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LIFE+ project FutMon Action C1-GV-15 IT



Forest Service



Department of
**Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food**
An Roinn
Talmhaíochta.



UN-ECE CLRTAP ICP Forests

Combined FutMon/ICP Forests Expert Meeting

February 15th-19th 2010, Tampere, Finland

Expert Panel Biodiversity and Ground Vegetation

Tampere (Finland) – Wednesday & Thursday, 17 & 18 February 2010

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome to participants and technical announcements

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Expert Panel, Pat Neville who also welcomed the members of the Expert Panel to Tampere.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Panel members were invited to adopt the agenda which was duly adopted with the addition of some extra presentations to the meeting.

3. Short presentation and discussion of the preliminary results of the field course in Cansiglio, July 2009 & Resuming notes on field transnational experiment

Roberto Canullo then presented the results of the first International Field Intercalibration Course in Ground Vegetation Assessment held at Cansiglio in Italy in July 2009, involving 9 to 11 Countries. Roberto outlined how the course had been designed to uncover sources of error and bias and to assess the accuracy of the assessments. Recommendations included that all countries should use two rather than one observer where possible and that a manual update should propose a baseline reference common minimum method of assessment, e.g. four 10 x 10 m sampling units to achieve the common sampling area of 400m². Roberto concluded by

informing the Panel that this was simply the first step in the process of improving data quality and that this process should be repeated into the future to improve the assessment quality in the field.

Jean-Luc Dupouey then presented the experiences of the National field training course in vegetation assessment from France. He informed the Panel that this course consisted of 16 teams of assessors ranging from one to three individuals. Field training is conducted before returning to the plots to achieve consensus, a method that works well and could be adopted into a European approach. He reported that overlooking rates were proportional to the number of observers and the time spent on the plot and the experience of the team. Indeed the time spent on the plot was considered crucial in this regard and Jean-Luc proposed that this parameter be adopted by the Expert Panel.

Silvia Stofer offered to be able to put countries in touch with lichen experts who could help in future surveys.

4. Suggestions for Quality Control and Quality Assurance at the Country level (both to be applied to surveys in 2010 and to implement the Manual part VIII)

The Panel agreed to include time spent on the plot as an assessment parameter and to circulate a draft Guidance Note for countries on National Training and Calibration of a Reference Method for field assessment teams. The Panel agreed that this approach should be adopted by all countries ahead of field surveys of ground vegetation. This National Guideline will be circulated to all members of the Panel and to the NFCs.

5. Results and National reports of the BioSoil project

Maija Salemaa from Finland outlined the results of the largescale forest biodiversity assessment project, BioSoil, for Finland. Field surveys were conducted in 2006 and a total of 630 plots were fully assessed. Maija presented the exciting results of the first integrated evaluation of the vegetation and soils data from these plots and showed relationships between plant species distribution and site fertility, soil nutrients, climatic gradient, Nitrogen deposition, soil pH and cation exchange capacity. Dead wood volumes of coarse woody debris were highest in open clear cut stands and regenerating forests and next highest in mature stands. Conversely they were lowest in young stands.

Janusz Czerepko then outlined the results of the BioSoil biodiversity project from Poland. Janusz informed the Panel that assessments had occurred on 438 plots during 2007. A novel initiative was taken to adopt the approach from the European Workshop level through national workshops, the internet and national manuals to ensure a harmonized assessment across all seven assessment teams. Janusz demonstrated first results of the assessment and showed that some items represented new information for Poland from the BioSoil project. He outlined which assessment parameters worked well and where improvement might be delivered in others. He further informed the Panel that the approach yielded useful information on the Natura 2000 network in Poland and also may have a value in the Certification process.

6. International biodiversity initiatives of the NFC process, ENFIN, EFDAC etc.
Unfortunately as time was limited and presenters had been unable to attend this item was somewhat postponed to allow discussion on other items.

7. New version of the FutMon database and procedures for data submission under FutMon

Oliver Granke of the Programme Co-ordinating Centre of ICP Forests presented the procedure for data submission under FutMon. He presented the online database and outlined the different data checks that occur such as data compliance, validation and conformity checks before being considered final validated data in the database. He presented a mock file and demonstrated to the Panel members the procedures required to complete the online data submission module.

8. State of the art about species code list and procedures & results of Questionnaire on National methods in GV

Franz Starlinger presented information to the Panel on the work being conducted on updating the species list. He informed the group that species updates to the Flora Europaea may be required when either a taxonomic revision has occurred at national level or species have been reported from outside the area of the Flora Europaea such as Cyprus or Turkey for example. Franz presented a slide outlining the process involved in this revision and the steps that must be taken. This slide is included in these minutes. Pat Neville informed the Panel of the work done on the list of tree species in the Flora Europaea by the ENFIN group and suggested that perhaps we could adopt this list into ours.

Roberto presented the results of the questionnaire circulated to countries on National methods of ground vegetation assessment. The questionnaire had been completed and returned by 37 of 42 beneficiaries within the FutMon project and 3 extra-countries. Details of results, thresholds and approaches used among the countries were outlined.

9. Manual update according to *ACTION C1-QAC-15(IT)*

Roberto Canullo then presented potential updates to the manual according to and in line with the ongoing revision of the entire ICP Forests Manual. Pat Neville apologised to the members for not circulating potential updates in advance. Discussion concentrated on which parameters would be mandatory or optional at which level of assessment, e.g. Level 1 or Level 2. It was also agreed that a separate chapter on dead wood assessment would be included into the ICP Forests Manual essentially adopting the ForestBiota approach for Level 2 plots and the BioSoil approach for Level 1 plots. Pat Neville agreed to prepare a draft for this.

10. Future activities and projects of the Expert Panel

Evaluation of BioSoil Data.

The Panel discussed the access and evaluation of the complete BioSoil biodiversity data set. Pat Neville informed the Panel of a meeting held in Brussels in November 2009 where the JRC stated that all the biodiversity data has been transmitted and has now been validated. Pat Neville agreed to contact the JRC for access to this data on

behalf of the Panel and to pursue some potential approaches to evaluate the data such as the potential establishment of a COST Action for this purpose.

Finally the co-chairman of the Expert Panel, Bruno Petriccione has indicated that he wishes to take some time to decide his role in the Panel. The Panel members agreed to propose Roberto Canullo as a potential co-chairman for nomination.

Pat Neville
Chairman Expert Panel Ground Vegetation & Biodiversity
February 2010

