



## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of WG 5**

**Bucharest 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

### Minutes Summary

#### Participants:

Indrek Jakobson  
Ruben Laina

Miljenko Zupanic  
Alicia Unrau

**WG Leader:** Debbie Bartlett

**Rapporteur:** Debbie Bartlett

**Welcome:** those present introduced themselves and their area of specialisation/interest. The contributions from

#### Agenda

The agenda was circulated prior to the meeting, with papers and the minutes of the previous meeting, and was approved without amendment. The contributions from Italy (Giulio Sperandio, Giuseppe Pignatti, & Stefano Verani) and Serbia (Nenad Petrović & Vladimir Nikolić) were acknowledged and circulated.

#### AGENDA ITEM 1

The modified wording of the outputs for this WG were discussed and adopted; these are given below.

1. Identify governance issues related to CFM, particularly with respect to ownership and access.
2. Analyse barriers to the development of the traditional coppice business sector, particularly with respect to the current legislative context, and explore governance-related solutions to these barriers.
3. Explore lessons to be learnt from traditional community-based/cooperative (or similar) CFM governance models for present-day fragmented, small-scale forest ownership patterns.
4. Organize a conference on coppice forests ownership and governance – what can we learn for current CFM issues and small-scale forestry?



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The significance of the word 'traditional' and its meaning was discussed.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2**

While the summaries produced after the first meeting and the 'green sheets' from last November's conference have provided useful background material these need to be set in the context of European policy and forestry governance. A first draft, intended to provide this context, was attached as Agenda Paper 2.

This paper was welcomed and the relationship between the European and national contexts was discussed. The main discussion was on the research questions.

*8.1 is it appropriate to consider coppice governance at national level? Would it be possible to take a landscape scale approach looking at the occurrence of coppice outwith the national boundaries? Using natural areas patterns of coppice type, ownership and governance might more sense*

*8.2 what impact have changing geo-political boundaries had on forestry/coppice governance? (map of former collectivised countries, for example)*

This issue of country jurisdictions was considered interesting. Croatia was given as a good example as the border defined by the river Mura has changed as the river course has altered. In addition the Estonia/Latvia border is well marked but that between Estonia and Russia is very difficult to identify.

*8.3 what are the most important influences on national forestry policy? (e.g. the 'German school' referred to in the Czech Republic as the rationale for high fores*

In Estonia the German school was a significant influence in the C18th. It was felt that the highest subsidies for fuel wood were found in England (although this needs evidence as DB is surprised by this statement). In both Estonia and Croatia the highest nature conservation value is associated with high forest while in England is it associated with structural diversity and so relatively short coppice rotations.

In Croatia small scale coppicing was allowed in Soviet times to meet fuel and agricultural requirements however many private owners are urban dwellers and long lasting substitutes are used in place of poles so causing woodland to be abandoned. All woodland over 5ha has been nationalized.

In Estonia the situation is more complicated as only small patches can be used for personal use although it was permissible to harvest low value material (e.g. salix and elder) from state forests for home heating. Alternative forms of energy are now available so this unofficial coppicing has declined

## **AGENDA ITEM 3**

AU reported that a student has been searching the European policy documents (listed in Agenda Paper 2) for references to the term coppice and to coppice woodland management. The aim of each document, references to SFM and whether high forest is being promoted (and therefore by implication that coppice is not) are being identified. The student felt there was space for coppice to be included if there was a lobby driving this.

Another student is working on stakeholders.

AU will circulate the two reports by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of November along with key papers

There was a discussion regarding SRC, which is included under agricultural policy rather than forestry (historically in e.g. Croatia as can't plant trees on agricultural land). Agreed SRC should be put to one side.

The difference between HF and coppice was discussed. Costs in Estonia relate to distance to road and soil quality, the more frequent the working the higher the cost. However this was contrasted with small scale subsistence use, for example with horses and axes rather than heavy machinery.

