



COST ACTION FP1301

“Innovative management and multifunctional utilization of traditional coppice forests - an answer to future ecological, economic and social challenges in the European forestry sector (EuroCoppice)”

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the Steering Group

**Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg (ALUFR)
Virtual telephone conference, 14-16 h CET
15 May 2014**

Minutes Summary

Participants

Chair: Gero Becker (DE)

Vice-Chair: Raffaele Spinelli (IT)

WG1: Dagnija Lazdiņa (LV)

WG2: Valeriu-Norocel Nicolescu (RO), excused absence

WG3: Natascia Magagnotti (IT)

WG4: Peter Buckley (UK)

WG5: Debbie Bartlett (UK)

STSM Manager: Pieter D. Kofman (DK)

Training School Manager: Karl Stampfer (AT)

Others: Janine Schweier (MC from DE), Martin Kühmaier (MC from AU)

Topics

1. Welcome

GB welcomed the participants of the meeting.

The agenda was accepted.

Janine volunteered to write the minutes.

After approval of the Steering Group (SG) the minutes will be put on the website

www.eurocoppice.uni-freiburg.de

2. Financial overview of the meeting in Florence (Feb.2014)

All claims of the Florence meeting were reimbursed (except 2 TRRs which were not yet submitted to the grantholder). In total, 86 participants joined the meetings and 140 attended the Conference.

Due to a cost efficient meeting organization it was possible to save ca. 17,500 € (scheduled budget acc.to work- and budget plan: 81,000€; spent budget: ca. 63,500 €).

3. Upcoming training school in Sarajevo (July 2014)

GB informed the SG that the selection of participants was approved by the MC and that the participants received the grant letters.

The selection of proposed trainers was approved by the SG. As a next step, the MC members will be asked by “silent vote” to approve this selection.

It was decided that the daily flatrate for accommodation of the trainers will be fixed to 50 €/ night because the local organizer pre-reserved rooms to this rate.

The question raised up whether an additional person from Latvia could join the TS without reimbursement to collect information about *terms* which are helpful for the progress in one of the WGs. GB asked DL to make this request in written form so that it can be forwarded to the local organizer. The idea was supported from the SG because 1. the result would support the aims of the COST action and 2. it wouldn't touch the budget of the TS. It was decided that the final decision should be taken by the local organizer.¹

When MC members were asked to approve the selection of the TS participants there was one contest from Portugal and the two Portuguese MC members asked to consider the application from the applicant from Portugal. The respective applicant was not selected because he is a MSc student, while 8 of the participants are holding a PhD and all others have MSc degree and are PhD students. During the last meeting in Florence KS has pointed out that the target group of this upcoming TS are PhD and PhD students. However, this was not mentioned explicitly in written form in the call for applicants.

Therefore the majority of the SG decided to make an exception for this applicant from Portugal and to invite him to the TS, too. This exception was done also because there is no participant from Portugal yet and ‘*country balance*’ was one of the selection criteria.

In the upcoming calls the target group (e.g. MSc students, PhD students, ...) will be mentioned explicitly. Also, it is strongly recommended that applicants write and submit the application personally (and not via their supervisor).

4. Status STSMs

PK reported that 8 STSMs were approved until now, 1 withdrawn and 3 under evaluation. In case all pending applications were approved, the remaining budget for Grant Period 1 (GP1) would be 6,315 € (= approx. 3-4 more STSMs in GP 1). GP 1 will end at Nov 30th, 2014.

It was discussed that the average amount of the grants is higher than assumed in the current work- and budget plan and that a higher average should be considered in the upcoming work- and budget plan. This was accepted.

5. Update work- and budget plan

GB presented the current status of the work- and budget plan of 2014 (GP 1). It was decided to shift the left over budget from the meeting in Florence to the benefit of the upcoming meeting in London. This decision leads to a budget of approx. 70.247 € for London, which was presented during the telephone meeting.

¹ DL has informed all SG members after the telephone conference per e-mail about the idea to send 2 persons (at own costs) to the TS. The idea is supported and approved if the local organizer can handle the organization (direct contact DL- local organizer).

GB reported that now, as the billing of the meeting in Florence is (almost) finalized, we'll prepare the official request of the 2nd payment which needs to be send to Brussels soon.

