

COST Action E53

Quality control for wood and wood products

Minute of the 5th Management Committee Meeting

Holmenkollen Park Hotel Rica
Kongeveien 26
Oslo, Norway

Tuesday, 20 May 2008, 14:00 – 15:00 hrs

1. Welcome to participants

Chair welcomed new COST SO

Representatives from the following 22 countries participated in this meeting:

Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland,

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda has been sent out with the letter of invitation.

The Chair proposed that two additional points to be introduced for discussion in addition to those on the agenda:

- planning for the meeting in Delft, and
- discussion about meeting in Slovenia in 2009

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the fourth meeting of the Management Committee held on Wednesday, 17 October 2007 at the Kyriad Prestige Hotel in Warsaw, Poland were approved by the Management Committee.

4. General Information from the COST Secretariat

The MC was provided with an update on information from the COST secretariat as follows.

Numerous press releases as well as documents accessible at the Web-site of the COST Office (What's new, <http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=265>) inform about the recent developments:

21/04/2008	About COST 2008 now available
08/04/2008	COST Considerations on the Results of the Consultation on the European Commission ERA Green Paper
21/03/2008	ESF launches its first Call for Candidates for the enhancement of the ESF/COST Information System
15/03/2008	Assessment, Monitoring, Final Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions
14/03/2008	Broaden the Scope of your Research
08/03/2008	COST Day in Skopje
31/01/2008	COST CSO President meets ESF CEO
10/01/2008	COST and INDIA
04/12/2007	COST Strategic Workshop - European Roadmap towards the Needs of Gifted Children and Adolescents
01/12/2007	COST-ESF Synergy
23/11/2007	COST in Tunisia
26/11/2007	COST approves 25 new COST Actions
21/11/2007	COST Statement on the Monfret Report
20/11/2007	COST appoints Professor Kneucker as Rapporteur
19/11/2007	COST gets rid of the “red ribbons”
02/11/2007	COST participates in the Australian-European ICT Days in Piemonte
26/10/2007	Bulgarian COST National Conference 2007
22/10/2007	COST participates in the Conference on “Cultural Diversity and Religious Pluralism”

COST Website

The official COST Web-site is accessible under the following address:
<http://www.cost.esf.org>.

Action item: The MC agreed that a summary of this workshop and the STSM reports would be added to the COST website, in particular the STSM reports

Status of the COST Action E53

So far, according to the files 25 countries have joined COST Action E53:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom

CSO approval:	14 June 2005
Entry into force:	14 October 05
First MC Meeting:	06 March 06
End of the Action:	05 March 2010

Chair:	Prof. Robert Kliger
Vice-Chair:	Dr. Johannes Welling
Rapporteur:	Dr. Paavo Kaimre

Action item: the MC noted that it would like the rapporteur to attend a workshop and/or conference for the Action.

Working Groups:

Working Group	Coordinator	Email-address
WG 1: Scanning for Wood Properties in Quality Control and Processing	Arto Usenius	arto.usenius@vtt.fi
WG 2: Moisture Content and Distortion in Quality Control and Processing	Johannes Welling	johannes.welling@vTI.bund.de
WG 3: Strength, Stiffness and Appearance in Quality Control and Processing	Charlotte Bengtsson	charlotte.bengtsson@sp.se

Budget Status

After all Management Committees of the COST Domain on Forests, their Products and Services have been contacted, the budget plan for the **2008 (1 June 2007 – 31 May 2008)** were drafted, and in the light of its activities 104.000 Euro were allocated to COST Action E53.

In the budget year 2008 all items (STSMs, Trainings Schools, Publications ect.) have to be financed out the Action Budget. The budget 2008 might be increased in the run of its life span.

Training Schools

In the course of the year 2004 the COST Programme has introduced the new tool of 'COST Training Schools' aiming to provide within the frame of the Action topic for a group of scientists over a period of normally five days intensive training in a new emerging subject in one of the laboratories of the Action with unique equipment or know how. The participants are basically but not exclusively young researchers from across Europe but should also cover appropriate-training as a part of 'life-long learning'.