In Spain coppice is productive while HF is merely a dream. The regional administrations favour HF on grounds of stability and supporting more animals, so began conversion about 15 years ago although there are no results yet. RL doesn't think it will yield a high value product as no quality and no industry. So feels coppice will continue with some HF for purely conservation reasons. It is the socio-economic relationships that keep coppice alive, in the centre of Spain, where rural people have moved to cities, coppices are abandoned so managers are considering conversion

Croatia has coppice in the Mediterranean area (chestnut, turkey oak, robinia) but it is not sustainable in the other areas due to difficulties in harvesting and the oak/beech/conifer mix

The relationship between coppice and fire risk was discussed. RL reported a perception that material over 25 years posed a risk but he is not sure. In Croatia 80% of fires are on abandoned agricultural land (but not coppice), In Estonia risk is associated with soil type. In Spain social issues are the main risk factor.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4 the plan for future work**

4.1 It was agreed that the review Agenda Paper 2) will form the basis for a factsheet on the Governance of Coppice for internal dissemination via the EuroCoppice website. DB will do the final draft of the EU policy and AU will summarise the students work. Other members of the group to produce country specific case studies, based on the following points:

- a EU/Pan European policy DB/AU
- b National policy (each country)
  - Where – if at all – is coppice mentioned in national policy?
  - Where – if at all – is coppice mentioned in regional document(s)? (this may be different in different regions)
  - Where – if at all – is coppice mentioned in standard management plan objectives?
- 2a Ownership (public/private; single/group; size)
- 2b Access issues
- 3a Policy drivers (actual and potential)
- 3b Horizon scanning

Examples of policy drivers were discussed and the following considered (but please do include others) CO<sub>2</sub>, Small forest owners and their subsistence needs, local small scale markets (e.g. firewood) and the restitution of collectivised land (e.g. this is ongoing in Croatia, with land being returned to both catholic and orthodox churches

The separating of this into two parts so that the first is a review of the policy context and the second a paper on ownership and access was considered. It is important that the fact sheet is concise and this may be done in the final edit.

The issue of land tax was raised. In Germany owners pay less if woodlands are coppice than if they are HF on the basis that the profit is likely to be lower. In Spain this is less if there is active management (or a management plan?). In the UK this does not apply and farm land attracts a flat rate area based subsidy (although this is not the case for woodland).

Co-operative ownership systems: Spain has two common property systems relating to woodland (do other countries have any examples of this?). He explained the pre Franco policy of addressing the fragmentation of land ownership that has been the result of, for example, marriage agreements, by putting all the farmland together and then parcelling it out in blocks that could be managed more efficiently. There was a recent attempt to do this with woodland but it was concluded that it would be cheaper to buy all the fragments and manage together.

RL presented two papers which he will circulate. In Spain there was a system of conversion based on cutting to leave a single pole so the sprouts would be grazed off. But now there is no grazing and there are large areas with no known owner. Lower demand for firewood and non-economic size of companies also contribute to the issues. If the administration wants to convert but cut and then don't do anything the required result is not achieved (in Estonia there is a penalty if not taken care of for 5 years; Croatia one year). The 2<sup>nd</sup> paper: classified the different ideas of owners (2400 people). The point was made that rural population more powerful in the past (in England the owners of large areas are still politically powerful). In Estonia 60% are private, with a quarter of these being large forestry companies; 7.5 % of population are forest owners. Biggest problem is multiple ownership e.g. IJ is a joint owner, part of a large consortium (he will provide details). In Croatia the average size is very small causing a big problem for mapping. In Estonia land can be split in inheritance but in, Sweden this is not allowed so there is larger and better managed woodland.

After these very interesting discussions it was agreed that to progress the fact sheet a meeting was required and RL agreed to host this in Madrid, 9-11<sup>th</sup> December, and that an application would be made to the Action Steering Group for support. This will enable the fact sheet (Milestone 10) to be completed and submitted to the website by the end of March 2016.