

## Minutes of the ForestDSS Community of Practice Working Committee (WC)

Skype 2017-15-05; 15.00-17.00 CET, *Actions are indicated in bold letters.*

Present:

José Borges  
Eva-Maria Nordström  
Keith Reynolds  
Tomas Lämås  
Ljusk-Ola Eriksson  
Chiara Torresan  
Sean Gordon  
Jan Kašpar (keeper of the minutes)  
Harald Vacik (chair)

### 1. Opening

Harald Vacik welcomed everyone to the skype meeting and summarized the latest activities related to the CoP.

### 2. Information and update on the latest developments within the CoP

A long time has passed by since the last WC-Meeting (November 2015) and the coordinator apologizes for not actively calling a meeting in 2016. However, Harald Vacik was trying “to keep the things running” – newsletters were sent several times a year, some efforts to update the CoP website as well – oncoming conferences; publications of CoP members. The technical problems with hosting the website were partly solved with a new technician – but we are still working on that (as Allan Sims has stopped his support).

A short report of the WC-members is given on the latest development and future activities:

Ljusk-Ola Eriksson recommended to others the PhD courses focused on DSS in June 2017 and informed about IUFRO Landscape Ecology Conference in Halle, Germany - good option to present Forest DSS. There is also another project focusing on models in forestry sector – project members could make use of the CoP ForestDSS to document/describe models (the project runs until the end of this year). **Ljusk-Ola is co-project leader of this project and will facilitate the next steps.** Also ALTERFOR project offers the opportunity to engage in activities. ALTERFOR project is until 2020.

José Borges informed about several interesting papers published in two special issues (Sustainability and Forest Policy and Economics [based on ORCHESTRA Cost Action]). The meeting of *SuFoRUN* project (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) within the H2020) focused on Decision Support System in Forest Management and was organized (together with other CoP members) in Lisbon in January 2016. Event report and website are available now. **José Borges will make the material available on the CoP- website.**

Jan Kašpar informed about the ICDST conference in Plymouth last year organized together with EWG-DSS. There is great opportunity for cooperation between Forest DSS CoP and EWG-DSS. However, a formal cooperation was now stopped due to the BREXIT from UK point of view.

Chiara Torres talked about a new project on which she is working now. This project is aimed on developing of DSS for Forest Management under Climate Change in Apennines. The project could be introduced on the CoP website as well.

Tomas Lämås and his team finished the project about DSS Heureka in Norway. The report is going to be finishing and will be published later. **Tomas Lämås will provide information about the results on the CoP website.**

Keith Reynolds introduced the activities related to the Spatial Decision Support Knowledge Portal and EMDS. It seems that the USDA Forest Service is concerned currently regarding IT developments.

Sean Gordon is working on the new Spatial Decision Support Knowledge Portal related to SDS Consortium and University of Redlands. Couple of conferences were organized in US related to DSS, planning etc. A cooperation between the SDS Portal and CoP ForestDSS is still welcome. A project proposal is currently developed focusing on conceptual modelling and a joint DSS design, might be an option for further collaboration. **Sean Gordon will inform the others about further options.**

### **3. Reflection on responsibilities / tasks of current WC members / role of the coordinator**

The critical review of the community activities is needed. The time for extra activities of all members is limited and that is why the CoP WC should focus only on those activities which could bring some benefits for members. A lot of activities were discussed in the past, however the organisation of joint sessions at conferences and the work on special issues and the update of the CoP website / newsletter were the most relevant activity of the group. WC members confirmed that the activities were good.

Ljusk-Ola Eriksson proposes to continue with the update of the website for facilitating the communication in the community and support cooperation. The problem is how to find some funding for maintaining of the website.

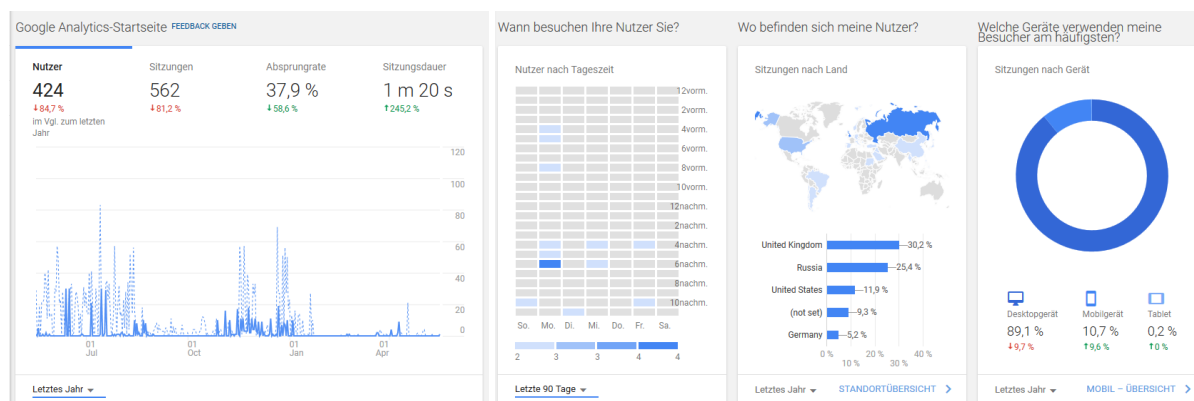
Harald Vacik see two issues. One is the technical issue (where some funding is needed for the programmers/web developer) and the other is the content management. How to keep the content up to date in a sustainable way? The information is currently not processed in a formal way, it is more based on a fuzzy and unstructured process.

