

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

Draft Minutes for the 9th Management Committee Meeting

Thursday, 25 October 2007, 17:10 - 18:05 hrs

**Conference Hall Minerva Hotel
Bucharest, Romania**

Erkki Tomppo opened the meeting by introducing Dr David Hladnik, Rapporteur and Miss Layela Idir of the COST Office, then gave the apologies of Günter Siegel who was unable to attend this meeting.

1. Welcome to participants

Representatives from the following **22** countries participated in the meeting:

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

There were five countries absent Croatia, Cyprus, Netherlands, Slovakia and Spain from the meeting.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted after after the correcting of some typos.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the 8th meeting of the Management Committee held on Thursday, 7 June 2007 at the Haikko Manor Hotel in Porvoo, Finland were approved.

4. General Information from the COST Secretariat

Erkki Tomppo requested that delegates should have read Günter's document and will pick up specific items within the Agenda discussions, e.g. Budget proposals. It was pointed out within the Working Groups table, Working Group 3 - reference to Marco Marchetti should be deleted and insert details for Gherardo Chirici, see revised table below.

Numerous press releases as well as documents accessible at the Web-site of the COST Office ('News from COST': <http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=265>) inform about the recent developments:

- 11/10/2007 COST is present in the Debate on the Future of Science and Technology in Europe
- 02/10/2007. A new success for COST: the overwhelming response of the European scientific community
- 01/10/2007 The COST President attends the ESF Governing Council in Helsinki
- 21/09/2007 COST participates in the EC Workshop "Strengthening the coordination of Community and Member States policies and programmes for international S&T cooperation: impediments and opportunities"
- 06/09/2007 Another COST Success Story: Phenological Responses to Climate Change in Europe
- 05/09/2007 Conference on Computational Physics (CCP2007) – COST/ESF involvement
- 03/09/2007 A new COST success story: Green Chemistry and cooperation with African countries
- 01/08/2007 The European Science Foundation and the European Commission sign contract for COST in FP7
- 06/07/2007 Joint preliminary statement of COST and ESF on the Panel Report on the Final Review of the EC-ESF Contract for COST in FP6
- 03/07/2007 COST contributes to the consultation on the EC Green Paper on "The Era: New Perspectives": The role of COST in the European Research Area
- 15/06/2007 COST in Italy
- 04/06/2007 COST in Croatia
- 28/05/2007 COST in Russia

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: 27/06/2008 (an extension for 6 months has been requested, the CSO will decide about this request in the frame of its next meeting scheduled to be held on 14 – 15 November 2007)

Chair: Prof. Erkki Tomppo
Vice-Chair: Dr. Klemens Schadauer
Rapporteur: Prof. 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 124.000 Euro have been allocated to COST Action E43.

As the Action will expire at the end of June 2008 the budget 2009 (starting on 1 June 2008) will provide further financial means. However, the dimension is not yet known.

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’.

Erkki Tomppo introduced the 2007 - 08 Budget Documents, and stressed that there is very limited spare funds for remainder of the year, still dependant on the final expenditure for this Bucharest meeting.

Mark Lawrence (GB) raised the question, If the E43 Action is extended by six months into late 2008, but with the COST Office stating that funds are unlikely to be available for a full MC / WG meeting after Portugal, then the Portugal event should be organised as the last full meeting?

Erkki Tomppo responded to say that the COST Office are considering that approximately 40.000 Euros may be made available, but this would not cover another full MC/WG size meeting, perhaps a smaller group event after the June 2008 Portugal meeting. It will be mid to late November 2007 before a decision will be known from COST Office if extra funds are available for additional

smaller meeting(s) after Portugal. Apparently E43 is already making use of the 2008 budget ?

5. Year budget planning

All MC members are to be 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 2007

In the frame of the budget year 2007 (1 January – 1 June 2007) COST Action E43 spent 31.200 Euro

Vienna Meeting (22 February 2007, 8 reimbursements)
Florence Meeting (20 March 2007, 7 reimbursements)
Vienna Meeting (11 April 2007, 10 reimbursements)
Eberswalde Meeting (16 April 2007, 5 reimbursements)

BUDGET 2008

The budget for the budget year 2008 will amount to approx. 124.000 Euro.
So far one meeting (Porvoo Haikko Manor 7 – 9 June 2007, 62 reimbursements) and 3 STSMs have been financed.

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 2007

In the course of the budget year 2007 3 STSMs have been financed.

STSMs 2008

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

7. Publication, annual report

Erkki Tomppoo reminded WG Leaders to submit a **Progress Monitoring Report** before the end of a calendar year. A template can be found in the annex of the COST Document titled Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions (COST doc. 203/07, see www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=38). The latest version of the Progress Monitoring Report will become a substantial part of the Final Report. From the beginning of the year 2007 those reports will have to be posted at the Action related sector of the official COST Web-site.

Working Groups have been productive on various publications with one nearing completion and others hopefully ready for the end of the E43 Action. Erkki Tomppo reminded the meeting of the proposed ‘E43 Book’, to be similar to the E27 version.

Quarterly Report (before the end of the quarter (15 November 2007) a brief report highlighting the outcomes of the Bucharest meeting has to be submitted).

The publishing of the outcomes of the Bucharest meeting should be considered.

The publication strategy might be revised in the in the light of the most recent developments. All planned/pending publications should be discussed. Highest priority should be attached to the finalisation of the scientific and other reports (final report, folder, policy document).

In addition to the final scientific report, the preparation of a scientific brochure (scientifically popularized language) as well as a final folder should be considered.

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 participants of the envisaged panel discussion planned for the last session of the Final Conference should be determined.

