

Meeting of the Programme Coordinating Group (PCG) of ICP Forests

in Berlin, Germany, 2 to 3 November 2016

Minutes

Opening

Mr Walter Seidling (Head of the PCC) opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed all participants. The agenda was adopted.

Looking for a new chairperson of ICP Forests; current state

Ms Sigrid Strich (Ministry and NFC of Germany) welcomed everyone on behalf of the ministry and informed the participants that Chairman Mr Michael Köhl could not attend the meeting as the date conflicted with other business he had to attend.

She explained that the search for a new chairperson was still ongoing. They were still considering several options and were hoping to appoint a new chairperson before Christmas.

After that Mr Seidling introduced the new members of the PCC team, Ms Anne-Katrin Prescher, Mr Andreas Schmitz and Ms Jana Davies.

Reports from past meetings

1. Mr Seidling informed the PCG about the **2nd Joint Session of EMEP and WGE** held in Geneva from 12- 16 September. Mr Seidling said it was a comprehensive event, handled by both chairpersons (Ms Laurence Rouil, Mr Peringe Grennfelt); the agenda can be found [online](#).

The UNECE Assessment Report ‘Towards Cleaner Air’ widely neglected the work of ICP Forests. There were almost no or unsuitable replies from the ICP Forests community towards respective questionnaires sent around among the EP chairs because the questions were rather abstract and hardly related to daily ICP Forests work. However, ICP Forests should make a contribution in future.

Ms. Isaura Rabago is the newly elected chairperson of the WGE for a 2-year term replacing Peringe Grennfelt.

Highlights of the scientific findings: The ICP Forests community published a total of 20 papers in peer-reviewed journals between May 2015 and May 2016 which was reported to the WGE.

Mr Seidling pointed out that many activities have been put under financial pressure over the last few years. He explained that the activities under the WGE are partly funded by a voluntary trust fund which is steadily decreasing. The budget has been decreasing over the last ten years and there has been, after FutMon, no financing from the EU within the last five years.

In the discussion about financing issues it was pointed out, that national and international levels must not be confused. It was also agreed that any cuts in the monitoring system that might have to be made in the future should be done after considering the implications.

Further Outcomes and contributions:

ICP Forests contributed to the Criterion 2 ‘Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality of the ‘State of Europe’s Forests 2015 Report’ with three chapters.

2. WGE and CLRTAP and the forest monitoring

Ms Sabine Augustin (one of the vice chairs of the WGE) talked about the relations between the Convention (CLRTAP), WGE, and the ICPs. The ICPs should gather data and information and evaluate and calculate cause-effect-relations and transmit these to the WGE via annual reports,

thematic reports and reviews to support the work of other bodies under the Convention. The WGE collects information and brings it forward to the Executive Body of the Convention and harmonises the work of the ICPs.

Mr Marco Ferretti pointed out little cooperation between the ICPs, and Mr Marcus Schaub wondered how ICP Forests could contribute more. Ms Augustin explained that a bigger contribution from ICP Forests is very much welcome and that data do not have to be perfect to be shared between the ICPs. As long as the data is sound then it is okay.

3. Reports from other relevant meetings (everybody)

Ms Liisa Ukonmaanaho reported that there was no ICP Forests representation at the IUFRO Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania in Beijing the week before and wondered whether it was worth preparing something related to ICP forest for the North American Forest Soils Conference (NAFSC), Quebec City 2018, Canada. She discussed it with some of the NAFSC conference organisers in the meeting in Beijing. One of the goals of the meeting is to have sessions that would be of interest to researchers beyond the usual attendees of the North American Forest Soils Conference especially since it is a combined meeting with the International Symposium of Forest Soils. IUFRO is one of the sponsors of the conference

Mr Nils König had been invited to give a talk at the IUFRO Conference on Global Change and Forest Health in Istanbul, June 2016 but the conference was cancelled.

Mr Ferretti reported that his colleague was invited to the ERET? reporting session and he was asked to review a few chapters.

Mr Nenad Potočić was at a ClimMani meeting (Cost Action on Climate Change Manipulation Experiments in Terrestrial Ecosystems: Networking and Outreach) and tried to attract attention to the fact that we have a lot of data freely available which would work well for the subject of climate gradients.

