# Minutes of the Core Group Meeting N. 18 of COST Action CA15206 “Payments for Ecosystem Services (Forests for Water)”

Skype/Teleconference

14h00 (15h00 CET) September 16th 2019

**1. Welcome to participants**

Participants were welcomed by the Action Chair. Others present were Lars Högbom, Tom Nisbet, Paola Gatto, Elisabetta Zanaga, Kazimierz Banasik

**2. Adoption of agenda**

The Core Group (CG) agreed to adopt the draft agenda circulated in advance by the Action Chair.

**3. GP4 Budget update: funds remaining from current budget allocations**

The GH representatives (Paola Gatto and Elisabetta Zanaga) and Chair provided an update of the expenditures and related remaining funds:

* 6th action meeting in Killarney: total expenditures € 47,722 (including cost of the WG1 workshop on June 2nd, but with one participant’s claim still to be paid pending provision of additional documentation). As the initial budget allocation was € 58,120, the remaining funds are around

€ 10,518. Anticipating that funds would remain, the Core Group had previously decided to allocate additional funds to a WG3 workshop in Dundee, WG1 workshop in Bratislava, and Bratislava 7th action meeting). The current situation on these is:

* + WG3 workshop in Dundee: total expenditure to date € 5,799 (but some claims still missing)
	+ WG1 workshop in Bratislava (Oct 21st): € 1,120 budgeted
	+ 7th Action Meeting in Bratislava: total budget increased from €46,420 to € 50,180 (LOS having been increased by € 3,820 – from € 2,940 to € 6,760). In addition, as the overnight rate had been increased to € 100 from € 90 for 52 participants reimbursed @~3 nights/participant), this potentially could imply an additional budget allocation of around €1,500 would be needed, although as a similar amount per participant had been budgeted for (€ 835) to the average expenditures for the France/Croatia/Italy/Bulgaria meetings (€ 827/participant), the impact on the budget for the Slovakia meeting of the increase in overnight rate to €100 was expected to be minimal.
* STSMs: € 10,000 allocated and € 4,960 remaining after approval of STSM of Khrystyna Vasylyshyn (€ 2,500) and Giacomo Pagot (€ 2,540)
* ITC conference grants: € 3,890 allocated and € 4,827 spent implying € 937 overspent (or € 2,237 overspent if € 1,300 grant for Can Vatandaşlar is approved)

**4. Meeting in Bratislava (22nd-24th Oct 2019)**

The GH representatives (Paola Gatto and Elisabetta Zanaga) inform the CG that so far 51 invitees have accepted the invitation, including 28 COST countries. The GH takes notice that a further invitation needs to be sent. Similarly, MC observers also still need to be invited.

A mail will also be sent to all participants with the indication of the maximum accommodation cost eligible (€ 100 per night)

The CG discussed the draft programme and the time allocated to plenary sessions vs WG meetings. Based upon the proposed changes agreed, the Chair will circulate a revised programme in the next days

**5. STSMs**

Khrystyna Vasylyshyn’s STSM (€ 2,500 approved) had been delayed but was understood to now be proceeding.

The CG approved the STSM application by Mr Giacomo Pagot (€ 2,540 requested), considering also that many CG members have already sent approval emails before the CG meeting. The GH will inform the STSM Coordinator Zuzana Sarvašová who will inform the applicant.

Given that several other STSM topics are still available in the current STSM call, the CG decided to leave the call open and to examine eventual new applications during the next Action meeting in Bratislava. The budget remaining should allow funding of at least another STSM, perhaps two.

**6. ITC Conference Grant**

The following applications had been approved:

* Martina Sterbova (€ 1,620)
* Attila Toth (€ 1,487)
* Laslo Galambos ((€ 1,720)

The total expenditure for these three Conference grants is € 4.827, implying € 937 overspent from the current € 3,890 allocated budget.

A further application by Can Vatandaslar (€ 1,300 requested) that had previously been approved in principle is still pending, as approval was subjected to funds availability. Given that the allocated budget is already overspent even without taking into account the application by Can Vatandaslar, the CG leaves the decision to the GH whether to support also this application, considering that funds could become available from underspending on other activities (e.g. the meeting in Bratislava). The GH will decide within the current week.

**7. Skills database**

Nothing special to report under this item.

**8. Case study template & spatial repository**

The case study templates, with some examples of cases already filled, and the status of the spatial repository will be presented during the forthcoming Bratislava meeting, in a session led by WG4.

**9. User manual**

The draft User Manual will be presented and discussed in Bratislava. CG members contributing sections to the Manual were reminded to provide their drafts to the WG4 leader Lars Högbom by the end of the September 2019.

**10. Application for a 6 month extension to the Action**

A short document needs to be prepared for requesting an extension, explaining the scientific reasons for it. In order to prepare this document, the CG decided that each WG leader would consider how an extension would contribute to the achievement of the Action’s proposed objectives and to maximising the impact of the COST Action, and outline their thinking on this during his/her presentation in a plenary session in Bratislava to stimulate discussion and the drafting of this document.

**11. Final Action Dissemination**

There is need to consider this further in Bratislava, taking into account decisions on the focus of the final conference.

**12. Location of ‘final’ (May/June 2019) conference**

An email will be sent by GH to MC members and substitutes asking them to suggest potential locations for the final Conference and potential woodlands for water PES case-study visits to then discuss at the MC in Bratislava.

The suggestion for linking the meeting with a suitable event organised by FAO/UNECE will be explored (Alessandro Leonardi).

Another issue discussed was who the main audience of the conference should be and it was agreed that it should involve both the scientific community and the decision makers.

**13. IUFRO World Congress**

The Chair informed the CG members that the Forests for Water PES session (E9a) planned from 8h30 to10h30 on Sat 5th Oct will now include 9 presentations, with posters presented in separate sessions (<https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/events/691/program-app/session/6138>).

The dissemination meeting grant for participation in the IUFRO World Congress allocatedin the budget

(€ 2,400) will be used to allow the Chair to participate in this event. He will be chairing the Forests for Water PES session (E9a) and deliver a presentation in the session about the Action.

**14. Potential future external funding bids**

The CG agreed to continue to monitor opportunities for collaborate on future external funding bids.

**15. AOB**

The Chair reminded CG members to send any material to Claire to be published on the Action webpages.

**16. Date of next Core Group meeting**

It was agreed that the next CG meeting will take place in late November/early December.

**17. Closing**

The Chair thanked other members for their participation and closed the meeting at 15.40 UK time (16h40 CET)

Prepared by:

*Action Grant Holder: Paola Gatto*