

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

Draft Minutes of the Task Force Meeting of WG1
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Federal Research and Training Centre for Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscape (BFW)

30 March 2006, 9:00 – 31 March 2006, 16:30

Participants:

Erkki Tomppo (Chair, FI), Klemens Schadauer (Vice-Chair, AT), Claude Vidal (Leader WG1, FR), Adrian Lanz (Deputy Leader WG1, CH), Nicolas Robert (STSM, FR), Thomas Gschwantner (STSM, AT)

1. Welcome and Opening of the Meeting

The Vice-Chair of the Action, Klemens Schadauer, welcomed the participants at the Federal Research and Training Centre for Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscape (BFW) in Vienna, where in the last years one MC meeting and two ENFIN meetings were held.

2. Agenda

The main topics of the meeting were

- Current status and work plans for the continuation of the work on the database
- Terminology
- Reference definitions of WG1
- Publications and publication policy
- Modalities for the attendance and reimbursement for the Bordeaux meeting

3. Current status and work plans

3.1 Database

3.1.1 Missing responses to questionnaires:

In 2005 a second questionnaire was sent to the countries. 7 countries have not responded to any of the parts (I, II and III) of the second questionnaire until now. Some more countries have provided only parts I and II. These countries shall be encouraged to fill in the missing parts. The country representatives of these countries will be approached by the participants of the task force meeting who have connections with these countries.

3.1.2 Data quality:

Advanced consistency checks on the questionnaires have shown that further clarifications are needed. In this concern two different tasks were considered:

- (1) At the Bordeaux meeting, but this seems to be hardly feasible since the time schedule at meetings is tight. Therefore, ambiguous questions shall be clarified via E-mails or phone calls to the national experts.

Responsibilities: Lucio, Nicolas, Thomas; Deadline: End of April.

- (2) Adrian proposed to write a so-called “technical report” based on the “raw material” of the questionnaires. This “technical report” shall contain the important parts of the questionnaires and shall be the point where national experts can interfere if they find their NFIs wrongly displayed in the report. This “technical report” shall be the basis for a publication later on.

Responsibilities: Adrian, Lucio, Nicolas, Thomas. Raw time schedule: A first version shall be finished till end of summer 2006, the final “technical report” shall be completed by end of 2006.

3.1.3 Extension of the questionnaire with additional questions:

Through the work on the reference definitions done so far, further information needs from the NFIs became apparent. These focus on two points:

- (1) Borderline definition

The work on a common forest definition revealed the necessity of clear rules to define the border of forest. Klemens emphasized, that the borderline has to be defined before crown coverage and minimum width can be assessed. Especially in regions with scattered and patchy tree formations (like for example in alpine regions) a clear definition is needed. But even in clear situations like on the border of forest/arable land the borderline needs to be defined (borderline where crowns end, at the stems, etc.). Another issue is the border between forest and other wooded land that needs to be defined. It was agreed that new questions have to be formulated and sent to the national experts. Mainly closed questions with some open clarifying questions were considered as most appropriate.

Responsibility: Klemens; Deadline: Beginning of May 2006

- (2) Reference definition on “Biomass”

During the STSM in Helsinki the reference definition “Biomass” was established. This reference definition includes all tree parts. Thematically, this is closely related to the work of WG2. Consequently, the question who will take lead on this reference definition arose. It will be clarified with WG2.

3.1.4 Relationship between NFIs and ICP

During the STSM in Helsinki (August 2005) a questionnaire on the relations between ICP Forest and NFIs has been compiled and sent to the countries. 10 countries have not responded to the questionnaire until now. Erkki will send a reminder via E-mail including the questionnaire by 3rd April 2006 to those countries. The expectations from this questionnaire were discussed. It was agreed, that extending the existing questionnaire with additional questions is of minor importance at the moment. More important are the responses from the countries that have not answered until now. The need for checking if NFI- or ICP-persons have received and filled in the questionnaire was discussed. Concluding, the NFIs can be regarded to be responsible that the right persons have filled in the questionnaires.

