



COST ACTION E50
Cell Wall Macromolecules and Reaction Wood (CEMARE)

Minutes of the Kick-off Meeting

COST Office
Avenue Louise 149, Brussels, Belgium
19 April 2005 at 10:00 – 16:30 hrs

1 Welcome to participants

The participants of the kick-off meeting of COST Action E50 were welcomed by Mr. Günter Siegel, Science Officer for the COST Domain on Forestry and Forestry Products.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Siegel until the election of an Acting Chair for the Action which was carried out under agenda item 6.

2 Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted without any amendment.

3 Presentation of the delegations

A total of 12 participants from the following 8 countries attended the meeting: Finland, France, Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden United Kingdom. The COST Office was represented by the Science Officer of the COST Domain on Forestry and Forestry Products, Mr. Siegel. The list of officially nominated delegates and the participants of the meeting with their contact information is presented in Annex 1.

4 General information on the COST mechanism and on the funding of co-ordination

At the beginning of this item Mr. Siegel gave a briefing on the COST Mechanism presenting the general framework for that programme created to promote the scientific and technical co-operation in Europe. Relevant information can be found on the COST-Website at <http://cost.cordis.lu/src/home.cfm>

Furthermore the participants were informed about the current situation of the COST Actions in the field of Forestry and Forestry Products. Currently there are 26 Actions running in this domain area.

The Science Officer informed the delegates about the principles and procedures relating to the COST Actions and about the possibilities of getting activities funded from the COST budget. The relevant documents were distributed and can be found at the official Web-site of COST:

- Rules and procedures for implementing COST Actions ([Annex 2](#))
- Financing of COST activities ([Annex 3](#))
- The Standard Rules of Procedure for Management Committees for COST ([Annex 4](#))
- Guidelines for the implementation of Short-Term Scientific Missions ([Annex 5](#))
- Guidelines for evaluation and monitoring of COST Actions (DOC. 222/03) ([Annex 6](#))
- Memorandum of Understanding of COST E47 ([Annex 7](#))
- Annual Grant Scheme
- New COST/ESF Reimbursement rules

With reference to the COST guidelines Mr. Siegel reminded the meeting that Signatories are committed to making every effort to ensure that the necessary funds for participating in the Action are made available under their internal financing procedure. The document 'Rules and Procedure for Implementing COST Actions' provides various modes for the participation in a COST Action (see Chapter 4).

After consultations the Management Committee recommended that the Standard Rules of Procedure for Management Committees ([Annex 4](#)) be adopted with the specification that the working language of the MC will be mainly English (Article 13).

Additionally the representative of the COST Secretariat emphasised the text in *Article 12*, which states that: 'Meetings shall be held where the MC considers it advisable to meet at the invitation of an institution in a signatory State. The COST-Office shall, however, only undertake the organization of the meetings held in Brussels. The cost of organisation of meetings elsewhere shall be borne by the host country.'

Furthermore, the MC recommended that Article 8 defining the minimal number of participating Signatories necessary to be present to consider a MC meeting as an official one be amended. In the light of the small number of signatory countries it was agreed to lower the relevant threshold from two-thirds to a half.

5 Status of the Action

COST Action E50 was approved by the Committee of Senior Officials on 16 March 2005. The Action will enter into force after five countries have signed the Memorandum of Understanding. The duration of the Action will be four years.

At the time of the Kick-off Committee meeting, no country had yet signed the MoU

6 Election of Acting Chair and Acting Vice Chair

The Management Committee elected Prof. J.R. Barnett (UK) to the Acting Chair of COST Action E40. Prof Joseph Gril (F) and Prof. Pekka Saranpää (Fin) were elected Acting Vice-Chairs.

The newly elected Acting Action Chair took over the chair of the meeting from this item onwards.

7 Working plan for implementing the Action

7.1 Objectives and working programme

The objectives of the Action E50 are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) ([Annex 7](#)). The newly elected Acting Vice-Chair Prof. Saranpää presented jointly with Prof. Grill, the Head of the Drafting Group, a brief summary of the Action background, pointing out that the main objective of the Action is to achieve a better understanding of the structure and biosynthesis of wood macromolecules like lignin, hemicelluloses and cellulose and their impact on wall assembly and wood properties, including reaction wood (RW), for the development of new products based on wood.