The Management Committee members should be encouraged to publish in national newsletters about the outcome of the Action. The COST Office should be provided with a copy of the article. If the article is not written in one of the three official languages of COST (English, French or German) it would be appreciated if a short summary in English language could be added.

8. Evaluation

The meeting was reminded of the following advice from COST Office and aim to meet the requirements if Portugal is the last full meeting of the E43 Action.

The COST Document titled Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions (COST doc. 203/07, see www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=38) 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 will be 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 next session the Domain Committee on Forests, their Products and Services (DC FPS) will nominate the Final Evaluation Panel. The Rapporteur will chair the Evaluation Panel. In this task he will be supported by two external evaluators (taken from the list of DC experts).

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 Final Evaluation Panel will be chaired the Rapporteur of the Action Dr. David Hladnik (SI).

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.

Erkki Tomppo reported Poland has been showing interest in joining the E43 Action, but no recent contact or approach has been made.

10. Non COST participation

Ron McRoberts representing USA is a regular attendee to E43 meetings, and New Zealand has now been accepted as a new Non COST participant.

11. Web news

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

Dr. David Hladnik raised the long term issue of maintaining the E43 web pages, Erkki Tomppo responded stating that Metla maintain the E43 web pages, but would check to see for how many years these pages could be maintained by Metla and report back.

12. Progress Report of Working Groups

WG1 Harmonised definitions and measuring practices

In the frame of the Bucharest meeting Adrian Lanz reported for WG1 who focused on the following issues since Porvoo:

- **One Task Force meeting**
- **Two STSM meetings**
- **2 submitted scientific papers and 1 still in draft**

Future Activities

In fulfilling the work program WG1 will focus on

- Reference definitions (continue the work to harmonise the different aspects)
- Cases studies for Bucharest meeting from Romania, Germany, Norway and combined France and Austria to be presented
- Cases studies on growing stock volume
- Volume functions for small trees
- Area decision versus point definition

WG2 Harmonised estimation procedures for carbon pools and carbon pool changes

In the frame of the Bucharest meeting Göran Stahl reported for WG2 who focused on the following issues since Porvoo:

- Proceeding with the Reference definitions and bridge building
- Sensitivity analysis and related projects

- Working within the group on e-mail exchange of information

WG3 Harmonised indicators and estimation procedures for assessing components of biodiversity with NFI data

In the frame of the Bucharest meeting Gherardo Chirici reported on WG3 who focused on the following issues since Porvoo:

- Continue the work on analysis of NFI database
- Aim to have final version of references by end of March 2008
- 3 Scientific papers are in production - 2 possibly accepted and 1 to be submitted
- Book to be produced on WG3 activities during the COST Action
- 1 STSM

13. Long term planning

Task Force Groups

A joint TF in January, in Vienna was proposed, changed to Birmensdorf after the meeting with the email approval of MC

WG1 proposing TF and STSM, Norway May 2008

WG2 proposing TF Slovenia, 17-18 April 2008

WG3 proposing TF Switzerland, 28-30 January 2008

Training Schools

The organisation of a Training School might be considered. However the financial aspects have to be discussed. Contrary to previous communications no additional financial means can be expected. Although the financing is not yet ensured, it would facilitate the planning if agreement on the topic and the date of the envisaged Training School could be achieved.

14. Time and place of next meetings

The Management Committee might revise and update the meeting plan elaborated in the course of previous MC meetings, **the meetings planned for the years 2007 /2008 should be fixed** (under the assumption that one reimbursement amounts to 800 Euro and a participation rate of 80%):

The following SC, MC, JWG, TF, STSM and other meetings were proposed

COST Action E43 events on 2007

| Meeting | 28/11/2007 | Date and place | Reimbursements |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Joint TF | 28-30 January, 2008, Birmensdorf,CH | 12 |
| WG3 TF | 28-30 January, 2008, CH | 8 |
| Editorial board meeting | 17-19, March, 2008 TF, Country report, Helsinki | 10 |
| Steering committee | 10-11, April, 2008, Trento | 10 |
| WG2 TF | 17-18 April, Slovenia | 12 |
| WG1 STSM TF | May 2008 Norway | STSM (2 weeks) ³ , TF |
| MC / JWG | 5-7 June, 2008, Portugal | 6-8 |
| Total | | 80 |
| | | 132 |
| COST DC | 10-12 March, 2008, Bordeaux | |
| COST DC | 10-11, September, 2008, TBC | |

Paolo Godinho-Ferreira invited the next full Joint Management Committee and Working Groups to visit Portugal from 5 – 7 June 2008, and has provisionally reserved 80 rooms in a hotel near Lisbon for the meeting.

The Management Committee might approve the following requests

- Grant 2007 and 2008 for the Chair (2000 Euro) - **Accepted**
- Publications: list publications
- Subvention: Final Conference

15. Any other business

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

Claude Vidal (Fr) asked to postpone Strategic Workshops through Günter, but waiting on the discussions within the COST Office.

(*) 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.

Continuously Open Call

At the beginning of the running year the second COST Open Call for Proposals to support Scientific and Technical Collaboration in Europe has been launched. Approx. 400 teams have submitted preliminary proposals for a new COST Action.

31 March 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).

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

The MC meeting thought, with the late stages of the E43 Action and no additional funding to be allocated to the above countries, then it is too late to invite other countries to join the Action.

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 career’s 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 well justified 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 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.

The MC reported that COST Action E43 has supported Young Scientists / Researchers through Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) within the three Working Groups of this Action.

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 sixth 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. Before Erkki Tomppo Closed the meeting, Miss Layela Idir of the COST Office reminded delegates of completing reimbursement forms, and to sign the official attendance register.**

Meeting Closed at 18.05

Graham Bull (GB)

Acting Minutes Secretary in Günter's absence