5. Year budget planning

The officeholders as well as all delegations are to be asked to assure that in the light of the limited financial means all future participants of activities organised by COST Action E53 will dedicate adequate attention to the *principle of the most economical overall expenditure* when asking for reimbursement.

BUDGET 2008

The budget for the budget year 2008 (1 June 2007 – 31 May 2008) will amount to approx. 104.000 Euro (3 meetings (Warsaw, Munich, Oslo), 3 STSMs, General Support Grant).

BUDGET 2009

The budget for the budget year 2009 (1 June 2008 – 31 May 2009) will amount to approx. 125.000 Euro.

Action item: the MC will develop a proposal for how it would like to spend this budget, in particular addressing the type and timing of different activities under the Action throughout the budget year 2009.

By the end of year 2008 the COST Action E53 has to migrate to the grant system. A detailed description of the grant system can be found at the following Web-site: www.cost.esf.org/fileadmin/cost_documents/guidelines/2-financial_instruments/2.6-COSTGrantSystem.pdf. The following web-site contains the template for the financial report form www.cost.esf.org/fileadmin/cost_documents/guidelines/2-financial_instruments/Financial-Report.xls. The grant system will request Actions to submit a detailed plan for the life span of the contract.

The Management Committee is invited to determine an institute which will administer the Action Grant (preferable the institute of the Chair or the Vice-Chair), in planning the budget the overheads have to be taken into consideration (up to max. 15%, to be decided by the MC).

Chair asked COST SO FPS for further information regarding the migration for the grant system.

SO reported that the COST Head of Science Operations has advised that migration to the grant system won't happen before 2009.

MC asked whether, in view of this delayed timing, Action E53 will have to change to grant system at all, given that it will finish in March 2010.

Action: COST SO FPS to clarify this with COST Office hierarchy.

6. STSM status, applications

STSMs have to be financed out of the limited financial means of Action budget. In this context it has to be underlined that applicants should only make binding bookings after having received the official letter of approval.

The Management Committee should be informed that the revised guidelines offer also the possibility of Group STSMs (two – three experts (each from a different signatory country) visiting one host institute at the same time).

In the light of the initially low amount of financial means available for the year 2006 only low priority should have been attached to the financing of STSMs.

So far, in the budget year 2008 2 STSMs have been financed. A further STSM is planned for the budget year 2009.

In the course of the budget year 2009 the Management Committee is invited to encourage young researchers to take advantage of this specific scheme.

Chair proposed that STSM participants be asked to give a presentation at one of the Action's workshops/ conferences in order that MC will know what happened and that the early stage researchers will get practice in presenting at conferences. The MC agreed that this was a good idea although decisions would have to be made on a case by case basis in view of the relevance (or not) of each STSM to the focus of each workshop/ conference.

SO suggested that STSMs could also be proposed for coverage in the COST newsletter produced by the COST PR & Communications team.

In the budget year 2009 (1 June 2008 – 31 May 2009) it is envisaged that three to four STSMs will be funded, two of which are already planned.

7. Publication, annual report

Each Action has to submit a **Monitoring Progress Report** before the end of a calendar year. A template can be found in the annex of the COST Document Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions (see www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=guidelines). *The MC members are invited to support the Action Chair in listing all relevant publications.*

Action item: The Chair will circulate a request for information for the Annual Report to the Steering Committee in October.

From the beginning of the year 2007 those reports have been posted at the Action related sector of the official COST Web-site.

It was noted that COST Action E53 has submitted its Monitoring Progress Report for the year 2007.

Action item: the MC will put the most recent Monitoring Progress Report on the Action web page to facilitate access for all MC members.

Quarterly Report (before the end of the quarter (31 May 2008) a brief report highlighting the outcomes of the Oslo meeting has to be submitted).

Action item: MC will submit a brief report highlighting the outcomes of the Oslo meeting for inclusion in the COST Quarterly Report.