Planning for future meetings

33rd Task Force Meeting 2017: Bucharest

Mr Seidling informed the PCG about a poll regarding the format of the meeting and after discussions a majority decided that the format should be travel and reception on Monday, 15th May, excursion on Tuesday, 16th May, scientific conference on Wednesday, 17th May and TFM on Thursday, 18th May and Friday, 19th May with Friday also being the day for travelling home.

It was agreed that the deadline for the updates to the manual parts III to XVII should be end of November 2016. The manual will be published electronically for cost reasons. Parts I and II are to be adopted at the TFM in Bucharest.

The current WGE workplan 2016/17 was discussed and the option to organize joint meetings was brought up. The WGE workplan for the next two years (2018-19) was discussed and Mr Seidling was asking for topics and suggestions. Heavy metals in forest ecosystems and nitrogen were brought up, but Mr Bruno De Vos pointed out time constraints and Ms Augustin cautioned not to promise what can not be delivered. Mr König mentioned evaluations on national level, but it was agreed that these would have to be delivered in English.

6th Scientific Conference 2017: Bucharest

Mr Ferretti suggested a possible title: Air pollution, climate change and forest ecosystems: evidence for effects, adaptation, and mitigation. He mentioned that that the majority of lecturers may later not be willing to contribute to a special issue and that one possible solution would be to organize

a different output, like a state-of-the-art report for the UNECE (not every year), a multi-author review paper or an entirely different concept in which the SC is a tool to guide ICP Forests activity. After an extended discussion about the format of the report it was agreed upon that it should be decided each year what output should be chosen.

The Scientific Committee was newly formed and comprises Mr Marco Ferretti (chair), Mr Bruno De Vos, Mr Stefan Fleck, Mr Walter Seidling and Mr Tom Levanič.

Joint EP Meeting(s) 2017

Mr Potočić informed the group about the coming joint EP Meeting in Zagreb, Croatia, with a suggested date from 27 to 31 March 2017. The EPs for deposition, crown condition, soil/soil solution, foliage and litterfall, and ozone, as well as the WG QA/QC expressed interest. It was agreed that a timetable like in Göttingen might work, where one day was used for a joint meeting. It was also mentioned that it would be beneficial if there was participation from chairs of other panels that do not take part in this meeting, and also that there should be a number of working group sessions organized with different topics, primarily internal project work and integrative studies. The discussion about how long the joint meeting and how long each individual EP meetings should be will be continued via email.

IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress 2017 in Freiburg

Mr Seidling informed the PCG about this event and that ICP Forests should decide in which session they should make a contribution, most likely to the All Division 7 Meeting – “Forest Health”. It was agreed upon that each EP should try and submit an abstract, most likely to session 146 Climate change and air pollution impacts.

Mr König informed everyone of another meeting for the Heads of Laboratories in autumn 2017 in Pallanza, Italy.

Collaboration and integration, projects

H2020-INFRAIA-2016/17: ForAccess

Ms Karin Hansen informed the group that the proposal had failed. A lot of work had been invested and the rejection was disappointing. Ms Hansen found that the negative points that were made were very hard to understand. Mr Seidling highlighted some points from the official decision.

EU Interreg Project SUSTREE

Mr Seidling reported that ICP Forests can support this cooperation with data on soil condition, climate condition and tree performance from Level II and data on crown condition and soil condition from Level I. The application for data use would be internal as the PCC is included. There will be a meeting in Hungary in December.

Mr Seidling introduced an investigation about which Level I and II plots are part of Natura 2000 and National Protected Areas which gives an overall view compared to a poll from 2015. Mr Seidling proposed ICP Forests to consider getting onto the ESFRI roadmap. It was discussed whether this would lead to any progress. Mr Seidling mentioned further systems and networks to be considered like ICOS, CZEN, TERN and NEON. Mr Seidling pointed out the financial scheme and the financing of ICP Forests to the group and asked each participant to think about the financing and what would suit each country best. The financial scheme will be shared and the discussion will be continued at the TFM.

EEA: Letter of Intent (LOI)

Ms Tanja Sanders informed the group about a request by the EEA to use ICP Forests data and that a first draft of a letter of intent had been started which the EEA greenlighted. It was discussed whether data should be freely given which some of the PCG saw as a good opportunity for visibility and some worried that the data that were given away would be too extensive. It was agreed upon that the next draft would be circulated so everyone can add their ideas and concerns to it.

PROFOUND Cost Action

Ms Sanders reported that the Cost Action PROFOUND is still running and that the first data was requested, mainly on beech masting, its distribution patterns, and spatial and temporal shifts.

