



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

*Skype/Teleconference
1030h (1130h CET) 23rd January 2017*

1. Welcome to participants

Participants were welcomed by the Action Chair. (The others present were Gebhard Schueler, Zuzana Sarvasova, Tom Nisbet; Poala Gatto, 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

As no applications had been received under the first call for STSMs launched with a deadline for applications of 20th December, the deadline had been extended by a month and re-advertised to MC members. The new deadline had also expired without eliciting any applications for STSMs for GP1. (Although at least one other application had originally been progressed, the only completed application was for a STSM during GP2, which it is not possible to fund from the GP1 grant allocation). In view of the relatively short period remaining in GP1 and lack of indication of further interest expressed by MC members in setting up STSMs in GP1, it was agreed that instead of extending the deadline for the call again and re-advertising, it would be better to reallocate the allocation in the GP1 budget to funding 5 or 6 additional participants in the Nancy meeting, and focus instead on encouraging STSM applications in GP2.

4. Survey of participants

The leader of WG4 had finalised the questionnaire for circulation to MC members to enquire about their interests and visions in order to help formulate a Dissemination and Exploitation Plan. The survey had recently been launched, eliciting 6 responses from MC members so far. The Chair thanked the leader of WG4 for his work on this, noting the useful information also elicited on willingness to host future meetings – including on the part of Croatia and Italy.

5. Potential locations for future meetings

Taking into account COST policies on inclusiveness, it was agreed that the Chair would approach the MC member for Croatia who had expressed willingness to host a future meeting in order to find out more about the woodlands for water PES scheme that could potentially provide a useful case study were a meeting to be organized in that country. He would also enquire whether hosting a full meeting of the Action in autumn 2017 would be feasible if the MC subsequently decide this is the best choice (including if considered better than holding a meeting to fit with the IUFRO 2017 World Congress woodlands for water PES session).

6. Dissemination and Exploitation Plan

Defining a Dissemination and Exploitation Plan will be a key element in the Nancy meeting, with a plenary session led by WG4 to focus in part on this. The leader of WG4 agreed to circulate a draft Dissemination and Exploitation Plan prior to the meeting to aide discussion.





7. Nancy meeting - programme

Of 2 alternative draft programmes for the Nancy meeting considered, it was agreed that the one including invited speakers on the first morning (in place of a round of introductions), would be best. In addition to providing a slot for the WG1 vice leader to give a presentation on Governance & design of Payments for Watershed schemes in the EU drawing upon work being undertaken for Ecosystem marketplace, it was agreed that the Chair would approach the European Environment Agency to provide a speaker for a European perspective on water quality challenges under the Water Framework Directive and potential for woodlands. It was noted that expenses for this speaker could be met using the budget allocated for reimbursing participants for lunch during the case study visit (a proposal from the Local Organiser the previous week that this lunch would be paid for instead out of the Local Organiser Support budget having been accepted). It was also agreed to shorten the proposed 'Knowledge Exchange Market' so that the first full day finished by 18h30 rather than 19h.

8. NNC Observer applications

Recent advice from the COST Association that reimbursing NNC Observers for participation in MC meetings is mandatory was noted. As this may have implications in deciding whether to accept a NNC Observer application given constraints on Action's budget, the Action Chair agreed to write to MC members to highlight this issue in relation to current applications for NNC Observer status (eVotes on participation by institutes in Ukraine, Tunisia and Jordan launched in eCOST are open for consideration by MC members before Friday 27th January). The proposal that NNC Observers be reimbursed for the full meeting rather than just for the MC meeting was accepted.

9. Nancy meeting – participation

The Action Chair noted that over 40 MC members or MC subs have so far registered to participate in the Nancy meeting. While the number is below the total number of participants (56) budgeted for, as several invitations (e.g. to MC subs where the MC member is unable to participate) have been sent recently and are awaiting response, with several MC Observer applications by NNCs currently under consideration, the existing budget allocation does not allow much scope to invite additional participants at present.

10. Nancy meeting - reimbursement of additional participants

Although the need to try to ensure all participating COST countries are represented was noted, no firm conclusions were drawn in considering principles to adopt to prioritise other potential participants for reimbursement for any remaining spaces (e.g. in relation to funding transferred from the STSM budget allocation). The Action Chair agreed to circulate a short list of potential candidates for consideration by the Core Group.

11. IUFRO 2017 World Forestry congress

Thanking again the leaders of WG2 and WG4, together with the STSM vice coordinator, for offering to help review abstracts for the IUFRO World Congress 2017 woodlands for water PES session, the Action Chair noted that he had not involved them due to the lack of means to provide access to the abstracts on the system being used to others and also the short time-frame. Reviewers had been instructed not to limit the number of abstracts accepted to have to fit within the slot that they had initially requested, as there could be scope in the programme for more than one session on a particular topic if there were sufficient abstracts for this. Bearing this in mind, reviews had needed to be less selective, and 15 abstracts (sufficient for 2 sessions





on woodlands for water PES rather than one) had been recommended to be accepted. (None of the abstracts submitted were recommended to be rejected, but some were suggested for potential consideration in other sessions).

12. Budget & activities in GP2

An increase in the GP2 budget allocated (to €156k) notified by the COST Association was noted and welcomed. The Action Chair plans to start drafting the GP2 budget over the next couple of weeks, with the WG2 leader agreeing that for the initial version it would be best to assume that the WG2 workshop envisaged in GP2 will be timed to fit with a full meeting in order to reduce associated travel costs.

13. Spatial Repository

The WG4 vice-leader noted his plans to progress work on developing the spatial repository over the next couple of weeks.

14. Website

Consideration of the Action's new webpages (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/pesforw>) indicated general satisfaction with these. Potential for designing a logo for the Action that could make the web pages more colourful was noted. While this was not considered worth the Action spending a significant amount on, there may be a participant with a flair for design who would like to take the opportunity to design a logo.

15. Defining PES

Noting diverse definitions – which in the case of PES-like schemes can extend to certification, the WG1 leader agreed to take the issue of the definition of PES and where to draw the boundary forward within WG1 initially with a view to producing a paper on this. This could subsequently be used to aide discussion at a plenary session at a future meeting of the Action.

10. AOB

The Chair agreed to initiate a doodle poll for dates for a Core Group meeting for around 2 weeks after the Nancy meeting in mid/late March 2017 in case budget remains from the Nancy meeting to consider uses for.

11. Closing

The MC Chair thanked the participation of other Core Group members and closed the meeting at around 12h10 (13h10 CET).

Prepared by:

Action Chair: Dr. Gregory Valatin