Responsibilities: E-mail from Erkki by 3rd April; Nicolas does the checking of correctness of the questionnaires until Bordeaux meeting (11th/12th May 2006).

3.1.5 Final structure of the database:

Adrian informed the participants about the structure of the questionnaire database and the management tool he had developed for the questionnaire of WG1. The work on the database management tool is completed and ready to produce outputs from the database in a time-

efficient way. Further up-dates on the database will be done as soon as new answers to the questionnaires come in.

3.2 Glossary

Based on a first draft, the compilation of a glossary for Cost E43 was discussed and the basic structure elaborated. The term “glossary” was considered to be more suitable than “terminology” or “lexicon”. The purpose and the contents of this glossary were outlined. Four distinct categories of definitions shall be included in the glossary:

- (1) Statistical definitions
- (2) Definitions on harmonisation issues
- (3) Definitions used in relevant international processes
- (4) Definitions that are often used in a wrong way

The glossary shall enhance the communication within Cost E43, but also the use of terms in individual NFIs. A first list of words was established in advance to the task force meeting. This list comprises the terms “concept”, “object”, “attribute”, “definition”, “reference”, “harmonisation”, “tree component” resp. “compartment”, “bridge”, “measurement (quantitative)”, “observation (qualitative)”, “threshold”, “indicator”, “data”, “result”, “metadata”, “estimate”, “estimator”, “estimation”, “precision”, “accuracy”, “parameter” and “variable”. The usefulness of these terms was evaluated. It was suggested to focus on terms for which we are experts. Statistical terms were considered as essential for the glossary. They shall be used in strict statistical sense. Decisions on literature sources will be necessary. How much and which “philosophical” terms will be needed must be clarified. Other working groups shall add further terms to the glossary. The review of the glossary by scientists involved in inventory harmonisation issues was suggested.

*Responsibilities: Erkki with assistance from Nicolas and contribution by Claude and Adrian.
Deadline: Some definitions will be used in the paper on reference definitions, see 3.3.2!*

3.3 Reference definitions

3.3.1 Draft paper on references within Cost E43

It was agreed to produce a reviewed version of the existing draft paper. The points of discussion outlined in the following will be considered in the updated version of the draft paper.

The first point “General” was reviewed by the participants of the task force meeting. Some of the previously proposed changes were made.

The reference definitions for “Forest” and “Other wooded land” were discussed in the following points:

- Borderline definition: the current definition does not work for single tree rows
- Priority of land-cover over land-use and vice versa?
- Priorities of the land-cover aspects in LC1: minimum size (ms) has the highest priority, then comes minimum width (mw), and afterwards the others
- Expression “expected in short time” could be better “temporarily”
- Minimum width of 20 m could be applied only to linear tree formations: examples were discussed, in some cases minimum width is applicable in some not; differences between NFIs!
- Additional need of the minimum length in the definition
- Consideration of “linear formations” in the definition
- Examples of forest and non-forest areas that do not fulfil the respective definitions: the existing list in the draft paper shall be extended

Concerning the reference definition for “Growing stock” a short presentation was given by Thomas. The presentation focused on the tree components currently included in the volume

estimates and on the capability of NFIs to provide volume estimates according to the reference definition established during the STSM in Helsinki (stem + tree top + bark) and possible alternatives. A major point is the question whether tree top, large branches and stump above ground shall be included in the reference definition or not. The existing reference definition (stem + tree top + bark) was accepted as practicable solution. Functions will be necessary to calculate volumes that include additional tree components. The need for a stump definition was refused since existing definitions are likely to depend on the harvesting methods employed in the countries. It was agreed that the estimation of volumes according to the reference definition can be left to the NFIs. Since the current reference definition is on the tree level, additional constraints are necessary to define "Growing stock". These focus on the question which objects within the forest shall be included in the volume estimates (which species?, dead trees?, damaged trees?, etc.). The existing FAO-definition for trees can be used. A list will be elaborated and will be the basis to decide which objects will be included and which will not. Furthermore, the concepts of "Standing volume", "Growing Stock" and "Dead wood" were discussed. Currently the priority of our reference should be on "Growing Stock".