Issue of “Ecological Studies”: Trends in Forest Ecosystems

Ms Sanders informed the group that she was approached by E.-D. Schulze, the editor of Ecological Studies, who asked whether ICP Forests would write something which covers most surveys. This usually means a 400 p book. Mr Schulze would want all EPs to contribute. He would be willing to attend a meeting about this. The idea was very well received and everyone agreed to pursue this further.

Data management

Status of the Data Infrastructure

Mr Till Kirchner presented the new versioning concept of the online documentation (icp-forests.org/documentation) which had been asked for by the Task Force in May 2016. Due to this concept the online documentation will be versioned with one major version per year and one minor version per month (e.g. version 2016.5 = May 2016).

Following changes / aspects will be documented:

- Forms: year of last change
- Dictionaries: month of last change
- Forms and Dictionaries: complete list of changes over time

In addition to the new versioning concept Mr Kirchner introduced the documentation of all check routines / tests used during the data submission and asked the Expert Panel chairs to review these routines.

Mr Kirchner described the new possibility to download “free files” uploaded to the ICP Forests database in addition to the data forms.

Those “free files” can be:

- Data Accompanying Reports
- Photos
- Files not further specified

The access and content is further described under:

http://icp-forests.org/documentation/introduction/Additional_sources.html

The “free files” could not be downloaded since now.

Mr Kirchner indicated that most content might not be known to the community so far.

At the Task Force Meeting 2016 Mr Kirchner announced to change the future upload format of data to be submitted from “fixed format ASCII” to “CSV”. This will be made operational after the current data submission period in March / April 2017.

Mr Kirchner informed the audience that the changes to the download procedure discussed at the Task Force Meeting 2016 could not be realized so far. It is planned to be realized in 2017.

New developments from the Expert Panels and committees

Questions were raised whether the EPs should be open to external scientists. It was generally agreed that external scientists and laboratories can be invited, but they will not get paid and should use manual methods.

Ms Hansen explained that the **EP on Deposition** is currently working on a range of papers, but the progress in each of them is unfortunately slow. One paper in cooperation with EMEP partners is proceeding well with Aldo Marchetto as coordinator. Aldo is taking this work forward. It has been a lot of effort and little response so far from EMEP. The second paper was supposed to be worked out by Dr. Hilde Fagerli (EMEP) in collaboration with us at ICP Forests but Ms Hansen has not heard from EMEP on the current progress.

Mr Schaub (**EP on Ambient Air Quality**) confirmed that both manuals are ready for publication and thanked Mr Kirchner for the efficient collaboration. He informed the group that the results for future TRs are not ready yet. He also informed the PGC about the fruitful collaboration with ICP Vegetation and EMEP. In September 2016, the EP had a very successful EP meeting and Intercalibration Course in Romania comprising nine countries and with the participation of members from the Life-plus project MOTTLES, including Italy, Romania and France. Mr Schaub expressed his hope for a collaboration and that the participating countries will make use of the already existing Level II infrastructure and that vice-versa, the new data will be submitted to the ICP Forests central data base.

Mr Ferretti pointed out that he thinks that ICP Forests puts a lot into collaborations and he would like others who are using the data to make the same level of effort. Mr Seidling felt that the lack of cooperation is more accurate for national projects rather than international ones.

Mr Ferretti felt that countries that participate properly and place importance on things like ring tests should be dealt with differently and acknowledged respectively than countries who seem indifferent.

Mr Pasi Rautio and Ms Ukonmaanaho (**EP on Foliage and Litterfall**) reported that they had made a few changes to the manual but that it was basically ready. Mr Rautio mentioned that they might do something regarding foliage for contributing to "Ecological Studies". They will also have new parameters for the coming manual in five years (mercury, heavy metals).

Ms Ukonmaanaho pointed out the discrepancy between data requests and the corresponding output. She explained that she had close to 100 data requests and had not heard back from a single one. It was pointed out that without a tool to control this it would be difficult to follow up upon.

Mr De Vos (**EP on Soil and Soil Solution**) reported that the soil manual is ready for publication and Ms Tiina Nieminen was sure that the soil solution manual was ready too. However, Mr De Vos feels that across manuals standardisation is needed. Each EP should check what the effects on the time series were once methods had been changed. Mr Kirchner explained that important changes would have to be marked in the annex of the manual so that the comparison between different methods could be published.

