

COST E43
Between WG Task Force meeting - Minutes
22-23 February 2007
BFW, Vienna, Austria

PARTICIPANTS

Gherardo Chirici (IT)

Emil Cienciala (CZ)

Alexandra Freudenschuss (AT)

Thomas Gschwantner (AT)

NamPhuong Hoang (FI)

Adrian Lanz (CH)

Nicolas Robert (FR)

Klemens Schadauer (AT)

Göran Ståhl (SE)

Erkki Tomppo (FI)

Claude Vidal (FR)

1 Opening and Welcome

Klemens Schadauer welcomed participants and explained the programme for the meeting. On the second working day, Harald Mauser director of BFW came and greeted the group. He informed the group that Austria had made a new initiative to promote a European FMS in the form of a side meeting during the Forest Director's meeting in March, and that the time during the postponement of LIFE+ should be used to promote a scientific concise and comprehensive monitoring system.

2 Setting up the agenda

Due to the late coming of some participants, the European issue was postponed until the afternoon session. The agenda for 2 working days was decided as follows (the order of the issues was changed during the meeting):

Strategic aspects:

- Biodiversity workshop with ICP (Gherardo Chirici's initiative)
- Collaboration with JRC's harmonisation project
- LIFE + under the German presidency
- Data request EFICP
- Strategic workshop MCPFE-Montreal (Liaison Unit Letter)
- JRC carbon tender
- ENFIN/ E43 approach to EFM
- Continuation of E43 work (new COST action, LIFE +)

E43 progress

Erkki Tomppo proposed the list of E43 items to be discussed during the Extended Steering Committee meeting (the proposal list has been sent to all participants in advance).

- Missing minutes
- Reference Definitions

- Scientific Papers
- Building Bridges
- Country Report
- Helsinki Meeting
- Within WG work

E43 PROGRESS

3 Minutes from the previous meeting

The Birmendorf Steering Committee meeting needed some adjustments. WG1 and WG2 would provide all the missing minutes during the following week.

4 Reference Definition

The first proposal was to divide the definitions into 4 categories which were presented as on the table below:

	Variable Core	Non-Core
Agreed		
Under Processing		

The action will concentrate on the completion of the definition for the Core Variable; the Non-Core Variable can be continued by the nation or other later Action. The Core Variable was agreed to be the variable that will not change during a short period of time and each NFI should try to reach the same definition at the national level. Emil Cienciala, Gherardo Chirici, Adrian Lanz and Göran Ståhl formed a subgroup to discuss this matter (*The discussion detail from the subgroup can be found in the Annex 1*). In general, the reference definition will be hierarchically built, one upon another, and each Work Group (WG) will give quality markers for reference definitions. Smiles will be used for each of the four categories:

- Long-term agreed
- Temporary references that may be used for couple of years to harmonise reporting
- References that have been discussed, but not yet agreed upon
- References discussed, but not likely to reach a reference definition soon.

In a few cases, there will be a note made for the ideal long run reference, which might be considered as the wish list of references for NFIs. These may be used in future methodological changes. The list of core variables will be established by individual WGs before the Helsinki meeting and the primary core variable list would be decided during the Helsinki meeting.

The internal report for reference definitions was needed and it will also be needed for the final E43 report.

5 Scientific papers

The reference definition (RD) will be shown in a paper (in report form or in scientific papers (SP)). In addition, all agreed RD will be published. The country report will be separate from the final report of the Action.

The article has been discussed during the subgroup discussion of WG1 and WG3 SPs are planned: Methodological aspects (Claude Vidal); Tree definition (Thomas Gschwantner); Forest definition (Adrian Lanz).

For WG2, Erkki Tomppo and Alexandra Freudenschuss have been working on interpolation and extrapolation of increments and they will introduce their findings into the technical reports of WG2.

6 Building bridges

E43 will have to show some possible tools on how to convert one definition to another in Europe (after several years). The bridge building will be based on the core variable list which will be produced during the Helsinki meeting. Each country could make a proposal for building bridge and the country which starts the new inventory could implement the RD in some part of the plot. There was a suggestion on asking countries to indicate how far they are from the RD (this can also be shown in the country report).

There will be some countries from WG1 which will presentation at the Helsinki meeting on how they can do bridge building. WG1 had some further discussion within WG about the bridge building issue.