Responsibilities:

- *Extension of list on examples of forest and non-forest areas: Lucio;*
- *Part "General" and Forest: Claude, Nicolas (Lucio);*
- *Borderline: Klemens, Adrian;*
- *Tree definition and growing stock and list of objects: Thomas, with contributions by Adrian.*

Deadline: Bordeaux meeting (11th/12th May 2006)

3.3.2 Paper on reference definitions

A publication about reference definitions will be written. Claude will lead the publication project. The reviewed version of the "Draft paper on references within Cost E43" will be used as basis for our article on reference definitions. The article shall be published in a peer-reviewed journal. Since our article will be thematically between science and politics, suitable journals will not be very abundant. Several journals were mentioned, for example "Environmental Monitoring and Assessment", "Journal of Environmental Monitoring", "Forestry", "Canadian Journal of Forestry", "Silva Fennica", "Scandinavian Journal of Forestry". Erkki offered to make inquiries at "Silva Fennica". The article shall be condensed and well written, with 15 pages at maximum. It shall have the capability to serve as reference in future harmonisation issues. The introduction shall be short and convincing and shall deal with the background of the paper and the need for a reference definition. For the part "Materials and methods" people who have worked on definitions shall be contacted in order to be able to give a complete overview on existing definitions. Furthermore, this part shall contain the principle for designing a reference definition, which includes part "General" of the "Draft paper on references within Cost E43". A geographical approach how to divide the surface area into arable land, forest, etc. can be taken into consideration as well as the various principles of volume estimation in European NFIs. The outlined method for designing a reference shall be applied to forest area and volume.

Responsibilities: Claude leads the publication project, Erkki (Introduction), Nicolas, Claude and Lucio (Material and Procedures and forest definition), Adrian, Klemens (Forest borderline), and Thomas (Tree definition and Growing stock) provide the parts they are responsible for. Deadlines: Reviewed version of the "Draft paper on references within Cost E43" – Bordeaux meeting; First coherent and complete draft – End of August 2006; Internal review – September 2006.

3.3.3 List of reference definitions

According to the meeting in Prague it is necessary to have an overview which concepts, reference definitions and variables are used in the WGs. Therefore, a list of reference definitions and concepts shall be established. It will be used to clarify who and which WG will take lead on certain reference definitions.

Responsibilities: Erkki and Claude (volunteers), Majella

3.4 Further publications

Erkki proposed a list of papers that shall be written within WG1:

- Article on reference definitions (peer-reviewed) by Claude, Erkki, Klemens, Adrian, Lucio, Nicolas, Thomas
- Status of the European NFIs:
 - Internal technical report by Adrian and others >>>
 - peer-reviewed article on the basis of the technical report
- Methods to build bridges (peer-reviewed) on
 - Forest area
 - Volume
- Harmonised results for Europe (or selected countries?) (peer-reviewed)

Additionally, general guidelines and rules for the publication of articles were discussed. The necessity of a common publication policy was emphasised. The publication policy was considered as an issue of the SC. Proposals for publication rules prepared by the SC shall be discussed at the plenary session, the final decision will be taken by the MC.

As a first proposal the possibility of a common name for publications was mentioned. A further possibility is to elect a person responsible for the publication within the author's collective. This solution will be used for the paper on reference definitions. The responsible person is also the first author.

3.5 Bordeaux meeting

The reimbursement for the meeting in Bordeaux (11th May 2006 – 12th May 2006) was discussed and decided. Since financial means are restricted, a maximum of three persons per country can be reimbursed. Additional persons are welcome to join the meeting but cannot expect reimbursement by the Cost office.