

International Co-operative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests of UN/ECE (ICP Forests) in cooperation with the European Commission

Minutes of the 10th ICP Forests Expert Panel on Foliar Analysis and Litterfall (EP on Foliage and Litterfall)

23 participants from 13 countries attended the meeting (Annex 1).

First meeting day (April 12th 2007)

1. The 10th EP on Foliage and Litterfall meeting took place from 12th to 14th April 2007 in Madrid/Spain.

2. Organizers opened the meeting

3. Mr. Federico Garcia Alonso (Head of Forest Protection Department of CIFOR-INIA) welcomed the participants and gave an introduction to the activities in CIFOR-INIA

4. Organizers explained practical arrangements (timetable etc.)

5. The meeting adopted the attached agenda (Annex 2).

6. The chairman Mr Pasi Rautio introduced the latest news from the ICP Forests:

- Draft for new strategy of ICP forests for 2007-2015
- Two new groups to work on quality issues: "Working group on quality in laboratories" and "Ad-hoc Group on Quality Assurance"

7. Organisational issues:

- EP selected Alfred Fürst and Anders Ohlsson to represent EP in the "Working group on quality in laboratories".
- EP gave a mandate on its behalf for Nils König to represent "WG on quality in laboratories" in "Ad-hoc Group on Quality Assurance" and to arrange meetings for the heads of the laboratories analysing different materials within the ICP Forests programme.
- EP selected Rona Pitman as the co-chair for the litterfall part in the Expert Panel on Foliage and Litterfall

8. Co-chair Alfred Fürst (FFCC) presented the results from the two latest foliar interlaboratory comparisons (8th and 9th ring tests). He explained the history and background of the ring tests and the progress in quality made in the course of the nine ring tests. He also proposed to decrease the tolerable levels for S to 15% and for P, Ca, Mg and K to 10%. The EP accepted his proposal.

9. Co-chair Alfred Fürst (FFCC) gave a presentation "Improving the quality of Foliage Laboratories". He explained different means to improve lab quality and the activities that has been used. He especially explained the results from the laboratory visits and the different problems that have come up in different labs.

10. Chairman P. Rautio gave a presentation of the current status of LIFE+, the future funding tool of DG Env (the Commission) for environmental projects, including forest monitoring. It became clear that the Life+ in the present form is not suitable for long-term monitoring. Many panel members expressed their concerns of the continuity of the ICP Forests / Forest Focus activities.

Hans Peter Dietrich (Germany) reminded that the Life+ specifically aimed to include Forest Focus activities and many of the member states demand that Life+ as a funding element is suitable for forest monitoring. He also pointed out that it is urgent to give a clear signal of common interest in ongoing monitoring activities within the Life+ funding scheme from both member states and the platform of ICP Forests task force meeting.

Bruno De Vos (Belgium) highlighted the need to express clearly that the future of forest monitoring is at risk and that without continuous monitoring within the existing networks and structures, we can't make conclusions of the different causes behind forest damages or make predictions of e.g. climate change effects.

Nenad Potocic (Croatia) said that even in the present mandate sampling frequency can be unsuitable to follow e.g. climate change effects since e.g. especially dry or wet years are not necessarily captured by biannual sampling

Bohumir Lomsky (Czech Republic) agreed with the previous speakers and reminded that the ICP Forests strategy can still be affected in the coming ICP Forests Task Force meeting in Zvolen in May.

Some descriptions from participants (e.g. Finland and Estonia) about the present status of the monitoring activities and the possible changes in the future were given.

It was agreed that the EP will express its concern about the recent development in the Commission funding in the form of memorandum where a support for the Göttingen resolution (see annex) is made. This memorandum is then sent by the panel members to ICP Forests and Forest Focus contact persons who are suggested to contact e.g. the members of the European Parliament and to inform them that the continuity of long-term forest monitoring is at risk due to the change in the Commission's funding (ending of the Forest Focus programme). Especially the operational aspects (e.g. annual calls; limited budgeting for pan-European projects) and interpretation of the processes in the coming Life+ programme seem to be in conflict with the ongoing plans of the European Commission and the member states for the Pan-European Forest Monitoring System. The chairman of the EP will draft a proposal for this and sent it to the participants for comments during the week following the Madrid meeting.

Second meeting day (April 13th 2007)

11. Discussion about the future of forest monitoring continued. Also the questions whether the manuals are up-to-date was raised.

N. Potocic stated that we shouldn't make too big changes in the manual when we don't know whether future financing is secured. Even though the annual sampling is better than biannual we shouldn't put it in manual, but perhaps a recommendations can be expressed in the manual.

B. De Vos: The litter manual is not clear enough. There are inconsistencies which temperatures to use in drying, how to report data etc. The manual needs some editing to be able to clearly harmonise and standardise methods.

A. Furst: Foliar manual was changed because the level of uncertainty in case of some elements (Na & Al) were too high for many labs and hence the same changes should appear in the litterfall manual.

Anders. Ohlsson: Some new measures could give additional information for e.g. drought stress and N saturation but further studies are needed before definite recommendations can be made.

Panel discussed about the information needs in the litterfall part and it was noted that litterfall is elementary part in the nutrient budget calculations and the importance of litterfall sampling and analysis should be highlighted. However, there is a clear need to decide what are the fractions of the litterfall we need to evaluate.