Mr Tom Levanič (**EP on Forest Growth**) confirmed that the manual is more or less ready for publication. He expressed disappointment about the low attendance to the first meeting of the expert panel under his chairmanship in Romania with 14 participants from nine countries. He asked when the deadline was for data for 2016 and it was confirmed to be in February 2017. He explained that not all countries had submitted their data and he wondered whether there should be a letter from ICP Forests to the countries to ask them for continued support. Mr Levanič also

informed the group that the position for co-chair is vacant and that he would like to see Ms Sanders as his co-chair.

Mr Potočić (**EP for Crown Condition and Damage Causes**) presented a poster which had the aim to promote ICP Forests and had raised interest at the ClimMani meeting.

The manual is more or less ready for publication. The EP will start to discuss further changes for the next manual, due in five years. At the upcoming EP meeting in Croatia the panel will discuss the necessity of keeping the A-C files, photo ICC results and the panel input on the TR. Other tasks include checking of the online documentation, finding out why Ukraine and Moldova are not sending data, and validating data, which is a big challenge.

Mr Potočić also informed the PCG about the intention of Kosovo to participate in ICP Forests. Mr Seidling promised to make inquiries about the possibilities for including Kosovo.

Mr König (**Working group on quality assurance and quality control in laboratories**) reported that after his retirement the new chair will be Mr Alfred Fürst and co-chair Ms Anna Kowalska. He mentioned that the next meeting of the head of labs will be in autumn 2017 in Pallanza/Italy with the main topics being results of the last ring tests, presentation of analytical problems, new methods.

The next meeting of the working group should be in combination with the joint EP meeting in Zagreb. Mr König let the group know that deposition and soil solution ring tests are now organised by Ms Kowalska, soil ring tests by Ms Jakovljevic and foliar ring tests by Mr Fürst. Mr König said that the deposition ring test is now running, the soil ring test is planned for 2018 (and should be done every three years) and the foliar ring test is now running. (He reminded the group that the registration for the foliar ring test is now running, but that so far only 13 countries had registered. He had reminded every lab to register in time.)

Mr König said in response to Mr Rautio's remark earlier on that it would be easy to include heavy metals, however, that mercury is still a problem. Mr König is wondering whether the EU would be interested in mercury and whether money could be received from the EU.

Mr Stephan Raspe (**EP Meteorology, Phenology and Leaf Area Index**) reported that he had many plans to include layer 1 meteo data into the ICP Forests database and that it would probably be done next year. He said that they had already used the layer 1 database to make a characterisation for the German Level II plots and built long-term meteorological variables from 1980-2010 and could do this for all the plots that are in the database.

Mr Stefan Fleck informed the group that there were a few smaller changes to the leaf area index manual. Mr Fleck said that they planned a technical workshop in cooperation with LTER and ICOS. Mr Fleck mentioned that the paper on the aggregated soil data is released. He also said that there would be a change in format of the data delivery and that it will be easier to deliver the data in that format.

Proposals for manual changes Part I and II

foreseen for TFM 2017

Mr Seidling reported that everything is available on the cloud for download and that the information on authors, editor, publisher will be done according to standards, and that it will not be printed but will be available electronically with access from the website. After a discussion how to treat authors of the previous edition in combination with those of the current edition of the Manual, it was agreed that a bibliographic specialist should be consulted.

Reporting

'ICP Forests Brief' – a new media

Ms Sanders pointed out that the version was only a draft version and would be produced in a DinA 4 format. There were questions whether the brief would replace the ER or would be done in addition. Mr Seidling explained that the decision would be made after this prototype had been produced. Mr Schmitz pointed out that the policy brief will pick an ICP Forests focus topic and a politically relevant subtopic and will combine data from ICP Forests with other sources. The PCG liked it but suggested making it even simpler and shorter.

TR (extent, national contributions, annex online?)

Ms Sanders asked whether the countries should get the opportunity to get a broader overview of activities, so not focussing on crown condition anymore but the countries could really report what was important in their country in the last year. Ms Sanders then asked the group for their opinions.

After some discussion, it was decided that PCC will circulate a provisional table of content for the TR by e-mail to allow comments.

Ms Sanders then stated that the supplementary material, including many of the maps on crown condition, should be moved online since money is an issue for the printing; this was approved.

