

COST ACTION E43
Harmonisation of National Inventories in Europe:
Techniques for Common Reporting

Draft Minutes of the 10th Management Committee Meeting

Thursday, 5 June 2008, 17:30-18:30 hrs

Hotel Praia Mar
Rua do Gurué, Lisbon, Portugal

1. Welcome to participants

The members of the Management Committee as well as in particular the members of the Final Evaluation Panel were welcomed by the Chair of COST Action E43 Prof. Erkki Tomppo.

Representatives from the following 26 countries are participating in this meeting:

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

2. Adoption of agenda

The draft agenda was adopted without any amendment.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the 9th meeting of the Management Committee held on 25 October 2007 in Bucharest were approved.

4. General Information from the COST Secretariat

The Science Officer of COST Action E44 Mr. Siegel informed the Management Committee about the most recent developments concerning the COST Programme, addressing in particular the following issues (see 'News from COST': <http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=265>):

21/04/2008 About COST 2008 now available



- 08/04/2008 COST Considerations on the Results of the Consultation on the European Commission ERA Green Paper
- 21/03/2008 ESF launches its first Call for Candidates for the enhancement of the ESF/COST Information System
- 15/03/2008 Assessment, Monitoring, Final Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions
- 14/03/2008 Broaden the Scope of your Research
- 08/03/2008 COST Day in Skopje
- 31/01/2008 COST CSO President meets ESF CEO
- 10/01/2008 COST and INDIA
- 04/12/2007 COST Strategic Workshop - European Roadmap towards the Needs of Gifted Children and Adolescents
- 01/12/2007 COST-ESF Synergy
- 23/11/2007 COST in Tunisia
- 26/11/2007 COST approves 25 new COST Actions
- 21/11/2007 COST Statement on the Monfret Report
- 20/11/2007 COST appoints Professor Kneucker as Rapporteur
- 19/11/2007 COST gets rid of the “red ribbons”
- 02/11/2007 COST participates in the Australian-European ICT Days in Piemonte
- 26/10/2007 Bulgarian COST National Conference 2007
- 22/10/2007 COST participates in the Conference on “Cultural Diversity and Religious Pluralism”
- 11/10/2007 COST is present in the Debate on the Future of Science and Technology in Europe

COST Website

The official COST Web-site is accessible under the following address:
<http://www.cost.esf.org>

Status of the COST Action E43

So far, according to the files 27 countries have joined COST Action E43:

Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

CSO approval date: 16/02/2004
 Entry into force: 10/06/2004
 First MC Meeting: 28/06/2004
 End of Action: 27/12/2008 (incl. 6 months prolongation without financial means)

Chair: Prof. Erkki Tomppo
 Vice-Chair: Dr. Klemens Schadauer
 Rapporteur: Dr. David Hladnik (SI)

Working Groups:

Working Groups	WG leaders	Email address
Working Group 1: Harmonised definitions and measuring practices	Claude Vidal	cvidal@ifn.fr
Working Group 2: Harmonised estimation procedures for carbon pools and carbon pool changes	Göran Stahl	goran.stahl@resgeom.slu.se
Working Group 3: Harmonised indicators and estimation procedures for assessing components of biodiversity with NFI data	Gherardo Chirici	gherardo.chirici@unimol.it

Budget Status

After having contacted all Management Committees of the COST Domain on Forests, their Products and Services the budget plan for the budget year 2008 (2 June 2007 – 31 May 2008) was drafted. In the light of its activities 174.000 Euro have been allocated to COST Action E43.

Training Schools

In the course of the year 2004 the COST Programme has introduced the new tool of ‘COST Training Schools’ aiming to provide within the frame of the Action topic for a group of scientists over a period of normally 5 days intensive training in a new emerging subject in one of the laboratories of the Action with unique equipment or know how. The participants are basically but not exclusively young researchers from across Europe but should also cover appropriate-training as a part of ‘life-long learning’.

5. Year budget planning

All MC members were asked to assure that in the light of the limited financial means all future participants of activities organised by COST Action E43 will dedicate adequate attention to the *principle of the most economical overall expenditure* when asking for reimbursement.

BUDGET 2008

The budget for the budget year 2008 will amount to approx. 174.000 Euro. So far 9 meetings and 3 STSMs have been financed.

BUDGET 2009

The budget for the budget year 2009 will amount to approx. 10.000 Euro.

As the Action will expire on 27 December 2008 the Science Officer underlined that all budget relevant activities have to be carried out before the expiration date. In this context the Science Officer reminded that the CSOI only granted the prolongation under the condition that no additional financial means will be provided.