The means for achieving this objective will be through finding better methods and tools for the analysis and characterisation of wood fibre cell walls, their native structure and developing new techniques for changing their structure using chemical, mechanical and enzymatic treatments. Furthermore, the Action will promote the development of basic science on fibre structure, formation and properties, to address practical problems related to fibre wall structure and RW occurrence in the various areas of the whole wood chain, including forestry and tree breeding as well as the wood and paper industries;

An important benefit emerging from this Action among others will be to advance knowledge as to how fibre properties at the molecular and ultrastructural levels may be

modified in order to improve processing and quality of pulp, paper, solid wood products and other types of wood-based products. Furthermore, the Action will contribute to an improved understanding of biosynthesis and variability of cellulose, hemicelluloses, lignin and the whole wood fibre cell wall;

7.2 Working method - organisation and management

It was decided that the Action will be carried out mainly through 4 Working Groups and through Short Term Scientific Missions (STMS). All four Working Groups should address the relevant key areas as described in the MoU. After a comprehensive discussion the following structures and responsibilities were agreed upon:

7.2.1 Working Group 1: Biosynthesis and structures of cellulose and polysaccharides

Acting Coordinator: Prof. Anne Mie Emons (Netherlands)
Acting Deputy Coordinator: Dr. Uwe Schmitt (Germany)

7.2.2 Working Group 2: Biosynthesis and modification of lignin

Acting Co-ordinator: Dr. Kurt Fagerstadt (Finland)
Acting Deputy Coordinator: Dr. Katia Ruel (France)

7.2.3 Working Group 3: Formation and induction of reaction wood

Acting Co-ordinator: Dr. Catherine Coutand (*)
Acting Deputy Coordinator: Dr. Geoff Daniel (*)

7.2.4 Working Group 4: Relating wood and fibre properties to structure and formation

Acting Co-ordinator: Dr. Barry Gardiner (UK) (*)
Acting Deputy Coordinator: Prof. Pekka Saranpää (Fin)

(*) the Acting Chair Prof. Barnett will contact the proposed experts asking them if they are ready to take on the offered task.

Regarding the grant system the Management Committee expressed preference for centralised management of the Action and asked the COST Office to provide the relevant service at least for the first year.

7.2.5 Short term Scientific Mission Scheme

In accordance with the existing COST rules the MC will set up a Steering Committee consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chair and the four Working Group Co-ordinators, which is mandated to judge and approve applications for STSMs and has to report back to the MC (fast track approach).

Application forms for STSMs are available on the WEB-Site <http://www.cordis.lu/cost> where one should look for 'Documents'.

7.2.6 INTERNET/WEB site

To facilitate communication between the members of the Action and to promote the distribution of information on the research activities going on in the field of COST Action E50 the participating experts have been asked to identify their possibilities to host and maintain a specific Web-site for this Action.

7.2.7 TC Rapporteur of the Action

The Technical Committee on Forests and Forestry Products (TC FFP) has nominated Prof. Arnis Treimanis (Latvia) as Rapporteur for COST Action E50, whose task will be to report about the activities of this COST Action to the TC FFP.

7.2.8 Meeting Secretary

In the course of the first Management Committee a Meeting Secretary should be appointed, who will be responsible for taking note of the meetings of the Management Committee at which the Science Officer will not be present.

7.3 Distribution of tasks

It has been agreed that all MC members will try to nominate their national WG members before the first meeting of the Management Committee and send their names to the Action Chair, the Vice-Chairs as well as to the COST Office (Science Officer).

In preparation of the first MC meeting all nominated MC members have been invited to prepare a country statement providing in particular information on ongoing research activities.

The acting officeholders have been invited to prepare a strategy for the implementation of the MoU, in particular to attach adequate importance to the elaboration of a publication strategy. The need to prepare a state of the art report has been identified.

8 Place and date of future meetings

The timing and location of the future meetings was agreed tentatively as follows:

Brussels	13 June 2005 (alternative 7 July 2005)	First MC Meeting (starting at 11:00 hrs)
Montpellier	3 – 5 November 2005	Joint MC/WGs Meeting
Wageningen	31 March 2006	MC Meeting

The Management Committee has taken note of the generous offers of the delegations of Germany and Slovenia to organise one of the planned Workshops in their countries (Potsdam, 2007; Ljubljana, 2009).

In the light of the limited financial means the MC Committee recommended to reimburse in the frame of the first management Committee meeting only one delegate per country, but asked the COST Office to provide means for the reimbursement of the Working Group Coordinators and their deputies.

9 Any Other Business

No issue has been raised under this agenda item.

10 Closing of the meeting

In closing the meeting on 19 April 2005 at 16:30 hrs Acting Action Chair Prof. Barnett expressed his gratitude to the members of the Management Committee for their active participation in the meeting.

Günter Siegel
Scientific Officer for the
COST Domain on Forests and Forestry Products

May 2005

ANNEX:

1. Agenda of the Meeting with the list of participants
2. Rules and procedures for implementing COST Actions
(see COST-Website www.cordis.lu/cost)
3. Financing of COST activities (see COST-Website www.cordis.lu/cost)
4. The Standard Rules of Procedure for Management Committees for COST
(see COST-Website www.cordis.lu/cost)
5. Guideline for the implementation of Short-Term Scientific Missions (see
COST-Website www.cordis.lu/cost)
6. Guidelines for evaluation and monitoring of COST Actions (DOC. 222/03)
(see COST-Website www.cordis.lu/cost)
7. Memorandum of Understanding of COST E47 (see COST-Website
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