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

***Skype/Teleconference***
***10h30 (11h30 CET) 21st June 2017***

**1. Welcome to participants**
Participants were welcomed by the Action Chair. (Others present were Gebhard Schueler, Tom Nisbet; Alex Chikalanov, Paola Ovando, Lars Högbom, Rik De Vreese, Zuzana Sarvasova, and Kazimierz Banasik, with apologies received from Paola Gatto).

**2. Adoption of agenda**
Meeting participants agreed to adopt the draft meeting agenda circulated in advance by the Action Chair, subject to addition of a further very brief item relating to a forthcoming 'COST Connect' event.

**3. GP1 budget**
The Chair reported that total expenditure during GP1 had been €63,565. Compared to the allocated budget of €70,500, this implied that the GP1 budget had been underspent by €6,935 (9.8% of the total allocated).

**4. STSMs**
The STSM Coordinator noted that of the three STSM applications received under the first call for proposals in GP2 (which had a deadline for applications of the end of May 2017), all were of sufficient quality to be supported. However, in order to leave half the allocated €10k STSM budget to cover applications in the autumn 2017 call, it was agreed to approve only the 2 most highly ranked applications (those of Ignacio Pérez Silos and Khrystyna Vasylyshyn), with the third applicant requested to reapply under the second GP2 call. To facilitate potential acceptance of the third applicant's proposal under the second call without necessitating significant changes to the October timescale proposed for this STSM, it was agreed to shift the deadline for applications under the second call forward to the end of September 2017.

**5. Spatial Repository**
The WG4 vice leader noted that proposals for information to include in the spatial repository of the case studies had been received from WG2 and WG3, but not so far from WG1. Responses to date indicated a desire to include a wide range of information. However, before proceeding to data collection, it was agreed that it would be best to decide which information is crucial for each case study (mandatory to complete) and which supplementary (useful to have, if available), and it was agreed to return to this issue at the next Core Group meeting. The need to draw on information from existing repositories and to minimize duplication with wider initiatives, were noted. The WG4 vice leader agreed to liaise with the WG1 vice leader in order to explore the extent to which the case study information sought is available from the Ecosystem Marketplace initiative and how best to minimize potential overlap with information collection as part of associated surveys. The WG4 leader agreed that once mandatory and ancillary information were distinguished and the extent to which existing sources can provide the information needed explored, this will provide a useful basis for developing the online survey to collect further case study data that WG4 plans. The WG3 leader outlined plans to develop a web application for keeping material on cost-effectiveness that would be linked to the spatial repository and plans to demonstrate its use at the meeting in Croatia, agreeing to liaise with the WG4 vice leader to ensure a good fit with development of the spatial repository.

**6. Workshops prior to main meeting in October 2017 in Croatia**
Returning to the working group workshops envisaged for most of the first day (9h-16h) of the October 2017 PESFOR-W meeting in Croatia, the Chair enquired about WG leaders' further plans for these and needs for external participants. The WG2 workshop will draw upon the findings of the STSM reviewing the evidence on the environmental effectiveness of woodlands in reducing diffuse pollution and it is envisaged that the workshop will include Ignacio Pérez Silos as one of the main speakers, with further consideration to be given subsequently to potential for also inviting one or two others, possibly including some speakers using Skype. The WG3 workshop aims to agree the underlying conceptual framework to use in developing a protocol to quantify the cost-effectiveness of woodlands for water PES and also to consider empirical estimation issues



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in assessing the cost-effectiveness of woodlands for water PES. A proposal for including a joint session between WG2 and WG3 to discuss evidence on the environmental effectiveness of woodlands needed to underpin cost-effectiveness estimates was agreed. A range of issues that the WG4 workshop is envisaged to focus on were noted (including stakeholder engagement, the user manual, preparing policy papers and forward planning for the final conference).

**7. Planning the main PESFOR-W meeting in October 2017 in Croatia**
The Chair noted that three invited speakers (Theresa Loeffler, UNECE/FAO Forestry & Timber Section; Ivan Pilas, Croatian Forest Research Institute; Owen Hewlett, The Gold Standard Foundation) had all accepted. Due to other pressing commitments in October, it had been agreed that the Gold Standard presentation will be by video conference. It was agreed that the supplementary presentation on developing a catchment water quality trading platform by Jonathan Fisher (former lead economist at the Environment Agency, England) scheduled in the programme after the end of the main meeting on the third day will be by Skype. A proposal that Irina Prokofieva (a founder proposer of PESFOR-W recently appointed a MC sub) be included among the list of initial invitees offered reimbursement for participating in the Croatia meeting was accepted.

**8. IUFRO 2017 World Forestry congress**
The Chair again expressed appreciation for the offer of financial support either for him or for the WG2 leader to participate in the IUFRO World Forestry Congress. Following further discussion with the WG2 leader, the Chair had accepted this offer.

**9. Journal Special Issues**
An invitation to publish those articles from the Woodlands for Water PES session at the IUFRO 2017 World Forestry Congress not published in the Water Resource Economics Special Issue in a Special Issue of Open Agriculture had been received. The WRE call for papers had been narrowly framed in encouraging contributions relating to incentive compatibility, but the WG3 vice leader (a joint editor of the WRE Special Issue) emphasized that papers on a wider range of PES-related issues are welcome. It was agreed to return to the possibility of a second Special Issue at the next Core Group meeting in early September once the number of the papers submitted for the WRE Special Issue (submission deadline 1st Sept 2017) is clear.

**10. Logo**
The latest revised version of the logo designed by Attila Toth (MC member, Slovakia) was noted and gratefully adopted for use by the Action.

**11. COST Connect event on water in the Mediterranean area**
The Vice Chair had received an invitation to a COST Connect event on water for food and agriculture in the Mediterranean area and enquired if others had also received an invitation. The Chair noted that the PESFOR-W member from Morocco (Abdelmohssin El Mokaddem) had also received an invitation and had enquired about aspects to highlight in his presentation about the Action. To facilitate coordination on the presentation, the Chair will copy the Vice Chair into his reply to this enquiry.

**12. Forestry and Timber News**
An invitation to publish an article introducing the Action had been received from the editor of Forestry and Timber News (the member magazine of the UK Confederation of Forest Industries). The Chair agreed to draft a short article (roughly 400-800 words plus images) and circulate it to other Core Group members for comments with a view to submitting it in early September 2017 for the October edition.

**13. AOB**
The Chair agreed to initiate a doodle poll for dates for a Core Group meeting in early September 2017.

**14. Closing**
The Chair thanked the other Core Group members for their participation despite technological difficulties in the early part of the meeting, closing the meeting at 12h (13h CET).



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