Action item: MC to consider publishing of the outcomes of the Oslo meeting.

Publications

The MC was advised to revise the publication strategy in the light of the MoU as well as the most recent activities. In doing so the Management Committee should consider the preparation of all publications planned to be produced in the remaining life-span of the Action. The Management Committee was invited to elaborate a detailed time table and to allocate the emerging responsibilities. In this context the setting up of Task Groups is recommended (see agenda item 13 and annex).

All MC members have been encouraged to inform at the national level about the most important outcomes of COST Action E53. At least one copy of all relevant articles should be sent for documentation to the Action Chair as well as the COST Office

regardless in which language they are written. However a small summary in English language would be helpful.

COST Actions are invited to contribute to the efforts of the COST Office to raise the awareness for the programme by informing the interested audience by publishing also articles in sectoral or even regional newspapers/newsletters using scientifically popularized language.

MC advised that COST Office has requested additional copies of “Warsaw publication”. There was no money in the Workshop Subvention for publication of these additional copies therefore MC advised that the Action will need more money from COST if it is to publish these.

Action: SO to review budget and advise how to proceed.

Delft conf – proceedings will be put on home page. Will also allocate some money in workshop support budget for publication of conference proceedings.

MC advised that each WG will produce a summary of publications.

8. Evaluation

The COST Document titled *Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions* (COST doc. 205/08, see www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=guidelines) contains information on the evaluation process implemented by Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), subsequently adapted by the Domain Committee on Forests, their Products and Services.

It will be the main objective of the final evaluation to demonstrate the effectiveness of the completed COST Action in terms of:

- achievement of the objectives stated in the MoU
- value added by the Action
- management of the Action
- dissemination of information by the Action
- level of participation in the Action
- economic impact of the Action.

The evaluation report of the Action is aimed at the:

- users of the Action resources and results
- Management Committee of the Action
- Technical Committee of COST FPS
- the COST Administration

and may also be used to evaluate proposals to initiate follow-up Actions by the MC.

The Rapporteur will chair the Evaluation Panel. In this task he will be supported by two external evaluators (taken from the list of DC experts).

In response to the COST Office's invitation to the MC to initiate the preparation process for the Final Evaluation by compiling copies of relevant publications (reports in particular) the MC advised that publications have already been collected and put on the Action website.

9. Request for new members

The period within which COST member states can join this Action without any conditions being imposed, has run for twelve months from the date of approval of the Committee of COST Senior Officials and has expired on 13 June 2006. Any request of a COST member state for accession to COST Action E53 which will be submitted after this date will have to be approved by its MC.

Since the last MC meeting the COST Office has not received any requests for accession to this COST Action.

10. Non COST participation

Since the last MC meeting the COST Office has not received any request from a Non COST institution.

MC advised that University of British Columbia (Canada) has previously been accepted as a non-COST institution member of E53.

11. Web news

The Web-site of Action E53 is accessible under the following address:
<http://www.cost53.net/>

A brief update on the status of the Website should be given.

12. Progress Report of Working Groups

The MC should be informed by the 3 WG Coordinators as well as the Task Force Leaders about activities so far carried resp. planned.

The MC is invited to complete the list of WG members.

13. Long term planning

Task Groups

The establishment of Task Groups focusing at specific issues might be taken into consideration

A Task Group will be established comprising the Steering Group members C, VC & WG leaders plus local organiser = 8 people; in September there will be a joint Steering Group/ Task Group meeting to discuss Delft Conference.

Another Task Group will develop and circulate a questionnaire comprising 10-12 questions (Qs to be submitted to Chair within two weeks of MC meeting). Draft questionnaire will be reviewed by MC members in WGs1, 2 & 3 for approval before distribution. It will then be circulated to MC members who will arrange translation (translation to be completed by end of summer) into home language. Questionnaire in each language will then be loaded onto guestbook website. MC members then to send link to relevant companies in their own country and responses will all be submitted electronically. Questionnaire will be ready for distribution at Delft conference in October. Data collection to be completed by December.