However, the financing of publications will also be possible after the Action has ended formally.

6. STSM status, applications

STSMs have to be financed out of the Action budget. In this context it has to be underlined that applicants should only make binding bookings after having received the official letter of approval.

Researchers applying for STSMs have to use the relevant on-line registration tool (<http://www.cost.esf.org/stsm>, details see http://www.cost.esf.org/fileadmin/cost_documents/guidelines/2-financial_instruments/2.3-STSM.pdf).

To facilitate the task of the COST Office, researchers are invited to submit their applications as soon as possible.

The Management Committee should be informed that the guidelines offer also the possibility of Group STSMs (two – three experts (each from a different signatory country) visiting one host institute at the same time).

STSMs 2008

In the frame of the running budget, so far financial means for 3 STSMs have been committed.

As the Action is expiring by the end of the running year, the Science Officer stressed that all STSM have to be finalised before the expiring date.

7. Publication, annual report

The Science Officer outlined that according to the existing guidelines each Action has to submit a Progress Monitoring Report before the end of a calendar year. In this context the Action Chair informed briefly about the Progress Monitoring Report 2007 which has been submitted at the end of last year.

The latest version of the Monitoring Progress Report will become a substantial part of the Final Report (a template can be found in the annex of COST Document 205/08 downloadable from the following sector of the COST Web-site: www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=guidelines (Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions)) which has to be submitted within six months after the Action has expired. (30 June 2009).

To be able to finalize the report the Action Chair asked the Management Committee members to send him a list of all publications relevant for COST Actions E43 as such a list containing those publications has to be added to the Final Report. 30 November 2008 has been determined as deadline for this task.

The Action Chair has been asked to submit not later than by 15 June 2008 a Quarterly Report, a brief report highlighting the outcomes of the Milan Workshop.

Furthermore, the Action Chair indicated to provide the COST Office in time with

contribution for the COST Newsletter as well as the Annual Report 2008 using the relevant templates.

In discussing the publication strategy (see annex) the MC expressed its gratitude to the Action Chair as well as all other officeholders for having ensured that the all planned publications have been published within the envisaged time table.

The Management Committee agreed that in addition to the final scientific report, a scientific brochure (popularized language) as well as a final folder should be published. The final meeting should offer a platform for communication with a broader audience and might be covered by sectoral as well as local or even regional media.

The Management Committee members have been encouraged to publish in national newsletters about the outcome of the Action. In this context MC member have been asked to provide the COST Office a copy of the relevant article. If the article is not written in one of the three official languages of COST (English, French or German) it would be helpful if a short summary in English language could be added.

The Action Chair invited all MC members to contribute to the efforts of the COST Office to raise the awareness for the programme by informing the interested audience by publishing also articles in sectoral or even regional newspapers/newsletters using scientifically popularized language.

8. Evaluation

The COST Document titled Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions (COST doc. 205/08, see www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=guidelines) contains information on the evaluation process implemented by Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), subsequently adapted by the Domain Committee on Forests, their Products and Services.

It is the main objective of the final evaluation to demonstrate the effectiveness of the completed COST Action in terms of:

- achievement of the objectives stated in the MoU
- value added by the Action
- management of the Action
- dissemination of information by the Action
- level of participation in the Action
- economic impact of the Action.

The evaluation report of the Action is aimed at the:

- users of the Action resources and results
- Management Committee of the Action
- Domain Committee of COST FPS
- the COST Administration

and may also be used to evaluate proposals to initiate follow-up Actions by the MC.

At its last session the Domain Committee on Forests, their Products and Services (DC FPS) has nominated the Final Evaluation Panel. The Evaluation Panel is chaired by the Rapporteur of the Action Dr. David Hladnik (SI). In this activity he has been supported by Mr. Jean-Michel Carnus and Prof. Romualdas Deltuvas.

The mid-term evaluation of COST Action E43 has been carried out by Dr. Janos Gal and Dr. Kalliopi Radoglou.

The MC should ensure that all issues raised in the report of the mid-term evaluation panel will have been addressed adequately.

The Management Committee and the Working Groups are invited to support the final evaluation panel by making available copies of all documents necessary for the final evaluation (incl. related individual or joint publications elaborated by the MC and WG members).

9. Request for new members

The period within which COST member states can join this Action without any conditions being imposed, has run for twelve months from the date of approval of the Committee of COST Senior Officials and expired on 16 February 2005. Any future request of a COST member state for accession to COST Action E43 will have to be approved by its MC.