12. Presentation from the members

1. Nenad Potocic (Croatia) gave a presentation "The influence of climate properties on the nutrition of forest trees: examples"
2. Bruno De Cinti (Italy) gave a presentation "Status and trend of key ecosystem indicators at the CONECOFOR plots"
3. Liisa Ukonmaanaho (Finland) gave a presentation " Comparison of two type of litterfall traps, preliminary results.
4. Nihal Ozel (Turkey) presented the ICP Forests activities and results in Turkey
5. Bohumir Lomsky (Czech Republic) presented results of nutrient studies in regions with high S and N deposition.
6. Ana de la Cruz (Spain) presented the results of "Litterfall on 11 Spanish level II plots in 2005"

Third meeting day (April 14th 2007)

13. Excursion to Spanish Level II plot in Cuellar (Segovia)

14. Chairman P. Rautio closed the meeting

Expert Panel wants to warmly thank the organisers of the meeting, Mayte Minaya, Ana de la Cruz, Isabel Gonzales, José Manuel Grau and their colleagues in INIA-CIFOR.

Annex 1 (List of participants)

Annex 2 (Agenda of the meeting)

Annex 3 (Göttingen resolution and the accompanying letter from prof. Eichorn to Mr M.P. Carl, the Director-General of DG Environment, the European Commission)

Name	Institute	Contry	Adress
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Ihr Zeichen, Ihre Nachricht vom

Mein Zeichen (Bei Antwort angeben)

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Göttingen, den
30.10.2006

**Resolution of the symposium:
“Forests in a changing environment“
Göttingen, Germany (25-28 October 2006)**

Dear Mr. Mogens Peter Carl

ICP Forests was launched in 1985 under the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) due to the growing public awareness of possible adverse effects of air pollution on forests. The programme was established in close cooperation with the European Commission (EC). ICP Forests monitors forest condition in Europe, using two different monitoring intensity levels. The first grid (called Level 1) was established in 1986. Since then, tree vitality has annually been monitored. The second monitoring intensity level (called Level II) was installed in 1994 in selected forest ecosystems in Europe. On these plots, soil and soil solution chemistry, foliar nutrient status, increment, meteorological condition, ground vegetation and deposition of air pollutants are measured in addition to the annual crown condition assessments. Currently 40 countries participate in the ICP Forests.

2006 indicates the end of the Forest Focus strategy period 2001-2006 and finalizes the period of the Forest Focus programme. In the symposium “Forests in a changing Environment” results of 20 years ICP Forests monitoring were presented. The symposium was attended by 120 delegates from over 30 countries who summarized and evaluated the knowledge of forest biological ecosystem components and its response to variable environmental conditions in Europe.

In 2006 with the conversion of Forest Focus into Life+, a new set of aims and a new programme structure is announced. Conference delegates were concerned for the future of the existing programme and have agreed on the resolution included with this communication.

Kind regards

(Prof. Dr. Johannes Eichhorn)



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Symposium: „Forests in a changing environment“

Göttingen, 25 – 28 October 2006

Resolution

The many scientific presentations given at the meeting confirmed that long term monitoring under both the extensive (Level 1) and the intensive (Level 2) networks are essential tools in helping to understand environmental issues in Europe today. The participants acknowledge the role played by the European Commission in helping to fund this monitoring work in the past. The group notes that the European Commission plans to transfer the forest monitoring programme from the Regulation Forest Focus to Life+ and is concerned that these proposed future changes could threaten the continuity of the forest monitoring.

They therefore agree on the following points to be forwarded to the European Commission, GD ENV, to the presidency of the EU, Finland, to the WG on Effects of CLRTAP and to the national coordinators of the Forest Monitoring programme of ICP Forests.

1. The participants consider that the existing monitoring system makes a major contribution to the information needs of the CLRTAP and, by adapting its systems, is also increasingly meeting the information needs of other political processes dealing with climate change, carbon sequestration, biodiversity and sustainable forest management.
2. The group urges that Member States (members of the Standing Forestry Committee) ensure that Life+ funds are available in order to carry out future forest monitoring. If the negotiation process of the Life+ Regulation is delayed then the European Commission is urged to find a way to extend the Forest Focus Regulation for another year.
3. The main strength of the Pan European programme lies in its Level I and II databases. The information generated by the programme is open to all clients (e.g. forest managers, scientists, environmental groups, EU and National data reporting for international conventions and commitments). ICP Forests is a main data contributor to the MCPFE indicators and has the potential to contribute data for future reporting needs (e.g. the Kyoto Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)). The continuous time series of the Pan-European programme is an essential tool for addressing future challenges and threats to the sustainability of forest ecosystems across Europe.

4. The participants support the existing monitoring concept with its structured monitoring levels, comprehensive infrastructure and European wide cooperation as a cost effective and scientifically robust basis for future activities. There is a danger that, under the co-funding procedure under Life+, the programme could fragment into a series of unharmonised networks losing the European added value.
5. The participants are in favour of developing cooperation between the Level I programme and the National Forest Inventories in order to gain efficiencies in the data collection processes, to improve the vertical and horizontal integration of the information, and to improve the potential of the monitoring activities to service the needs of Kyoto and CBD. This presupposes a transition phase in order to solve current differences between the two systems (e.g. timing, representativity).
6. The participants take note that the development of the future structure and aims of the Level II plot network is currently under discussion at the national and European level. An in-depth analysis of the Level II network will identify those plots which are of particular relevance from the European perspective. Specific attention should be paid towards the requirements set by climate change, carbon stocks and fluxes, sustainable forest management and maintaining biodiversity, while ensuring that the original mandate concerning air pollution continues to be fulfilled. Therefore the content of the Level II programme (e.g. plot design, attributes, parameters, assessment frequency) must be developed towards a targeted oriented, cost-effective approach while still delivering reliable ecosystem information. More flexibility is needed in order to answer questions which are relevant only to certain regions in Europe.
7. The outcome of the above evaluations is urgently needed in order to formulate a core European programme for forest monitoring.