

**Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting N. 9 of COST Action CA15206 “Payments for Ecosystem Services (Forests for Water)”**

Online

**9am-12pm UK time (10h-13h CET) on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

(8.45am UK time [9h45 CET] onwards join to test your Zoom connection)

Zoom-Meeting Link:

<https://uni-trier.zoom.us/j/94729518271?pwd=Vyt1ZzlqQmZnOWxhWFFkN0V2aFhnQT09>

Meeting-ID: 947 2951 8271

**1. Welcome to participants**

Participants were welcomed by the Action Chair. It was the first MC meeting to be held online and was hosted on the Zoom platform licensed by Trier University (Log-list in attachment).

**2. Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the Participating COST Countries or, if applicable, a quorum**

24 COST countries in total were represented during the meeting, so the meeting was just quorate. In addition, there were participants from 3 NNCs and 2 IPCs– so 29 countries in all were represented.

**3. Adoption of the agenda**

Participants agreed to adopt the draft agenda circulated in advance by the Action Chair.

**4. Matters arising from the last MC meeting and recent Core Group meetings**

The action Chair noted that the Action’s 6-month extension request had been accepted with an additional budget of €40,000 allocated to cover stakeholder workshops to test out the User Manual and a launch event. Due to the Covid pandemic, potential for organising a launch event in conjunction with UNECE/FAO was uncertain, however. There is now an opportunity to consider potential for funding additional activities, as some events, such as the WG3 Training school will now be held entirely online and cost less than originally budgeted for.

**5. Update from the Action Chair**

The Chair noted the new end date of the Action (April 17<sup>th</sup> 2021). There had been no change over the past year in either the number of COST participating countries (which remain at 33), or in the number of other countries (7) and international organisations (2) represented.

Inclusiveness Target Countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey.



## **6. Update from the Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM) Coordinator**

Due to the Covid-19 emergency, there had been no requests and the budget allocated for STSMs was unlikely to be spent. Potential for interactions based upon a virtual alternative to physical mobility were raised, possibly along similar lines to a recent internship by a student in Germany hosted online by Forest Research in the UK, who had assisted in collecting information for the PESFOR-W spatial repository and in drafting case study factsheets.

## **7. Update from the Grant Holder**

After the approval of the 6-months extension request, the total GP5 budget had increased to 111.300 euros. The additional €40,000 had been covered by funds remaining from the GP4 budget (due partly to the postponement of the WG3 Training school).

## **8. Update from the COST Association (optional)**

No one was present from the COST Association.

## **9. Monitoring of the Action**

Monitoring by the COST Association showed that the Action had achieved a good geographic balance, inclusiveness and gender distribution. The Chair passed on congratulations from the COST Association. A greater preponderance of STSMs by applicants from ITC countries had been encouraged, although this was unlikely to be feasible due to the lack of applications during the pandemic.

## **10. Follow-up of MoU objectives: progress report of working groups**

Each working group reported progress in connection with the MoU objectives. In particular a full draft of the User manual had been completed - the bulk of the drafting having been undertaken by the WG2 leader. The Chair thanked those involved in preparing this and the MC approved the draft for use in future stakeholder events.

The Local Organizer of the WG3 Training School provided an update on the number of participants and the plan adopted now to hold the event entirely on-line.

## **11. Scientific planning, scientific strategy, budget planning, activity planning and dissemination**

The User manual will need to be translated into various European languages – including Italian and Slovak prior to the stakeholder events being planned in Italy and Slovakia. It had been previously agreed that PESFOR-W participants would be best placed to undertake the necessary translation. However, where this is not possible, it was agreed to pay for the translation out of the COST Final Dissemination Grant, as long as the expenses are incurred in a way that is eligible under COST rules. For the first stakeholder event being planned (in Brussels – but likely now to be online), it was agreed that the English version would suffice.

It is likely that many of the events being planned will need to be organised online rather than in person. This may apply to the final conference too. It was decided to wait and see how the Covid emergency goes and take

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a final decision on this in few months, possibly before the end of the year. In the meantime, WG4 will explore potential use of companies managing on-line events and eligibility of associated expenses under COST rules.

A proposal by Johan Barstad (MC member, Norway) to organise a workshop on the implementation of the User manual was agreed in principle subject to approval of the details by the Core Group. The workshop will help in developing the Action Plan.

It was agreed (subject to COST consent) to use some of the remaining funds for journal submission and open access fees – including with respect of articles under preparation by WG1 and WG3 that are currently being finalised. It was also agreed to use funds remaining from the WG3 Training school for a workshop to model cost-effectiveness of specific case studies should there be an appetite at the end of the Training school for such a further event.

The MC were invited also to think about further proposals to use remaining funds. These could then be considered by the Core Group.

## **12. Requests to join the Action**

No requests had been received.

## **13. Research funding opportunities (H2020 Green Deal related call)**

The discussion focused on the possible UK participation and about other eventual leaders, in formulating proposals that build upon the work of PESFOR-W to undertake collaborative research on topics covered after April 2021. Potential opportunities will be discussed further.

## **13. Location and date of next meeting**

It was decided to hold a MC meeting as part of the final conference in March 2021.

## **14. Closing remarks**

The Chair thanked all the invitees for their active participation and the vice-Chair for hosting the meeting.

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