Since the last meeting the COST Office has not received any request from a member country for accession to the Action.

10. Non COST participation

Since the last MC meeting the COST Office has not received any request from a Non COST institution.

11. Web news

The Web-site of Action E43 is accessible under the following address: www.metla.fi/eu/cost/e43.

The readiness of the institute of Prof. Tomppo to continue to host the Action Web-site has been welcomed by the Management Committee. In this context the Management Committee thanked Prof. Tomppo for his efforts regarding the management of the Action Web-site.

MC member were asked to establish on the Web-site of their institutions a link to the Action Web-site if such a step has not yet already been taken.

The Science Officer asked the Prof. Tomppo to notify a shutting down of the Action Web-site to the COST office.

12. Progress Report of Working Groups

Informing about the most recent activities of their Working Groups the three WG Coordinators informed that

13. Long term planning

In the light of the fact the Action will expire by the end of December 2008, it has been agreed that highest attention has to be paid to the finalisation of the envisaged publication.

The most important products and outcomes of the action were discussed. These are

1. **The technical reports** with the agreed definitions to be published in series of the some participating institutes or COST series or both.
2. **E43 book** with national inventory descriptions by countries and supporting articles, “National Forest Inventories in Europe, USA and New Zealand”. Springer has accepted to published the book in the series Managing Forest Ecosystems, see Appendix 1.
3. **WG3 book** “Contribution of National Forest Inventories for forest biodiversity assessment”, see Appendix 2.
4. **A list of scientific articles**, in addition to those already published, to be published in a Special Issue of **Forest Science**, see Appendices 3 and 4. Appendix 4 has been agreed after the Lisbon meeting. The articles describe the tools creating definitions and obtaining harmonised definitions.
5. MC decided to support **publications** describing the outcomes of the Action and intended **for public in large**.

14. Time and place of next meetings

The Management Committee revised and updated the meeting plan elaborated in the course of previous MC meetings as follows:

1. **Editorial Board meeting, Edinburgh, UK**, 8-10 or 6-8 October, 12 + 1 participants (max. 12 reimbursements). The date has been shifted to **27-29 October**.
2. **WG1 Task Force**, 17-19 September, or 17-18 August, **Trento, Italy**, 7 + 3 participants (max. 7 reimbursements). The date has been shifted to **27-29 August**.
3. **WG2 Task Force**, 7-9 October, **Edinburgh, UK**, in the connection of the meeting 1, partly same participants, max. 10 additional reimbursements. The date has been shifted to **27-29 October**.

4. **WG3, Editorial board meeting, Edinburgh, UK**, 7 or 5 October. This meeting has been **cancelled**.
5. **WG3, Copenhagen, Denmark, 17-19 of September** alternatively in Trento, if WG1 TF will be in Trento on 17-19 September, max 5 participants.

(the organisation of the meetings is depending on the availability of financial means)

The Management Committee approved the following requests

- Grant 2008 for the Chair (2000 Euro)
- Publications: all publications listed in the annex

15. Any other business

The MC Members has been informed informed about the possibilities of the instruments provided by COST Strategic Workshops (*), ESF (Research Conferences); INTAS; EUREKA as well as NATO Research programme.

(*) Strategic Workshops are an important new element in the positioning of COST. The aim is to bring researchers and decision makers together to discuss forefront topics, principally of an inter-disciplinary nature, which can be used in the future development of the topic and which may form the basis of future proposals, not only to COST, but also to the framework programme and to other European organisations responsible for research networking.

On 19 – 21 April 2007 a Strategic Workshop on ‘Health and the Natural Outdoors’ has been held in Larnaca, Cyprus. Its purpose was to identify the extent of knowledge in this field and the implications for policy and for future research. The Workshop found that nature-based approaches can contribute significantly to health objectives in Europe by ensuring that people have contact with nature in their everyday lives and that nature would be an integral feature of health care environments and approaches, an aspect of growing importance in steadily ageing and urbanising society. More effective coordination and communication of existing knowledge and understanding, combined with increased investment in new research, is necessary to capitalise on the benefits of nature-based approaches.

Soon the proceedings of the following strategic workshop

**Forest ecosystems in a changing environment:
identifying future monitoring and research needs**
(Istanbul, 11 – 13 March 2008)

Global change and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions
(Innsbruck, 7 – 9 April 2008)

will be published.

