

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

Draft Minutes of the 4th Management Committee Meeting

14 April 2005, 17:00-18:00 hrs
15 April 2005, 16:10-17:00 hrs

Federal Research and Training Centre for Forest, natural Hazards and Landscape
Hauptstrasse 7, Mariabrunn, Vienna

1. Welcome to participants

In opening the meeting Action Chairman Prof. Erkki Tomppo welcomed all participants.

Representatives from the following 21 countries have participated in the meeting:

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

2. Adoption of agenda

The draft agenda has been adopted with the amendment that under agenda item 12 bis the issue of data collection should be discussed.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Management Committee held on 2 December 2004 at the Accademia Italiana di Scienze Forestali in Florence, Italy have been approved without any amendment.

4. General Information from the COST Office

Referring to numerous press releases as well as documents accessible at the Web-site of the COST Office (What's new, <http://cost.cordis.lu/src/home.cfm>) the Science Officer Günter Siegel informed the Management Committee about the following issues:

COST Day (held on 30 November 2005 in Brussels)
Council of the European Union as well as European Parliament supporting COST
Strengthening the cooperation with Eureka



Reform of the COST Programme

Initiating cooperation with neighbouring countries (in particular Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ukraine)

Preparation of the devolution of decision making

External assessment of COST Domains

Introduction of a Continuous Open Call for Proposals in COST based on a two stage process

Initiating cooperation with the Joint Research Centres.

COST Website

Although a transfer of the official COST Web-site to the ESF server is planned, during the next few months the Web-site still can be reached under the following address: <http://cost.cordis.lu/src/home.cfm>. All MC members will be informed in time about the intended transfer.

Status of the COST Action E43

So far, according to the files 26 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, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Expiring date: 27 June 2008

Budget Status

After having contacted all Management Committees the budget plan for the year 2005 has been drafted. In the light of its activities 85.000 Euro have been allocated to COST Action E43.

In the run of the year 2004/2005 STSMs and publications will be financed out of a central budget line.

5. Year budget planning

According to the files 167.217 Euro have been spent for the seven below listed meetings carried out by COST Action E43 in the run of the year 2004 (details see below listed table).

BUDGET 2004

E43	28/06/2004	Brussels (B)	16593	
	15/07/2004	Helsinki (FIN)	6808	
	09/09/2004	Horsholm (DK)	50994	
	30/09/2004	Nogent-sur-Vernisson (Paris) (F)	7463	
	21/10/2004	Gembloux (B)	24605	
	05/11/2004	Brussels (B)	1202	
	02/12/2004	Florence (I)	59552	
				167217

The budget for the year 2005 amounts to approximately 80.000 Euro corresponding to approx. 90 reimbursements (further, more precise information will be soon available).

BUDGET 2005

E43	17/03/2005	Birmensdorf (CH)	6400	
	14/04/2005	Vienna (AT)	38400	
	02/05/2005	Graz (AT)	3840	
	18/09/2005	Freiburg (D)	25600	
	9/10/2005	Prague (CZ)	3000	
				77240

Information on the budget 2006 will be available in the course of the second half of the year 2005.

The officeholders as well as all delegations have been 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.

6. STSM status, applications

A special central budget line has been established for a centrally financing of STSMs. As the CSO attaches great attention to the promotion of young scientists the above mentioned budget line will also be available during the year 2005.

The Management Committee has been invited to continue to encourage young researcher to take advantage from this specific COST tool. In this context the Management Committee has been informed that an on-line registration tool has been introduced. Its Web-address can be found in the new '*Guide for Short-Term Scientific Missions online request*' (http://cost.cordis.lu/src/cost_office_documents.cfm#COST-ESF_Reimbursement).

The Science Officer informed the Management Committee that the revised 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).

7. Publication, annual report

Action Chair Prof. Tomppo informed the MC about the submission of the Progress Report 2004.

With reference to the decisions taken at the third MC meeting the Action Chair presented a detailed Draft Publication Strategy which envisages the publication of the following documents:

- 2005 publication containing country-related State-of-the-Art reports
- 2006 publication of the first outcomes concerning the harmonisation of the national forest inventories in Europe, compilation of national field manuals
- 2007 publication of the further outcomes concerning the harmonisation of the national forest inventories in Europe
- 2008 publication describing the achievements of the Action

Appreciating the efforts of the officeholders regarding the development of a publication strategy, the Management Committee invited the Working Group members to provide the support necessary for its successful implementation.

With reference to the role models presented by the Science Officer the Management Committee has been invited to prepare an Action folder as well as an Action poster.

8. Evaluation

The Science Officer informed the Management Committee that the main objective of the mid-term evaluation is to assist the Management Committee to achieve the goals outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding, as well as to allow the relevant parent bodies and the COST Administration to assess the effectiveness of the Action since its beginning. The outcome of the mid-term evaluation will also be used to evaluate a prolongation of the Action or proposals to initiate follow-up Actions by the MC.

