



WG1 Workshop

National Forest Centre – Forest Research Institute
Zvolen, Slovakia

February 18-19, 2019

During February 2018, seven WG1 members – i.e. **Johan Barstad, Rik De Vreese, Zuzana Dobšínská, Paola Gatto, Zuzana Sarvašová, Martina Štěrbová** and **Lyudmyla Zahvoyska** – met in Zvolen for two days for analysing the preliminary results of the “WG1 Survey on the legal and policy background for W-PES” and setting the ground for a joint paper on Payments for Forest Water Services (W-PES) governance in Europe.

The WG1 Survey was launched after the meeting in Castelfranco Veneto and further refined during the meeting in Norway, both in 2018. It was prompted by the observation that the distribution of existing W-PES initiatives is uneven in the PESFOR-W countries: while some countries have already progressed in implementing Forest for water PES mechanisms, others are lagging behind. Hence, WG1 decided to focus on exploring reasons for this, in particular on which preconditions in the different countries enable or hinder the development of Forest for water PES mechanisms and thus contribute to explaining this patchy distribution. The WG1 Survey collects information at the country scale on the most important water issues, the legal framework for access, extraction and management of freshwater, and the acknowledgment of the forest-water connection by the current policies. It also looks at the extent to which the concepts of Ecosystem Services, of Payments for Ecosystem Services and, specifically, Forest for water PES, is progressively included in the political discourse in each country.

In parallel, PESFOR-W is collecting data for a Repository of existing Forest for water PES cases, which is led by Rik De Vreese and to which WG1 coordinators and members have collaborated, both in structuring the Repository and in providing information on existing cases.

The WG1 Survey has received so far replies from 26 out of 37 PESFOR-W participant countries (70% response rate), which is deemed to be a good starting point for data analysis. A reminder to those countries who have not replied yet has been sent on Feb 20, aiming at getting as near as possible to a 100% coverage of PESFOR-W participant countries.

The group who met in Zvolen proposes that the information collected through the WG1 Survey is used and published two ways:

1. A Cost-Action WG1 Country Report, which reports, in structured way and on a country-unit base, the information collected by the Survey, including countries outside Europe. This publication will be authored by all those who contributed to the survey. It will have a ISBN and be in a form of an e-book
2. A paper (see details below), which will only focus on the European situation and will be authored at least by the seven members who met in Zvolen. The group proposes to open authorship to other PESFOR-W participants who will contribute to analysis of results, discussion and writing in a active and constructive way.

Paper

A preliminary exploration of the scientific literature on ES and PES discourse shows growing attention towards the implementation of PES and the analysis of their success and failures. However, the growing availability of case studies also highlights informational gaps in Europe with respect to other parts of the world. Hence, the group who met in Zvolen agreed that there can be scope and interest for a paper aiming at exploring what are the institutional, regulatory and policy drivers of W-PES that can help to understand the W-PES distribution in Europe. The group thus identified two main objectives for the paper: i) to present an updated picture of existing Forest for water PES cases at an European scale – based also on the results from the PESFOR-W Repository; ii) to explore why Forest for water PES are generally less frequent in Europe and, particularly, in some specific areas of Europe.

During the meeting, the group further brainstormed and defined the structure, concepts, contents, main messages and limitations of the paper; it undertook a first analysis of the information from the WG1 survey and collected for the repository; it explored opportunities for publishing in different journals, ending up in identifying Ecosystem Services (<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/ecosystem-services>) as the preferred one (also expressing a desire for publishing Open Access if funded by the Action); it defined analysis and writing responsibilities; it set up a plan for a second round of data collection for fine-tuning; it agreed on deadlines, prepared a to-do list and scheduled further meetings.

A preliminary draft version of Introduction (including literature review), Conceptual framework and Methodology, as well as preliminary data analysis, will be circulated within the group by the first half of May 2019. The group proposes to meet again in a specific one-day workshop in Ireland, possibly the day before the start of the proper COST Action meeting, to work together on data analysis and start drafting the Results, Discussion and Conclusions sections.

During the meeting, the group enjoyed the warm hospitality and super-efficient organisation of the Slovak team – thanks to Zuzana Sarvašová, Martina Štěrbová, Zuzana Dobšínská – and of the National Forest Centre – Forest Research Institute in Zvolen, which enabled a very fruitful work in a pleasant, friendly and collaborative atmosphere.

The seven WG1 members outside the National Forest Centre in Zvolen