Currently the following Strategic Workshops served by the FPS Team is under preparation:

Improving Energy Efficiency in Papermaking
Improving energy utilisation - reducing carbon emissions
Finding energy solutions
(Hoofddorp (NL), 9 – 11 June 2008)

Continuously Open Call

28 March 2008 has been the latest collection date for the continuous COST Open Call for Proposals to support Scientific and Technical Collaboration in Europe. Approx. 400 teams have submitted preliminary proposals for a new COST Action.

Friday, 26 September 2008 has been determined as the next collection date for continuous COST Open Call (further details will be soon available at www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=721).

Future Collection Dates:

- 27 March 2009
- 25 September 2009
- 26 March 2010

COST Near Neighbour Policy

At its 167th meeting (March 2007), the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) approved extended support from the involvement of researchers from institutions in the Balkans and Europe's "Near Neighbours" not already members of COST.

Countries qualifying for support:

Balkans

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina

"Eastern Neighbours"

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Georgia
- Moldova
- Russian Federation
- Ukraine

COST Strategy towards increased support of early stage researchers

Introduction

A widely accepted deficiency in European research is the lack of opportunity for early stage researchers to develop independent careers and to establish their first research group under their own responsibility. This is a structural problem that leads to a dramatic waste of research talent in Europe. It limits or delays the emergence of the next generation of researchers, who bring new ideas to the European Research Area (ERA).

The definition of the term “early stage researchers” used in this document is based on the time that elapses between the date of the PhD/doctorate (or similar experience) and the date of involvement in the COST Action. If this time span is less than 10 years, a person fits the definition; of course, periods of careers’ leave have to be added to the time span mentioned. A similar definition will be used, e.g. in the European Research Council (ERC) and other support schemes.

Suggestions of support measures

There are a large number of possibilities for COST to give early stage researchers better support through the existing instruments. The list of support measures is not conclusive; proposals are not given in priority order. The Action-related support measures can be strongly recommended to all COST Actions and either be implemented by the COST Office or by the Actions, according to their needs. More general support measures shall be given as recommendations to the Actions or to the COST National Coordinators.

Support measure 1: Short Term Scientific Mission

- Set a target figure, from which a percentage of the Action budget shall be used for STSMs (Domain Committee together with the COST Office).
- STSMs of early stage researchers can be expanded in duration beyond 3 months in welljustified cases. Financial support shall be increased accordingly.

Support measure 2: Training Schools

- Training Schools shall already be planned at the proposal stage of a new COST Action. This shall be reflected in the criteria for the open call at the full proposal stage.
- The current level of this activity shall be raised.

Support measure 3: Action Think Tank

- An early stage researchers' network may be created within the Action as a “think tank”.
- Each year one of the workshops of the Action would involve early stage researchers to strengthen links with each other and with experienced scientists involved in the management
- of the Action.

Support measure 4: Conference Grant

- A Conference Grant shall be established: Each Domain offers 3 supporting grants (max. 3000 euro each) per year for early stage researchers to participate in an international conference outside of the COST Action activities.
- In order to be eligible for this grant, an accepted oral contribution is required.
- The grant can be used to cover travel and subsistence costs, conference fees, and the costs of conference workshops.
- Selection Process by written procedure: written application through the COST Office/grant holder to the Executive group of the Domain Committee through the Action’s Management Committee, selection based on a list of criteria (to be defined by the Domain Committee), preparation of a short list of max 3 applications by DC. Final decision shall be taken by written procedure by DC Chair and 2 members of the Executive Group of the Domain (Vice Chair Professor Giuseppe Scarascia-Mugnozza (email: giuseppe.scarascia@ibaf.cnr.it), Ms. Piroska Károlyiné-Szabó) three times per year for one grant each.

Support measure 5: Selection of Chairs

- Recommendation to the Actions to nominate early stage researchers as Chairs of Working Groups.

Support measure 6: Open Call

- The text as well as the criteria of the Open Call shall encourage early stage researchers to submit proposals to the Open Call.

Support measure 7: Early stage researchers as national MC delegates

- Recommendation to the COST National Coordinators to nominate early stage researchers as national delegates whenever feasible.

Final statement

COST follows an overall policy of increasing its support to early stage researchers. The preferred strategic initiative is to use the existing instruments and to apply them in favour of early stage researchers and as a means of capacity building. Based on the availability of funds, the support measures described in this paper shall be implemented by the COST Office or recommended to the Domain Committees, the Actions or the National Coordinators.

The strategy is described in detail in COST Document 212/07 titled COST Strategy for Early Stage researchers.

Pilot Scheme to foster non-COST institution participations in COST Actions

COST has a long standing tradition of non-COST country institutions participating in Actions. Applications for such participations are assessed by the respective Management Committee of the Action, endorsed by the respective Domain Committee and by JAF and approved by the CSO taking into account the mutual benefit expected from this interaction.

