

COST ACTION E43

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

Draft Minutes of the 8th Management Committee Meeting

Thursday, 7 June 2007, 17:00 - 18:30 hrs

**Haikko Manor Hotel
Porvoo, Finland**

1. Welcome to participants

The members of the Management Committee were welcomed by the Chair of COST Action E43 Prof. Tomppo.

Representatives from the following 19 countries have participated in the meeting:

Austria, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, 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 7th meeting of the Management Committee held on Thursday, 16 November 2006 at the Royal Hotel in Thessaloniki, Greece were approved.

4. General Information from the COST Secretariat

A note prepared by the Science Officer of COST Action E43, Mr. Siegel informed about the most recent developments concerning the COST Programme. The note referred to press releases and documents (News from the COST Office: <http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=441>) addressing in particular the following issues:

04/06/2007 COST in Croatia
28/05/2007 COST in Russia

08/05/2007 COST Information Day in Armenia
 04/05/2007 CERN hosts Cost- Enlight Strategic Workshop on Hadron Therapy
 16/04/2007 Report of the President of the COST Committee of Senior Officials on the Triennium 2004 -2006
 12/04/2007 Response to the first Open Call 2007
 21/03/2007 Francesco Fedi confirmed President of COST for the next triennium
 16/03/2007 COST participates in the farewell symposium to Professor Andersson
 14/03/2007 COST information day in Serbia
 27/02/2007 The EC-COST High Level Strategic Group meets for the second time
 17/02/2007 COST in Sevilla
 16/02/2007 Strengthening the COST and ESF synergy: “COST-ESF Frontiers of Science” and “COST-ESF Science Days”

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

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@unifi.it

Budget Status

After all Management Committees of the COST Domain on Forests, their Products and Services have been contacted, the budget plan for the budget years 2007 (1 January – 30 June 2007) and 2008 (1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008) were drafted, and in the light of its activities 69.800 Euro and 128.000 Euro respectively were allocated to COST Action E43. Due to the transition to a new contract, no activities can be financed in the time period starting on 8 June 2007 until 15 September 2007.

In the budget years 2007 as well as 2008 all items (STSMs, Trainings Schools, Publications ect.) have to be financed out the Action Budget. The budget 2008 might be increased in the run of its life span.

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 five 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

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 organized by COST Action E43 will dedicate adequate attention to the *principle of the most economical overall expenditure* when asking for reimbursement.

BUDGET 2006

In the run of the year 2006 COST Action E43 has spent 162.849 Euro.

BUDGET 2007

For the budget year 2007 69.800 Euro have been allocated to COST Action E43.

BUDGET 2008

The budget for the budget year 2008 will amount to approx. 128.000 Euro.

The Management Committee has been asked to observe strictly the limitations emerging from the transfer from FP6 to FP7 (no activities from 8 June until 15 September 2007) when planning its next meetings

6. STSM status, applications

It has been outlined by the Science Officer that 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 has been reassured 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 2006

In the course of the year 2006 8 STSMs have been undertaken:

STSMs 2007

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

7. Publication, annual report

The Science Officer reminded that each Action has 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.

The Monitoring Progress Report 2006 has been brought to the attention of the Management Committee. As the revised guidelines are requiring a listing of all relevant publications published by the network established under a COST Action, Action Chair Prof. Tomppo asked all MC members to provide him with the requested information relevant for the Action.

The Action Chair has been asked to submit not later than by 30 June 2007 the Quarterly Report, a brief report highlighting the outcomes of the Porvoo Workshop.

All MC members have been encouraged to continue to inform at the national level about the most important outcomes of COST Action E43. At least one copy of all relevant articles should be sent for documentation to the Action Chair as well as the COST Office regardless in which language they are written. However a small summary in English language would be helpful.

The members of the Management Committee have agreed to revise the publication strategy (see previous minutes) in the in the light of the most recent developments. In this context the Action Chair has been asked to distribute in preparation of the next MC meeting a document informing about all planned publications as well as those under progress. In the light of the rapidly approaching end of the Action, it has been

underlined that 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 (popularized language) as well as a final folder has been considered.