GB reported that we'll ask for a budget amendment because the number of participating countries increased from 26 (average in first year) to 30 COST countries plus 1 NNC (AL).

6. Upcoming meeting in London

Program:

The local organizer DB informed the SG about the preparation of the meeting so far. The event is scheduled with a tentative number of approx.. 80 eligible participants, depending on the exact amount of the 2nd payment (35%) for 2014 (GP1). This could be slightly increased.

GB presented the proposed time schedule which was developed per e-mail and within a telephone meeting with DB:

Monday, Nov 3rd, 2014:

Travelling to London, arrival until 15:30

16:00-18:30 WG meetings

19.00 informal dinner (could be within or between the WG´s)

Tuesday Nov 4th, 2014

7:30-16:00 field trip

16:30-18:30 WG meetings

19:30 official dinner

Wednesday Nov 5th, 2014

8:30-9:30 MC meeting

10:00-15:30 Conference

16:00-18:00 WG meeting & plenary session

Thursday Nov 6th, 2014

Departure

This draft schedule was approved. DB will develop in this time frame a more precise agenda as well as a conference flyer. Both documents will be circulated and approved first within the SG and will then be attached to the official invitations.

DB was asked to book 5 rooms that the WG meetings could be parallel (if wanted). DB explained that it's not possible to make pre-bookings at this moment but it is unlikely that this will present a problem (it is an academic year issue and room booking can be done at the beginning of October).

Mode of invitation:

To support the idea of efficient working group meetings, GB proposed the following mode of invitation:

Only one MC-member will be invited per country.

The five WG-leaders will nominate eligible experts for their WG from our 31 member's countries according to the following selection criteria: expertise and active engagement, country balance, gender balance and ESR.

As the WG have different sizes it was discussed and decided that each WG- leader may nominate the following amount of participants:

WG 1: 6 participants

WG 2: 15 participants

WG 3: 15 participants

WG 4: 6 participants

WG 5: 6 participants

The WG-leaders will check beforehand if their nominees plan to attend the meeting if they get an official invitation via e-cost.

The WG-leaders will send a list with their nominations until June, 3rd, 2014, to the Chair GB who will formally check all proposals according to the selection criteria. Then, participants will receive an official invitation via e-cost which needs to be accepted or declined within 3 weeks.

7. Report from APC

GB reported from the APC (annual progress conference) which was held in March in Belgrade. The overall feedback for FP 1301 was positive:

Dear FPS Action Chair Cc Action Vice Chair and DC Rapporteur	
Please find below the DC Monitoring Statement agreed by DC FPS at the Annual Progress Conference held on 25-26 March 2014 in Belgrade, RS. This statement should be reported to the Management Committee at the next MC meeting of the Action and the MC must implement measures to address any issues raised/ recommendations made by the DC.	
FP1301	The DC commends the Action's positive start, involvement of ESRs and commitment to gender balance. The holding early in the Action's first year of a large scientific conference is commended as are the plans for a Training School in an inclusiveness country. The use of a videoconference for the Steering Group meeting, thereby maximising reimbursement places for other activities is commended as is the early start to STSM activities. The DC encourages the Action to also involve industrial coppice plantations in the Action's activities and planning.

GB reported that the mandate of the COST Domain Committees will end on 30 September 2014. After this date the role of the DC Rapporteur ceases to exist and DC Rapporteurs must not be invited to attend Action activities. Any funds paid to DC Rapporteurs for Action activities taking place after 30 September 2014 will be considered ineligible expenses and will not be accepted by COST.

The suggestion of the DC to include industrial coppice (namely Eucalypt plantations) was shortly discussed.

8. Work- and budget plan GP 2

Approx. in June we'll have to submit a draft work- and budget plan for GP 2. As decided in Florence, there will be a MC meeting and a Conference in July 2015 at the Transilvania University of Brasov in Romania.

GB asked the SG to think about possible topics and volunteers for 2 training schools in 2015.

GB asked the WG leaders to identify needs for individual or combined WG meetings and to forward it to JS until June, 10th, 2014.

STSM: it was decided that the average grant should be adjusted according to the experiences from 2014.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

The meeting was closed at 15.45 h CET.