

Minutes of the Core Group Meeting of COST Action CA15206 “Payments for Ecosystem Services (Forests for Water)”

*Skype/Teleconference
1530h (1630h CET) 30th November 2016*

1. Welcome to participants

Participants were welcomed by the Action Chair. (The others present were Gebhard Schueler, *Kazimierz Banasik*, Zuzana Sarvasova, Tom Nisbet; Yiyang Cao, Lars Högbom, Rik De Vreese).

2. Adoption of agenda

Meeting participants agreed to adopt the draft meeting agenda circulated in advance by the Action Chair.

3. STSMs

The first call for STSMs has been launched with a deadline for applications of 20th December and advertised to MC members and online via the Actions new webpages (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/beeH-afwkpr>). Action participants from signatory COST countries (and MC observers) who would like their institute listed as a potential host on the associated webpage (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/beeH-afzgj7>) are encouraged to contact Claire Holmes (claire.holmes@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) to have their details added. The STSM coordinator led a discussion of the call and procedure for evaluating proposals. It was agreed to keep the procedure as simple as possible, with assessment of STSM applications undertaken by the STSM coordinator, Vice Chair and relevant WG leader, assisted by the STSM vice-coordinator, and carried out within 2-3 weeks of the deadline for submissions. Were a case to arise where an applicant comes from the same organisation as one of those normally charged with assessing applications, it was agreed that person would be excused from assessing the application to avoid a potential conflict of interest. Whether to elaborate assessment criteria and the scoring system is an issue to consider for subsequent STSM calls.

4. Dissemination and Exploitation Plan

Defining a Dissemination and Exploitation Plan is a key deliverable for WG4 in GP1. The leader of WG4 agreed that before Christmas he will finalise a questionnaire for circulation to MC members to enquire about their interests and visions in order to help formulate a Dissemination and Exploitation Plan, as well as circulating an example Plan from another project that might serve as a useful template for PESFOR-W.

5. Website and Spatial Repository

The main Action webpage (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/pesforw>) and subpages had gone live the previous week. A proposal from the WG4 vice-leader for the spatial repository to be developed using Google Maps using a similar approach to that developed to show the locations of Ecosystem Services research in Belgium (<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1snhITrvZWwAlADrNZw3dPpP7BVI&ll=50.983639100000,026%2C5.50221949999991&z=8>) was accepted and he agreed to circulate weblinks to an initial version of the new spatial hub for case studies by early February 2017. Once the new spatial hub has been developed, a link will be provided from the Action's webpages.

6. Budget

The Chair noted that the amount allocated in the GP1 budget for the meeting of the Action to be held in Nancy allows for reimbursement of a total of 56 participants. This is slightly fewer than the total number of MC members currently. Were all MC members to participate in the meeting, there will no budget remaining to reimburse others. However according to the COST Association, on average around 80% of MC members

tend to participate in an Action meeting, suggesting that the amount allocated may stretch to cover the expenses of around 14 non-MC members. It was agreed in principle that the Action should reimburse the expenses of eligible Core Group members who are not full MC members, as well as any invited speakers, with decisions on who else to reimburse left for subsequent consideration if funds remain. (Initial indications of remaining places will be available within one month of sending out initial invitations as under the rule agreed by the MC at the inception meeting any invitation not accepted within one month, is cancelled/withdrawn). The importance of spending the GP budget fully was noted, as any underspend cannot be transferred to a subsequent GP, but instead will lead to a reduction in the budget in subsequent periods. It is difficult to judge in advance the level of costs to be reimbursed to participants. However, the COST Association have advised the Grant Manager that funds left unspent after the event can be used to reimburse other eligible participants (not offering reimbursement prior to the meeting is likely to limit the number of such participants though). The GP1 allocation for the meeting in Nancy had been budgeted on the basis that the reimbursement rate for an overnight stay would be €100/night – a figure suggested by the local organiser. The €100/night reimbursement limit for the meeting in Nancy was approved.

7. Defining PES

This item had been included on the agenda to explore ways in which the definition of PES adopted in the MoU might be relaxed in order to cover a wider range of schemes in more participating countries (especially ITCs). In the absence of the WG1 leader to lead the discussion (and in anticipation that she might still join the meeting), this item was postponed until last, and only a very brief discussion ensued of other potential case studies, such as schemes on water quality and carbon balance associated with forestry on peatlands.

8. IUFRO 2017

The Chair raised the issue of whether other core group members would like to collaborate on a PESFOR-W overview presentation, or to assist in reviewing the abstracts that are submitted for the IUFRO World Congress 2017 woodlands for water PES session. The leaders of WG2 and WG4, together with the STSM vice coordinator offered to help reviewing abstracts. The leader of WG2 and the leader and vice-leader of WG4 offered to collaborate on the overview abstract with the Chair and STSM Coordinator. (It was noted that the deadline for submission of abstracts had been put back until 15th Dec 2016)

9. Nancy meeting

How to structure the meeting to be held in Nancy 28th Feb – 2nd March 2017 was discussed. The Chair's suggestion of a plenary followed by working group meetings and then possibly a further plenary on the first day, with the case study visit to Vittel and possibly also with a stakeholder forum on the second day, and the MC meeting on the morning of the third day, was approved. The Chair noted overlap in the membership of different WGs and a potential issue of creating 'silos' if WG meetings are held in parallel. However, on logistical grounds it was decided to hold WG meetings in parallel. A proposal to hold a knowledge exchange 'market' for participants to share information on their institute and research (posters, leaflets, videos, etc) on the first evening was accepted – subject to logistical details being agreed with the local organiser. Potential speakers to invite included those providing local/regional/national perspectives on PES policies in France, a speaker from a French water regulatory perspective, and a European Parliament speaker. Issues to discuss with the local organiser included any translation requirements if a stakeholder forum were to be held.

10. AOB

The Chair agreed to initiate a doodle poll for dates for a Core Group meeting for late January 2017.

11. Closing



The MC Chair thanked the participation of other Core Group members and closed the meeting at 17:00h (18h00 CET).

Prepared by:

Action Chair: Dr. Gregory Valatin



COST is supported by
the EU Framework Programme
Horizon 2020

COST Association
Avenue Louise 149 | 1050 Brussels, Belgium
t: +32 (0)2 533 3800 | f: +32 (0)2 533 3890
office@cost.eu | www.cost.eu