The COST strategy for cooperation with non-COST countries defines the scope of these activities. It pays special attention to the EU “Near Neighbours” policy. The COST Office implemented a special scheme to support participants from the respective countries setting aside € 100.000 p.a. for this specific purpose.

The following pilot scheme for Australia and New Zealand is approved:

Only COST Actions for which participation of institutions from Australia and New Zealand has been approved by the CSO are eligible for this reciprocal additional STSM support. According to the normal COST procedures these approvals require the positive response of the MC of an Action to the request of the institution from Australia and New Zealand. If the MC considers this participation in the interest of the Action the MC requests this particular participation to be endorsed by the DC and eventually approved by the CSO.

The extended STSM support is available to institutions in Australia and New Zealand based on a reciprocal agreement between the COST Office and a dedicated partner organisation. The dedicated partner organisation will receive a specific budget from the authorities of the respective country to ensure the reciprocity.

At present Australia and New Zealand are prepared to support such a reciprocal scheme. For New Zealand the dedicated partner institution will be the “Royal Society of New Zealand” (RSNZ) – and for Australia it is expected to be the “Forum for EU-Australia Science and Technology cooperation” (FEAST).

The COST Office will provide up to € 25.000 p.a. respectively for travel of European scientists in the respective COST Actions to the Australian and New Zealand institutions. An adequate amount will be provided by each dedicated partner

organisation as additional support for the participation of researchers from respectively Australia and New Zealand in COST Actions.

The strategy is described in detail in COST Document 211/07 titled Pilot Scheme with Australia and New Zealand.

COST Strategy for Cooperation with institutions from non-COST countries

The CSO takes note of the report by the rapporteur (doc. COST 220/07). CSO recalls its previous orientations regarding the cooperation with non-COST countries and confirms, in particular, that COST is open to participation of institutions from non-COST countries in COST Actions following the bottom-up principle and for mutual benefit, to be approved by the CSO on a case by case basis. In this context, the CSO agrees furthermore that:

- The arrangements previously agreed by the CSO for the Balkan Countries and the Near Neighbours (doc. COST 329/05) are extended as follows:
 - up to two researchers from each of these countries may be reimbursed for attendance at the meetings of COST Actions,
 - researchers from these countries are eligible to participate in other activities decided at the level of individual Actions (such as meetings, short-term scientific missions, training schools and conferences),
 - the Management Committees of the respective Actions report on the success of these extended Near Neighbour activities,
 - the COST Office provides appropriate budget allocations within the COST Grant System. The present level of funding of these Near Neighbour activities remains unchanged until the demand exceed the available budgets based on an indicative annual report by the COST Office on this matter.

The strategy regarding the cooperation with institutions from non-COST countries is described in detailed in COST Document 229/07 titled COST Strategy for Cooperation with institutions from non-COST countries.

COST Office Newsletter

The eighth issue of the COST Office Newsletter has been released recently and can be found on the COST Website.

([www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=18&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=336&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=441&cHash=3963d2863a](http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=18&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=336&tx_ttnews[backPid]=441&cHash=3963d2863a))

16. Closing

Annex: Planned Publications

E43

1) Action Number: E43

Working Title of planned publication:

National Forest Inventories in Europe, USA and New Zealand

Editor/Publishing House: Springer

Format: Book

Number of Pages (estimate): 400

Number of Copies to be financed by COST (estimate): 1000

Date of finalisation of the manuscript (realistic estimate): 30 October 2008

Date of printing (realistic estimate): 30 December 2008

Presumably to be financed out of the budget 2009

2) Action Number: E43

Working Title of planned publication:

The role of National Forest Inventories in biodiversity monitoring in Europe

Editor/Publishing House: Springer

Format: Book

Number of Pages (estimate): 200

Number of Copies to be financed by COST (estimate): 1000

Date of finalisation of the manuscript (realistic estimate): 30 October 2008

Date of printing (realistic estimate): 30 January 2009

Presumably to be financed out of the budget: 2009

3) Action Number: E43

Working Title of planned publication: **Scientific report in popularized language, name to be determined**

Editor/Publishing House: Editor: to be determined

Format: Leaflet (folded A4)

Number of Pages (estimate): 10

Number of Copies to be financed by COST (estimate): 200

Date of finalisation of the manuscript (realistic estimate): April 2008

Date of printing (realistic estimate): May 2008

Presumably to be financed out of the budget 2008