In the light of the efforts made by the COST Programme to raise its visibility of the Management Committee agreed to discuss in the frame of the next meeting the measures necessary to ensure that the final meeting will offer a platform for communication with a broader audience which might be covered by sectoral as well as local or even regional media.

8. Evaluation

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
- Technical 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 Dr. David Hladnik (SI) 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 in the frame of the Bordeaux meeting.

The MC has been asked to 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 have 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 a COST Action without any conditions being imposed, runs for twelve months from the date of approval of the COST Committee of 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.

Since the last MC meeting the COST Office has not received a request from any COST member state.

10. Non COST participation

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

11. Web news

The Web-site of Action E43 (www.metla.fi/eu/cost/e43) is hosted by Metla.

Informing about the most recent updates the Action Chair invited all MC as well as WG members, in particular all officeholders to continue to provide him with information relevant for the Action Web-site.

12. Progress Report of Working Groups

In the first half of year 2007, the action organised a Management committee meeting and Joint working group meeting, on 7-9 June in Haikko. Reference definitions under elaboration were finalised and possibilities to create bridging functions identified, in addition to, normal meeting topics like status of countries in making forest resource estimates comparable. Reference definitions were further prepared and methods to convert forest resource estimates from non-reference to reference (bridge building) were prepared in the Joint WG Task Force meeting in Vienna, Austria, on 22-23 February.

Further, Workgroup 1 organised an extended Task Force meetings in Vienna, Austria, on 11-12 April. Delegates from several member countries attended the meeting. The purpose was to have a wide representation from member countries and to figure out the difficulties in obtaining comparable forest resource estimates, as well as to find solutions. Work group 1 organised a Short Term Scientific Mission in Roslin, Scotland from 14-24 May. The objective of the STSM was to work on a questionnaire formulated during the Task force meeting in Vienna (11-12, April 2007), on quantitative methods for bridging functions, and the publications.

Workgroup 2 organised two Task Force meetings, the first was in the Joint WG in Vienna, Austria, 22-23 February and the second, organized by WG2, in Eberswalde, Germany 16-19 April. Results from a small questionnaire were compiled, addressing to what extent European countries can report according to selected reference definitions. Further, country-specific bridges for selected case study countries were prepared in order to be able to report according to selected reference definitions. The case study countries are Finland, Germany, Italy, and Sweden. Also, possibilities to perform initial sensitivity analyses for the selected case study countries were identified and the potential for a scientific article based on the results of the work conducted during the Task Force meeting were discussed.

Workgroup 3 also had also two Task Force meetings, the first in Vienna, Austria, 22-23 February and the second one in Florence, Italy 20-24 March. Principles in creating reference definitions were discussed on the basis of the conclusions in Vienna in February. The principles were applied to concepts and variables of WG3. Main rules for the operative test on using existing NFI data were discussed and set-up, as well as, the structure of the data-based agreed. Co-operation with ICP forests was one of the meeting items.

The status of the entire action, as well as, each working group was discussed and future work planned in the Plenary Sessions in Haikko. Further, meeting arrangements for the 9th and 10th Joint Working Group and Management Committee Meetings in Bucharest, Romania 25-27.10.2007 and Portugal 5-7.6.2008 were discussed.

13. Long term planning (Distribution of Tasks)

WG1 Harmonised definitions and measuring practices

In the frame of the Porvoo meeting WG1 focused on the following issues:

- Reference definitions (in the meanwhile definitions for 31 different aspects have been elaborated)
- Cases studies on growing stock volume
- DBH classes
- Forest border line (cases studies from Austria, Germany, Italy and Switzerland have been presented)

Future Activities

In fulfilling the work program WG1 will focus on

- Growing Stock Models
- Forest Area

Member countries have been invited to present case studies in the frame of the forthcoming Joint MC/WG meetings.