Action items:

- MC members to submit possible questions for inclusion in questionnaire to Chair within two week of MC5 meeting
- MC members to begin building national distribution lists for questionnaire

Training School

The organising of a Training School might be considered.

The date and the venue of the meetings planned for the years 2008/2009 should be determined.

The outline of the next meetings should be discussed.

After the Work plan for the years 2008/2009 has been discussed the meetings necessary to implement the work plan should be fixed (date (alternative date), venue, local organiser, meeting objectives, reports, questionnaires, country contributions, Steering Committee meetings, etc.)

All activities which have a financial implication have to be approved by the MC (meetings, subventions, trainings courses, publications) and recorded in the minutes.

No training schools planned for 2009 budget year.

14. Time and place of next meetings

The Management Committee might revise and update the meeting plan elaborated in the course of previous MC meetings, **the meetings planned for the year 2008/2009 should be fixed** (under the assumption that one reimbursement amounts to 800 Euro, please take into consideration that on average only 80% of the expected experts eligible for reimbursement are finally asking for the reimbursement of their costs arising from the participation in the concerned meeting):

Budget 2009 (1 June 2008-31 May 2009)

Delft SC	22-23 TBC September 2008	SG & Task Group
Delft	29 – 30 October 2008	Conference & MC mtg
Ljubljana	21-22 April 2009	workshop & MC mtg

Budget 2010 (1 June 2009 – 31 May 2010)

Oporto/Lisbon	Autumn 2009	Conference & MC mtg
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WGs 1 & 2 activities in Spring 2009 to be determined

The E55 representative to the E53 MC meeting enquired about the possibility of holding an E53-E55 workshop and allocating or seeking a “liaison budget” in this regard.

Budget relevant decisions:

The Management Committee approved the following requests:

- Publication of proceedings from Delft conference Euro 3,000
- Grant 2009 for the Action Chair (2.000 Euro)
- Possibility of questionnaire costs to be covered from 2009 budget (approved by MC but will need to seek advise from COST Office)
- Subvention: Delft SC meeting, Delft conference and Ljubljana workshop will all seek workshop support (exact figures TBC) in 2009 (approved by MC)

15. Any other business

The MC Members should be informed about the possibilities of the instruments provided by COST Strategic Workshops (*), ESF (Research Conferences); INTAS; EUREKA as well as NATO Research programme.

(*) Strategic Workshops are an important new element in the positioning of COST. The aim is to bring researchers and decision makers together to discuss forefront topics, principally of an inter-disciplinary nature, which can be used in the future development of the topic and which may form the basis of future proposals, not only to COST, but also to the framework programme and to other European organisations responsible for research networking.

On 19 – 21 April 2007 a Strategic Workshop on ‘Health and the Natural Outdoors’ has been held in Larnaca, Cyprus. Its purpose was to identify the extent of knowledge in this field and the implications for policy and for future research. The Workshop found that nature-based approaches can contribute significantly to health objectives in Europe by ensuring that people have contact with nature in their everyday lives and that nature would be an integral feature of health care environments and approaches, an aspect of growing importance in steadily ageing and urbanising society. More effective coordination and communication of existing knowledge and understanding, combined with increased investment in new research, is necessary to capitalise on the benefits of nature-based approaches.

Soon the proceedings of the following strategic workshop

**Forest ecosystems in a changing environment:
identifying future monitoring and research needs**
(Istanbul, 11 – 13 March 2008)

Global change and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions
(Innsbruck, 7 – 9 April 2008)

will be published.

Currently the following two Strategic Workshops served by the FPS Team are under preparation:

Improving Energy Efficiency in Papermaking
Improving energy utilisation - reducing carbon emissions
Finding energy solutions
(Hoofddorp (NL), 9 – 11 June 2008)

Continuously Open Call

28 March 2008 has been the latest collection date for the continuous COST Open Call for Proposals to support Scientific and Technical Collaboration in Europe. Approx. 400 teams have submitted preliminary proposals for a new COST Action.