7 Country reports

Erkki Tomppo presented a draft template of the report and asked for the comments. During the discussion, there was an idea about create a semi-accomplish country report template which means putting all the ready made material about the country available on COST E43 webpage into the template of each country and the country would only have to finalise the missing part. After the discussion, it was decided that Erkki Tomppo and Klemens Schadauer will provide a template (shortly after the Vienna meeting) to WG leaders for further discussion and enhancement within WGs. It's also important to provide a well designed summary report. The country reports can be considered more like appendices containing the basic information in raw form. Erkki Tomppo and Klemens Schadauer have worked intensively with the content of the templates and already have some results for the country report template.

EUROPEAN AND STRATEGIC ASPECTS

8 ICP-E43 collaboration on biodiversity monitoring

Gherardo Chirici explained the initiation of the proposal for cooperation between ICP and COST E43. The initial idea of collaboration between ICP and NFI, E43 on biodiversity aspects started through Pat Neville, Richard Fischer, Bruno Petricone (responsible for Italian ICP and NFI) and Gherardo Chirici. They planned to have a meeting in Florence during the WG3 task force meeting on March 2007. There seemed to be a big budget available within LIFE+ for field work on ICP plots and for the countries willing to collect data on NFI plots. Thus, the idea of the current project

(document was distributed without the notice of Steering Committee (SC)) was to stimulate the EU to fund biodiversity studies within LIFE+. Gherardo Chirici explained that the document was distributed without his agreement and that there was a more recent ICP document, but it was not available for the SC.

Claude Vidal told that it was not fair to mention E43 and ENFIN in the draft document without consulting ENFIN and E43. The document had been distributed within countries as a joint ICP/ENFIN/E43 proposal; however, it was only an ICP paper without the notice of the SC, so a reaction from ENFIN/E43 is needed. Göran Ståhl suggested that the whole aspect of MCPFE indicators should be considered for the collaboration and not just a few biodiversity indicators. In addition, Klemens Schadauer raised the question of whom should ENFIN/E43 react to? After that, Gherardo Chirici explained again about the common workshop with ICP (organised by ICP) in Florence during March. He stated that this could be a chance to evaluate further collaboration on biodiversity monitoring and also to present the ENFIN position. Several options were raised during the discussion:

- E43 would participate in the common workshop
- E43 will neglect the workshop
- E43 officially stated that will not participate in the workshop
- E43 would write an official letter to DG ENV and/or EC explaining the position of ENFIN/E43

The final decision for the collaboration was that E43 was positive for scientific exchange and flow of information on the issue between ICP and E43. Hence the biodiversity meeting in Florence would be organised. Moreover, Gherardo Chirici should inform the workshop participants of the E43 SC position. Gherardo Chirici should also clarify and solve the situation about the project paper on biodiversity (E43 was not officially contacted and involved in this project proposal) with Richard Fischer and other ICP people.

9 LIFE +

Klemens Schadauer informed that the German presidency, Prof. Michael Koehl from University of Hamburg, asked ENFIN for the projects within LIFE +. It seemed that forest monitoring would remain under a centralised regime; consequently, funding will have to be found through projects evaluated by the commission. Therefore, a short ENFIN/E43 concept paper with concrete projects and overall concepts for a future European forest monitoring system was written by Göran Ståhl during the Vienna meeting. The document would be commented on by SC and would be finalised by the end of the week following the meeting.

10 Harmonisation project (JRC)

Michael Koehl requested COST E43 to take part in the test sites for the harmonisation between JRC and COST E43. Nevertheless, it could be difficult for COST E43 to participate without any funding source. Thus, the group agreed to invite Michael Koehl to the Helsinki meeting to present his detailed plan, to explain what he is expecting from E43, and to ask him where the funding will come from. It seemed that no field work has been planned but Michael Koehl might ask for additional field plots. E43 also asked for the technical specification from Michael Koehl before the Helsinki meeting, since the presentation he sent to E43 didn't provide enough information.

11 Forest data provision for EFICP

The EFICP (through DG AGRI and DG JRC) asked for aggregated forest information. The discussion was about how NFI should provide requested information, should NFI charge for information, and how detailed should the information provided by NFI be. Finally, the decision was that NFIs should be positive in providing the information at the proposed levels (NUTS3 or NUTS2) since delivering data is the main meaning of ENFIN's existence. The group agreed that it is in ENFIN's interest to provide this information and to help demonstrating usability of NFI data.