Furthermore, it has been agreed to revise the reference definitions in the light of the recent discussions. Delegations and officeholders have been asked to respect the following time schedule:

21 June 2007	Distribution of the document containing a revised version of the reference definitions
31 July 2007	Submission of comments
31 August 2007	Finalization of the revision of the reference definitions
September 2007	Task Group Meeting

WG2 Harmonised estimation procedures for carbon pools and carbon pool changes

In the frame of the Porvoo meeting WG2 focused on the following issues:

- Report on references (nearly finalised)
- Sensitivity analysis (the outcome of analyses of the questionnaire as well as some case studies (Germany, Sweden) have been presented; specific attention has been attached to the preparation of the envisaged country reports)

Furthermore, the debate has revealed the need to analyse in depth the existing uncertainties. In the context a Task Group has been charged with the preparation of a document.

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

In the frame of the Porvoo meeting WG3 focused on the following issues:

- Database related aspects

- Revision of the report (general revision of used terms; definition of the references on ground vegetation, deadwood, naturalness as well as stand structure; drafting of a chapter on variables that so far can not be harmonised)

Work plan

15 September 2007	deadline for the delivery of the requested data
25 – 27 October	presentation of the outcome of the data test
	Final decision on the elaborated references
January 2008	Task Group Meeting (Spain)

In the light of the delay in implementing the work program emerging from the fact the solution of various issues has been considerable more time consuming than expected, the Management Committee decided to ask for a x-month prolongation of the life-span of the Action. The Action Chair has been asked to take the necessary steps.

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:

Norway	24-25 September 2007	WG1 Task Group, SC, STSM
Bucharest	25 – 27 October 2007	Joint MC/WGs Meeting
Florance	22-23 November 2007	SC
Vienna	15-18 January 2008	Joint Task Force
Italy	Feb-Mar 2008	STSM and TF
Helsinki	15-18 March 2008	TF Country Report
Tbd	12-13 April 2008	SC
Portugal	5 – 7 June 2008	Joint MC/WGs Meeting
(Tbd ... to be decided)		

Furthermore, the Management Committee has approved the following requests:

- Grant 2007/2008 for the Chair (2.000 Euro)
- Publications (titles to be decided)

15. Any other business

The MC members have been 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. The first Strategic Workshop has been held on

“Environment and Health” In the year 2006, Strategic Workshops on “Food and Health”, Bioenergy as well as “Nanosciences and Technologies” have been organised. Furthermore, a number of new workshops, including partnership with ESF its forward looks, are in an advanced planning stage.

On 13 and 14 September a Strategic Workshop “Bioenergy in a Cross-Europe perspective” was held in Norway. Energy is one of the main elements needed for Europe to achieve growth, develop jobs and create sustainability. The European strategy for renewable energy defines bioenergy as the most important renewable resource for the future regarding power, heating and transportation fuels. The main aim of the workshop was to identify gaps in knowledge and to produce conclusions in the form of an agenda that will trigger novel research activities. In this context leading international experts were invited and presented keynote addresses, that were followed by discussions.

The event was financed by cost, the research council of Norway and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (further details see [Http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=147&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=214&tx_ttnews\[backpid\]=112&chash=c7558e48b3](http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=147&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=214&tx_ttnews[backpid]=112&chash=c7558e48b3)).

COST Near Neighbour Policy

At its 160th meeting (1/2 December 2004), the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) approved 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**

Up to 100.000 € per annum has been set aside for the reimbursement of researchers from CSO approved participating institutions in COST Actions to attend Management Committee (MC) and Working Groups meetings /Workshops of such Actions. This support is available on a “first come, first served basis”. Action budgets will be “credited” by the appropriate amounts from central funds held by the COST Office.

The relevant official invitation has to be issued by the COST Office (currently preference will be given to the country in bold letters).

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.

Sunday, 30 September 2007 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).

16. Closing

In closing the 8th MC meeting the Action Vice-Chair Dr. Schadauer expressed the gratitude of all MC members to Prof. Tomppo and his team for the excellent preparation of the workshop. Furthermore, he thanked also all MC members for their active participation.

Günter Siegel
July 2007