Friday, 26 September 2008 has been determined as the next collection date for continuous COST Open Call (further details will be soon available at www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=721).

Future Collection Dates:

- 27 March 2009
- 25 September 2009
- 26 March 2010

COST Near Neighbour Policy

At its 167th meeting (March 2007), the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) approved extended support from the involvement of researchers from institutions in the Balkans and Europe's "Near Neighbours" not already members of COST.

Countries qualifying for support:

Balkans

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina

"Eastern Neighbours"

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Georgia
- Moldova
- Russian Federation
- Ukraine

COST Strategy towards increased support of early stage researchers

Introduction

A widely accepted deficiency in European research is the lack of opportunity for early stage researchers to develop independent careers and to establish their first research group under their own responsibility. This is a structural problem that leads to a dramatic waste of research talent in Europe. It limits or delays the emergence of the next generation of researchers, who bring new ideas to the European Research Area (ERA).

The definition of the term “early stage researchers” used in this document is based on the time that elapses between the date of the PhD/doctorate (or similar experience) and the date of involvement in the COST Action. If this time span is less than 10 years, a person fits the definition; of course, periods of careers’s leave have to be added to the time span mentioned. A similar definition will be used, e.g. in the European Research Council (ERC) and other support schemes.

Suggestions of support measures

There are a large number of possibilities for COST to give early stage researchers better support through the existing instruments. The list of support measures is not conclusive; proposals are not given in priority order. The Action-related support measures can be strongly recommended to all COST Actions and either be implemented by the COST Office or by the Actions, according to their needs. More general support measures shall be given as recommendations to the Actions or to the COST National Coordinators.

Support measure 1: Short Term Scientific Mission

- Set a target figure, from which a percentage of the Action budget shall be used for STSMs (Domain Committee together with the COST Office).
- STSMs of early stage researchers can be expanded in duration beyond 3 months in welljustified cases. Financial support shall be increased accordingly.

Support measure 2: Training Schools

- Training Schools shall already be planned at the proposal stage of a new COST Action. This shall be reflected in the criteria for the open call at the full proposal stage.
- The current level of this activity shall be raised.

Support measure 3: Action Think Tank

- An early stage researchers' network may be created within the Action as a “think tank”.
- Each year one of the workshops of the Action would involve early stage researchers to strengthen links with each other and with experienced scientists involved in the management
- of the Action.

Support measure 4: Conference Grant

- A Conference Grant shall be established: Each Domain offers 3 supporting grants (max. 3000 euro each) per year for early stage researchers to participate in an international conference outside of the COST Action activities.
- In order to be eligible for this grant, an accepted oral contribution is required.
- The grant can be used to cover travel and subsistence costs, conference fees, and the costs of conference workshops.
- Selection Process by written procedure: written application through the COST Office/grant holder to the Executive group of the Domain Committee through the Action's Management Committee, selection based on a list of criteria (to be defined by the Domain Committee), preparation of a short list of max 3 applications by DC. Final decision shall be taken by written procedure by DC Chair and 2 members of the Executive Group of the Domain (Vice Chair Professor Giuseppe Scarascia-Mugnozza (email: giuseppe.scarascia@ibaf.cnr.it), Ms. Piroska Károlyiné-Szabó) three times per year for one grant each.

Support measure 5: Selection of Chairs

- Recommendation to the Actions to nominate early stage researchers as Chairs of Working Groups.

Support measure 6: Open Call

- The text as well as the criteria of the Open Call shall encourage early stage researchers to submit proposals to the Open Call.

Support measure 7: Early stage researchers as national MC delegates

- Recommendation to the COST National Coordinators to nominate early stage researchers as national delegates whenever feasible.

Final statement

COST follows an overall policy of increasing its support to early stage researchers. The preferred strategic initiative is to use the existing instruments and to apply them in favour of early stage researchers and as a means of capacity building. Based on the availability of funds, the support measures described in this paper shall be implemented by the COST Office or recommended to the Domain Committees, the Actions or the National Coordinators.