12 JRC carbon tender

Emil Cienciala informed shortly about the current situation of the JRC carbon tender. It seemed to be on a good way and the result would be distributed one week after the meeting in Vienna. However, other consortia still have the possibility to interfere.

13 E43 strategic workshop

The second draft of the proposal, which was more technically oriented (after the comment from Alexander Korotkov), was positively recognised by COST office and Ronald McRoberts, and it has been sent to MCPFE (Warsaw liaison) and the Montreal Process (MP). The MP (Canada and Japan) were positive towards the proposal. Nevertheless, MCPFE's (Piotr) reaction was less positive according to the mail message he had sent in mid February. The mail message indicated that the workshop outline was political and the target group was broad. Claude Vidal, the leader of this process, told about the history of the process and explained the aim and the progress. After that the group discussed how to establish and exchange data with the MP: should we extend the work of COST E43 to global level, should the higher mandate level be harmonised or not, and should E43 react or only Claude Vidal react to the progress. In the end, the group decided that COST E43 would technically support the initiative and since the strategic workshop was out of the budget line of E43, Management Committee would support them for the process. In addition, Claude Vidal will change the objectives into a less political direction and inform and convince Piotr to the aim of the process.

14 Future of ENFIN

Klemens Schadauer said that a new COST action seemed to be needed to continue the work covering virtually all countries in Europe, thus the possibility to apply for a new COST action would be discussed more detail in Helsinki meeting. Meanwhile, Erkki Tomppo (during the Bruxelles COST meeting in March) and Klemens Schadauer (through Gunter Siegel) would also explore the possibilities and requirements to launch a new COST action.

15 7th framework program

Gherardo Chirici discussed the upcoming calls which would cover the forest carbon and biodiversity aspects. The general calls may arrive 2008 so we have time to consider the proposal. Additionally, Klemens Schadauer suggested the energy call may be of interest for E43 and could be one of the content for the next action.

16 Other business

Claude Vidal requested to enlarge the task force meeting for WG1 in March (intended in Trento) from 4 people to 7 or 8 people. The aim of this enlargement was to have more representatives from different countries providing data on bridge building. The SC had positive attitude to this request, the decision would be made after consulting COST office. The STSM of WG1 would be moved by 1 week, starting 26 March and ending 13 April.

The meeting ended at 14.30 on Friday, 23 February 2007

Labelling reference definitions

Background

During the COST E43 Steering Committee meeting in Vienna, 22-23 February 2007, the need for attaching quality labels on reference definitions was discussed. Further, it was proposed that a hierarchical system of reference definitions should be developed, where concepts/ variables higher up in the hierarchy should build logically on basic concepts/variables.

Quality labels

It was proposed that a COST E43 system with four categories of quality labels be developed and used. The “top category” should be represented by a square “green smiley”; the second category by an ordinary green smiley, the third by a yellow, and the last/fourth by a red smiley, indicating:

Square green smiley

Agreement has been reached regarding this reference definition. It is not likely that the definition will change in the near future, since it is broadly conceived that the reference is relevant and sound. Inventory programmes undergoing changes should consider converting to this reference definition since it is believed to be stable.

Circular green smiley

Agreement has been reached regarding this reference definition. However, due to slightly different opinions in different countries and/or limited knowledge the discussions on this definition are likely to continue in a near future and the definition may be changed.

Circular yellow smiley

Discussions regarding this reference definition are ongoing. No agreement has yet been reached, but is likely to be reached in a near future.

Circular red smiley

Discussions regarding this reference definition are ongoing. No agreement has yet been reached. Due to the problems involved (e.g. substantial differences between country level definitions) agreement most likely will not be reached in a near future.

Ideal or pragmatic references

In some cases, a reference definition may be relevant and sound due to the current practices in most national inventories. However, due to the nature of the problem probably a slightly different definition might better describe the conditions. In such a case, no new quality label should be used, but a clear comment be made regarding in what way a definition ideally could be developed, although the agreed-upon reference may belong to any of the “top” categories.

Time schedule for work within COST E43

At the Vienna Steering Committee meeting, it was decided that a preliminary ranking (according to the above system) of the reference definitions addressed by each WG should be made until the end of the Helsinki meeting in June.