

Minutes of the ERFP - Steering Committee meeting - Bratislava, Slovakia

Chair: Asko Mäki-Tanila

Participants: Oya Akin, NC Turkey; Didier Bouchel, NC France; Elzbieta Martyniuk, NC Poland; Nina Sæther, NC Norway; Tamas Szobolevszki, NC Hungary; Frank Begemann, Sebastian Winkel, Babette Balzer, ERFP Secretariat

ERFP Steering Committee Meeting

Asko Mäki-Tanila opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Sebastian Winkel was appointed as rapporteur.

ERFP reports

The Secretariat presented the drafts of the ERFP Progress Report 2012 and the ERFP Financial Report 2012. Regarding the activities of the Secretariat the SC recommended that it should be stated that ERFP supported FAO in the nomination of European experts for the evaluation of the Trust Fund proposals.

Concerning point 2.3 of the ERFP Progress Report 2012 the slow registration of the NC for the Assembly meeting and the connected problems with the organisation were mentioned by the Secretariat. The SC recommended appealing to the NC in the Assembly meeting for a quicker registration.

The point 2.4 of the ERFP Progress Report 2012 contains following proposal to change the ToR: *"....Members of a Working Group should be experts in the respective task and should be nominated by their National Coordinator. NCs are invited to nominate one member for each Working Group. Each WG is coordinated by a WG leader chair elected by the WG members for a [3][4]-years term of office. A re-election for one term is possible. The WG leader chair has the responsibility to present a draft annual work plan to the Annual Meeting of the Assembly of NCs for adoption. The WG leader chair should also oversee the implementation of the work plan, in liaison with the Secretariat and the SC, where appropriate, and to encourage involvement of all the WG members"....* The SC agreed to present this proposal to the Assembly and ask for their decision.

Regarding the already closed TF "Agri-environmental Measures" the SC pointed out the importance of this issue and decided to deliberate on further activities in this matter in the first half of the year 2013. In the conclusions of the ERFP Progress Report 2012 the Secretariat was pleased by the SC chair to emphasize the exchange with the European Commission for relevant information on AnGR in Europe. Finally the draft ERFP Progress Report 2012 was accepted by the SC with the above mentioned additions.

Afterwards the draft of the ERFP Financial Report 2012 was discussed. The report contains a table with the country contributions to ERFP. The SC decided to show in this table the separate countries and their category, their total contribution for the period from 2001 until 2009, their contributions for the single years from 2010 until 2012 and their requested annual contribution according to the ToR. Some editorial changes in the ERFP Financial Report 2012 were made for a better understanding.

Connected with the ERFP reports the drafted "Country-LoA" regarding EFABIS was discussed. The ERFP Steering Committee decided to ask the ERFP Assembly again in Bratislava, whether changes in the wording are required.

Operating expenses of ERFP Secretariat

The operating expenses of the Secretariat were already discussed in connection with the ERFP reports, in where these expenses are presented. For the work of the Secretariat (incl. management of the ERFP website) 10,000 € were paid in 2011 and 2012. But according to the documented workload of the Secretariat the real costs of this task were more than 40,000 €. Currently, it is not intended to increase the budget for the Secretariat but institutions which are interested in taking over the function of the Secretariat should consider this gap between real costs and provided budget. The ERFP Progress Report 2012 quantifies the achieved workload with 965 h/a.

ERFP budget

The ERFP budget was already discussed in connection with the ERFP Financial Report 2012, wherein a proposal for the budget 2013 is included. The proposal was accepted by the SC and shall be presented to the Assembly in Bratislava to ask for their decision.

Revised ERFP Rules for Reimbursement

On the last SC meeting in March 2012 the SC had already decided to propose some changes in the ERFP Rules for Reimbursement for clarification to the Assembly. After this SC meeting in March 2012 further questions to the ERFP Rules for Reimbursements were raised. To clarify these questions the Secretariat added the following further proposals in the draft, which were accepted by the SC.

See point 2. of the ERFP Rules for Reimbursement:

“According to the Terms of Reference the following costs are eligible for refund:

- *for the ERFP Working Groups: travel costs incl. accommodation for WG members only (or for one representative of the WG member confirmed by the respective NC), travel costs incl. accommodation for one additional expert, publication of reports, other actions, consumables and other costs; durables will not be considered an eligible expense nor will be salaries.*
- *for the ERFP Task Forces: travel costs incl. accommodation for TF members only (or for one representative of the TF member confirmed by the respective NC), travel costs incl. accommodation for one additional expert and meeting costs.”*

See point 7. of the ERFP Rules for Reimbursements:

“Accommodation costs will be paid by ERFP. Participants and / or organisers are encouraged to book hotels with good rates. The reimbursement rate shall be capped at a maximum of € 120 per room per night.

*Exceptions may be made in justified cases **with prior consent by the ERFP Secretariat only**. An explanatory statement has to be made on the reimbursement claim accordingly.”*

The draft version for the amendment of the ERFP Rules for Reimbursements shall be presented to the Assembly in Bratislava for consideration and adoption.

Draft letter ERFP country contribution

The Secretariat prepared a draft letter on the country contributions, which includes a reference to the FAO. But for the general use the SC preferred the former version without that reference to the FAO. Each country which

has not paid their country contribution for the year 2012 until September 2012 shall receive the letter on country contribution. Beginning with the year 2013 the Secretariat shall send the letter regarding the country contribution, in January of each year. In cases, where countries like Turkey need the reference to the FAO in this letter, the Secretariat can prepare a specific version. NCs which need a specific letter shall be asked on the Assembly meeting in Bratislava to inform the Secretariat about their specific needs.

Nominations to SC

The draft of the ERFP Progress Report 2012 mentioned the need for a replacement of Asko Mäki-Tanila (NC of Finland, chair of the SC) and Didier Bouchel (NC of France) according to the ToR. Nominated candidates were Catherine Marguerat-König (NC of Switzerland) as chair and Luis Telo da Gama (NC of Portugal) as member representing the Western Region. The candidates shall be proposed to the Assembly and in case that there are no votes against they shall be elected by acclamation.

Chair for two terms

The SC decided to ask the Assembly for a change of the ToR regarding the duration of terms of office for the SC chair. As proposed for the WG chair the duration of terms of office for the SC chair should be 4 years or 3 years with one possible re-election.

Need for new TF

In preparation for the Assembly meeting the ERFP Secretariat asked the NC if they have a need for a new TF. The Secretariat had not received any reply.

Participation & preparation for bilateral meeting with EAAP on budget

A meeting between the SC and EAAP is arranged on 26th August 2012 to discuss and improve the situation regarding the reimbursement procedure, the ERFP budget management and possibilities to generate interest on credit. Elzbieta Martyniuk as a SC member and the Secretariat volunteer for represent ERFP in this meeting. Furthermore the new chair of the SC shall be asked to participate.

Preparation for 7th ITWG in October 2012

The SC recognized that Denmark might have the position to coordinate the preparation of the 7th ITWG. A workshop to prepare the European position would be very useful, but further information, whether FAO or another institution would arrange such a workshop, were not available.

The meeting was closed by Asko Mäki-Tanila at 5:45 pm.