The strategy is described in detail in COST Document 212/07 titled COST Strategy for Early Stage researchers.

Pilot Scheme to foster non-COST institution participations in COST Actions

COST has a long standing tradition of non-COST country institutions participating in Actions. Applications for such participations are assessed by the respective Management Committee of the Action, endorsed by the respective Domain Committee and by JAF and approved by the CSO taking into account the mutual benefit expected from this interaction.

The COST strategy for cooperation with non-COST countries defines the scope of these activities. It pays special attention to the EU “Near Neighbours” policy. The COST Office implemented a special scheme to support participants from the respective countries setting aside € 100.000 p.a. for this specific purpose.

The following pilot scheme for Australia and New Zealand is approved:

Only COST Actions for which participation of institutions from Australia and New Zealand has been approved by the CSO are eligible for this reciprocal additional STSM support. According to the normal COST procedures these approvals require the positive response of the MC of an Action to the request of the institution from Australia and New Zealand. If the MC considers this participation in the interest of the Action the MC requests this particular participation to be endorsed by the DC and eventually approved by the CSO.

The extended STSM support is available to institutions in Australia and New Zealand based on a reciprocal agreement between the COST Office and a dedicated partner organisation. The dedicated partner organisation will receive a specific budget from the authorities of the respective country to ensure the reciprocity.

At present Australia and New Zealand are prepared to support such a reciprocal scheme. For New Zealand the dedicated partner institution will be the “Royal Society of New Zealand” (RSNZ) – and for Australia it is expected to be the “Forum for EU-Australia Science and Technology cooperation” (FEAST).

The COST Office will provide up to € 25.000 p.a. respectively for travel of European scientists in the respective COST Actions to the Australian and New Zealand institutions. An adequate amount will be provided by each dedicated partner organisation as additional support for the participation of researchers from respectively Australia and New Zealand in COST Actions.

The strategy is described in detail in COST Document 211/07 titled Pilot Scheme with Australia and New Zealand.

COST Strategy for Cooperation with institutions from non-COST countries

The CSO takes note of the report by the rapporteur (doc. COST 220/07). CSO recalls its previous orientations regarding the cooperation with non-COST countries and confirms, in particular, that COST is open to participation of institutions from non-COST countries in COST Actions following the bottom-up principle and for mutual benefit, to be approved by the CSO on a case by case basis. In this context, the CSO agrees furthermore that:

- The arrangements previously agreed by the CSO for the Balkan Countries and the Near Neighbours (doc. COST 329/05) are extended as follows:
 - up to two researchers from each of these countries may be reimbursed for attendance at the meetings of COST Actions,

- researchers from these countries are eligible to participate in other activities decided at the level of individual Actions (such as meetings, short-term scientific missions, training schools and conferences),
- the Management Committees of the respective Actions report on the success of these extended Near Neighbour activities,
- the COST Office provides appropriate budget allocations within the COST Grant System. The present level of funding of these Near Neighbour activities remains unchanged until the demand exceed the available budgets based on an indicative annual report by the COST Office on this matter.

The strategy regarding the cooperation with institutions from non-COST countries is described in detailed in COST Document 229/07 titled COST Strategy for Cooperation with institutions from non-COST countries.

COST Office Newsletter

The eighth issue of the COST Office Newsletter has been released recently and can be found on the COST Website.

([www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=18&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=336&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=441&cHash=3963d2863a](http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=18&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=336&tx_ttnews[backPid]=441&cHash=3963d2863a))

16. Closing

Chair thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and thanked organiser for organisation of an excellent meeting.

Annex: Planned Publications

Action Number: E53

Working Title of planned publication:

Editor/Publishing House:

Format:

Number of Pages (estimate):

Number of Copies to be financed by COST (estimate):

Date of finalisation of the manuscript (realistic estimate):

Date of printing (realistic estimate):

Presumably to be financed out of the budget 2009 (1 June 2008 – 31 May 2009)