and veteran trees, deadwood, naturalness, lichen species, disturbances/damages (last 2 missing templates). Lichen and disturbance damages were originally in plan but were never sent in the questionnaire.

Considering time and financial constraints, harmonisation work will be the main focus for WG3. In 2006, the work plan included to finalize, send and evaluate the second questionnaire. The expected output will be defining references and nomenclature. Then start working with the analysis of differences and building bridges, joint meeting preparation on the work with bridge functions. Two possible publications for 2006 are 1) Report based on the first questionnaire (possibly by June06) and 2) Report based on the second questionnaire around the end of the year.

WG3's presentation concluded with a presentation of the online questionnaire on forest biodiversity assessment.

### **Questionnaires**

Gerardo recommended that we need to implement a strategy to make sure that people are followed up for the questionnaire so that everyone fills in questionnaire. Erkki proposed the motion for a country correspondent available on the COST web page, motion was second by Adrian. Claude proposes that the chairman and vice chair can inspect each questionnaire. It is agreed.

Erkki motions that Majella collect variables and definitions and make a list and synthesis of variables for each WG, Nicolas perhaps may assist.

### **Publication Strategy**

A draft of the publication strategy was introduced and the group looked at the options available. The discussion was adjourned and the meeting was closed at 17:55.

*Day 2*

### **Publication Strategy Continued**

The meeting resumed at 8:40. A brief discussion on the role of COST, JRC and ENFIN within the publication strategy. Adrian recommended that we keep COST and the call for tenders through JRC separate and that we fulfil the requirements of COST and includes reports for the 27 signatories under the Action. An outline of what is possible to publish under each WG was given by each WG leader. It may be possible to have a report from each WG in time for the mid-term evaluation if one can consider WG3 questionnaire as an article.

A country report showing the status of NFIs in the participating countries was proposed for 2006. A report by COST E27 is a good model. However it was noted that the resources, staff and funding required for such a task could be too ambitious. It was suggested and agreed that towards the end of the action it should be produce a status report possibly with harmonised results. The idea will be further elaborated.

It was agreed that a scientific report of the methods and results from the action should be submitted to the COST office. After which, scientific articles could be submitted to scientific journals.

Adrian noted that the STSM reports are only on private access web-pages. There is an obligation to publish these sorts of reports for the STSMs. Erkki will confirm what is expected from the COST office in this respect for publishing STSM reports.

#### Updating the COST E43 Brochure

Klemens presented the motion that the middle-inside pages of the brochure that details the plans of the WGs could be updated to the first results of the WGs. The text should be short (10 sentences per WG) as well as non-scientific and designed for decision/policy makers. All agreed. Erkki/Majella and Klemens will be responsible.

#### Selection of Variables, nomenclature

A discussion around defining what is a variable, concept and parameter within COST E43. A short list of the most commonly used terms will be produced. Erkki will lead the motion for which terms need to be defined to aid everyone within the action, with assistance from Nicolas. This list could include also the list of the references to be created. The possibility of a publication on references and nomenclature is open. Claude recommends a presentation in Bordeaux.

It is agreed that this is good to create and the WG leaders will be responsible to present in the Bordeaux meeting.

It is agreed that the Action needs more references. Annemarie proposes that if references are common for the whole action, they can be taken by WG1. Second: Claude.

Returning to the issue of whether it is necessary to go into detail on a few references, or present many references at a basic level, Claude explains that it is necessary to work step by step. The decision was that Erkki and Majella will collect concepts for which references will be defined and also for which bridges will be constructed. WG leaders will inform Erkki on which bridges will be built, as this takes some reflection. Göran noted that bridges are needed on a country to country basis, as each country is different. Additional measurements might be necessary in some cases. The first bridges need to be simple.

#### STSMs, Workshops and Training Courses

Because of limited funding, the committee allocated preferences should any additional funds for the following activities become available.

- 1) STSMs
- 2) Workshops
- 3) Training courses - if we have huge amounts of money.

Per default we are all interested in these activities but the budget is too constrained. It was noted that Task forces were the easiest to arrange.

WG1 will try to organise a STSM in Vienna if BFW, and can offer accommodation for free, and we share travel costs. It is up to Klemens to announce when accommodation is available, but it needs to be held before the Bordeaux meeting.

It was agreed that after the election of a new WG3 leader training courses and STSMs for WG3 will be announced.

### **WG3 Arrangements**

Annemarie resigns as WG3 leader due to general work load and conflicting activities. Marco Marchetti will act as WG3 leader supported by Gerardo Chirichi until the Bordeaux meeting. The Steering Committee accepts Annemarie's resignation and thanks her for her contribution to the Action.

### **Bordeaux Arrangements**

Claude will try and organise a meeting with the help of the regional authority, so they can offer official rooms and coffee breaks. Ask municipality to provide a cocktail. INRA will also participate if possible. Field trip on Saturday - agreed. Claude proposes an open meeting in Bordeaux to local people: offered to approx 10 foresters/researchers.

It is agreed that WGs will provide material for the non-COST participants. Non-COST participants (USA, NZ, JP) are invited. To ensure reimbursements are secured, it was agreed that a preliminary list will be sent to the COST office. Nicolas will be a contact person, with assistance from Majella.

Deadline for pre-registration must be early so that we can announce those who will be reimbursed. First information to be sent at the end of February. Protocol for registration for the Bordeaux meeting:

- 1) Pre-register
- 2) Send list to Brussels to announce quota
- 3) Selected those that must be reimbursed
- 4) Inform participants

Deadline for pre-registration: **THE END OF MARCH**

Erkki will ask Gunter for a large quota (50) reimburses for the Bordeaux meeting, and the second meeting could be made up of STSMs and task groups.

A technical committee that is responsible for arranging the details in Bordeaux, can make enquires into what can be worked with flights, times and the start of the meeting. Taking into consideration the forest BIOTA meeting and hotel prices.

### **Miscellaneous**

European forest monitoring issues: need to nominate a representative for the drafting team in Geneva. Klemens will chair this part of the meeting. Klemens is nominated by Erkki, the steering committee agrees. Klemens accepts.

### **Place and date for next Steering Committee Meeting**

Sweden was identified as the next potential place. The time is yet to be defined.

The meeting was closed by Erkki and Klemens at 15:10. Recognition and thanks to IFER and Emil Cienciala for hosting the 6th Steering Committee meeting of COST E43.