Ljusk-Ola Eriksson proposes to divide the responsibilities for the website content between WC members. Taking ownership for a certain topic / field would perhaps stimulate the content generation.

Harald Vacik noted that all WC members have the same rights for adding information on the website.

José Borges draws attention to reviewing community structures and role of individual working groups. The individual involvement is needed. The current working group members will be the starting point for reviewing of structure. The review of communication in website and contents of the website is needed, after this the restructure of working groups can come. **Harald Vacik will send out a reminder to all WC members to provide some critical feedback on the contents of the website and how a revised structure could look like and how the responsibility could be split among the WC members.**

Keith Reynolds proposed to critically review the “use of the website” – google analytics or the drupal reports could be used for that purpose. See below some examples for [www.forestdss.org](http://www.forestdss.org) from Google analytics



The website should be kept up to data, as it is useful for disseminating the information about conferences, special issues etc. The website can work like a “filter” or “hub” for forest DSS related content.

Harald Vacik answered to Chiara Torresan on her question that new members are welcome every time, the CoP is an open community. Each member who goes through the registration process is a member of CoP. New members are presented in the newsletters, they can be proposed to be part of WC. **Chiara Torresan will promote membership through her channels.**

The next important point which has to be discussed during a physical meeting is the coordination of CoP. As indicated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU has been updated in December 2015) the coordination of the CoP should change every two years. According to this it is needed to discuss the way forward – one option is to find new candidates for the coordination among the WC members and prepare the election of a new coordination, another option would be to prolong the duration of the coordination in the MoU.

Ljusk-Ola Eriksson noted that a big problem will be to find someone who will be willing to do the coordination and continue with activities of CoP. A plan how to continue must be prepared before the next Council meeting (physical meeting at a conference). Candidates for the coordination will be contacted before the physical meeting. Chiara Torresan agrees with the survey of candidates before a meeting. **Ljusk-Ola Eriksson and Harald Vacik will discuss the options and will propose a procedure.**

#### **4. Discussion of a "focal point" for the CoP activities in 2017/18**

The Erasmus+ application for Forest DSS was submitted already twice in the past, we can try again to resubmit the proposal. However, somebody would have to act as a coordinator, the chances for a successful application seem to be limited in Austria – maybe there is a higher success rate in other countries. **There are also training courses and PhD courses – Ljusk-Ola Eriksson will sent out it in the news.** José Borges agreed that is a need to concentrate also on funding options (see point 6).

#### **5. Participation in meetings 2017 and next council meeting**

Opportunities to meet physically at a conference this year were discussed. Probably SSAFR and IUFRO conferences are the best option for a council meeting this year and meet personally. In case that one of the meetings is selected, an early announcement would be good. Another option would be to organize two meetings, so that everybody has the opportunity to join, is also possible based on the past experiences.

**José Borges will check how many CoP members will be in SSAFR 2017 conference and Ljusk-Ola Eriksson will try to ask the IUFRO 2017 organizers about the list of presenters to plan the best opportunity for a ForestDSS council meeting. Ljusk-Ola Eriksson together with Harald Vacik will make a suggestion for the best opportunity for a ForestDSS council meeting at IUFRO 2017.**

#### **6. Funding options for ForestDSS CoP**

Several options for funding were discussed. José Borges presented possible extension of his and Jordi's ITM project proposal to other countries, types of ecosystems, management types etc. Main focus was the med ERANET group, but this could be enlarged in a new application. **José Borges will take the initiative in case that a new application is going to be prepared.**

Jan Kašpar informed about the new call in COST and proposed also the idea to broaden the scope of an application to a landscape approach. The deadline is 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The opportunity is to submit a multi- and interdisciplinary project. We should try to submit a more general DSS topic, extending the focus of Forest DSS (water management, biodiversity conservation, bioeconomy, ....). It would be a good opportunity to invite other partners from EWG-DSS for example. Ola-Ljusk Eriksson agreed that the extending the project to landscape perspectives makes a great sense. **Further options for raising funds under COST will be screened in the next months by the WC members of the CoP.**

#### **7. Any other business**

No other points were raised for discussion.

#### **8. Closing**

Harald Vacik closed the meeting and thanked all for their time and contributions.