The evaluation team will particularly focus on

- 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 Technical Committee on Forests and Forestry Products (TC FFP) will be asked to carry out the mid-term evaluation of COST Action E43 in the year 2006. As besides the self-evaluation the documents produced by the Action are the main sources of information for the Evaluation Panel, the Management Committee is invited to prepare an adequate set of documents. In the course of its next meeting the TC FFP will nominate the members of the evaluation panel.

The Management Committee has been invited to initiate the preparation of the Mid-Term Evaluation by beginning to compile all relevant information.

9. Request for new members

The period within which COST member states can join a COST Action without any conditions being imposed, runs for twelve months from the date of approval of the Committee of COST Senior Officials. Therefore any request of a COST member state for accession to COST Action E43 received after 16 February 2005 has to be approved by its MC.

The Management Committee has been informed that since 16 February 2005 the COST Office has not received any requests for accession to COST Action E43.

10. Non COST participation

The Management Committee has been informed that in the course of its 161st meeting the CSO has approved the request of the Institute for the Environment and Sustainability of DG Joint Research Centre (JRC) for becoming a non-COST Institute of COST Action E43.

The representative of the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA) of the USDA Forest Service Dr. Ronald McRoberts participating as invited expert in the Management Committee of COST Action E43 expressed his gratitude to the MC for accepting in principle the request of his programme for becoming a non-COST Institute. He has been invited to clarify the administrative requirements concerning an accession to a COST Action with the Science Officer.

11. Web news

The Action Chair Prof. Tomppo presented briefly the most recent developments regarding the Web-site of COST Action E43 which can be reached under the following address: www.metla.fi/eu/cost/e43

To assure that the Action Web-site will soon become a rich source of information, all experts participating in the Action have been invited to provide input.

Furthermore, the Action members have been invited to check the listed names and addresses.

12. Progress Report of Working Groups

Informing the MC about the activities of his Working Group the Co-ordinator of Working Group 1 on '*Harmonised definitions and measuring practices*' Dr. Claude Vidal highlighted that the Working Group has undertaken a first analysis of the received questionnaires. In this context he underlined that the report provided by the relevant STSM Group has been an important contribution.

Furthermore, the Working Group 1 addressed the following issues:

- Report on FAO/national bridges
- FRA 2005
- Identification of core variables
- Elaboration of a detailed work programme
- Preparation of a seminar on quality assessment and error budget

The Co-ordinator of WG2 on '*Harmonised estimation procedures for carbon pools and carbon pool changes*' Dr. Goran Stahl reported that the Working Group discussed the following issues:

- Revision of the work programme
- Analysis of the questionnaire
- Establishment of a Task Group on Identification of Options for Harmonisation
- Establishment of a Task Group on Analysis of nationally provided data (questionnaires)
- Analysis of the 6 presented Country Reports allowing the following observations
 - Increasing precision for above ground biomass assessment
 - New biomass expansion factors
 - Increasing use of sensitivity analysis for stock change estimates
 - Improvements of the estimates of uncertainty.

Dr. Annemarie Bastrup-Birk, Coordinator of Working Group 3 on ‘*Harmonised indicators and estimation procedures for assessing components of biodiversity with NFI data*’ reported that in the frame of the Vienna meeting the Working Group focused on the following issues:

- Analysis of the questionnaire
- Continuation of the discussion on Forest Type Classification including provision of information on relevant projects
- Liaison with COST Action E27
- Evaluation of Indicators
- Outcomes of the assessment of forest biodiversity based on the data provide the members states by completing the questionnaire
- Further elaboration of the Working Group work plan.

12 bis Policy concerning the accessibility of inventory data

Several MC members expressed the need to develop a policy concerning the accessibility of inventory data.

13. Long term planning

The current work programme has been reviewed by the MC which has not identified any need for a revision.

14. Time and place of next meetings

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

Graz	2 – 4 May 2005	TF WG2
Prague	29 – 30 August 2005	Steering Committee
Freiburg	19 - 20 September 2005	MC5 & Joint WGs
Prague	8 – 11 October 2005	Trainings School (subject to confirmation)
Denmark (?)	23 – 24 March 2006	MC6 & Joint WGs
Trento (IT)	5 – 7 June 2006	Trainings School

15. Any other business

Vice-Chair Dr. Schadauer informed about the recent activities of ENFIN as well as its new modalities for membership.

16. Closing

In closing the Joint Management and Working Groups meeting, Action Chair Prof. Tomppo expressed his gratitude to the Working Group co-ordinators, the authors of the presentations as well as all other officeholders for their active role in preparing and conducting the ending workshop. In particular, he whole-heartily thanked Dr. Klemens Schadauer and his team for the excellent organisation of the Vienna meeting. Furthermore he expressed his appreciation to all delegates for their active participation.

Günter Siegel
May 2004