AOB

Mr Ferretti proposed to send regards to Mr Roberto Canullo since his university and town were severely affected by one of the recent earthquakes in Italy.

Mr Schaub asked: How do we improve the performance of the countries in future analysis? And how can we encourage countries to participate more? Mr Schaub wondered whether countries should be rated according to their performance.

There was some concern about putting more pressure on countries that have to cope with cuts already. There should be a check with each country to see how they feel about that and it could be done every 3 to 5 years only.

Final point

Mr Seidling thanked everybody for participating and emphasized the importance of meetings like this for ICP Forests with its complex structure. He closed the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

A side meeting on an integrated project started at 1:30 p.m. chaired by Marco Ferretti

Meeting of the Programme Coordinating Group (PCG) of ICP Forests, 2 – 3 Nov. 2016

Venue: Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Wilhelmstraße 54 (entrance at Französische Straße 1), Building 3, Room: 3.3.40 (on the third floor)

Provisional Agenda

2 Nov 2016, Wednesday	<>: time foreseen
13:00 - ...	Opening <0:05> - Adoption of the agenda
	Looking for a new chairperson of ICP Forests; current state <0:10> (BMEL)
	Reports from past meetings <0:40> - 2 nd Joint Session EMEP and WGE: Geneva, 12-16 Sept (PCC Walter) - WGE and CLRTAP and the forest monitoring (WGE Sabine Augustin) - Reports from other relevant meetings (everybody)
	Planning for future meetings <0:40> - 33 rd Task Force Meeting 2017: Bucharest (PCC Walter) - 6 th Scientific Conference 2017: Bucharest (Marco) - Joint EP Meeting(s) 2017 (Nenad, EP chairpersons) - IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress 2017 (NN)
	Collaboration and integration, projects <0:40> - H2020-INFRAIA-2016/17: ForAccess (PCC, Karin) - EU Interreg Project SUSTREE (PCC, Walter) - EEA Letter of Intent (PCC Tanja) - PROFOUND Cost Action (PCC Tanja) - Ecological Studies: Trends in Forest Ecosystems (PCC, Tanja) - Any other collaborations planned/ongoing (everybody)
15:00-15:30	Coffee break <0:30>
	Data management <0:30> (PCC, Till) - New features (online documentation, metadata for publications) - Future developments of the database
... - 18:00	New developments from the Expert Panels and committees <2:00> (EP chairpersons, PCC) - Is the manual ready for publication? - Check routines - Any results available for future TR? - Would you support the opening of the EPs to external scientists? - Workshop(s)
19:30	Social Dinner
3 Nov 2016, Thursday	
08:30 - ...	- News developments from the EPs and committees <2:00> (EP chairpersons) (continued) - Meeting of the Heads of Laboratories (Nils) - QAQC beyond labs (e.g. Ambient Air Quality) (Marcus, NN) - Cross-Calibration in the field (/photo) (e.g. ICC 2017 (Volkmar, Nenad, PCC))
10:30-11:00	Coffee break <0:30>
	Proposals for manual changes Part I and II <0:15> - foreseen for TFM 2017 (PCC Walter)
	Reporting <0:30> - 'ICP Forests Brief' – a new media (PCC Alexa) - TR (extent, national contributions, annex online?) (PCC Alexa)
	AOB <0:45>
... -13:00	Closing of the PCG Meeting
13:00 (13:30) -16:00	Side Meeting: Designing a quasi-experimental observational study on environmental effects on growth of European forests (Marco)

List of participants

Meeting of the Project Co-ordinating Group (PCG) of ICP Forests 2016

	Name	Country
1	Nenad Potočić	Croatia
2	Marcus Schaub	Switzerland
3	Stefan Fleck	Germany
4	Stephan Raspe	Germany
5	Nils König	Germany
6	Tiina Maileena Nieminen	Finland
7	Bruno de Vos	Belgium
8	Pasi Rautio	Finland
9	Volkmar Timmermann	Norway
10	Liisa Ukonmaanaho	Finland
11	Karin Hansen	Sweden
12	Marco Ferretti	Italy
13	Tom Levanič	Slovenia
14	Sabine Augustin	Switzerland
15	Sigrid Strich	Germany
16	Walter Seidling	Germany
17	Till Kirchner	Germany
18	Tanja Sanders	Germany
19	Anne-Katrin Prescher	Germany
20	Jana Davies	Germany
21	Andreas Schmitz	Germany