

**1st CPF – GFIS Implementation
Group Meeting
November 2-5, 2004**

MINUTES

Global Forest Information Service - GFIS
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Version	Summary of changes	Author/Organization	Date
1.0	New document	Eero Mikkola, IUFRO	10/11/2004
1.1	Amendments	Peter Holmgren, FAO	11/11/2004
1.2.	Amendments	Joris Siermann, CIFOR	11/11/2004

CPF - Global Forest Information Service (GFIS)

1st CPF – GFIS Implementation Group Meeting,

November 2-5, 2004

FAO in Rome, Italy

MINUTES

Participants:

Eero Mikkola (IUFRO)

Magnus Grylle (FAO)

Peter Holmgren (FAO)

Joris Siermann (CIFOR)

Rebecca Tavani (FAO)

1. Objectives of the Meeting

The participants agreed to refer to themselves as the Implementation Group of GFIS, and agreed that the objective of this meeting is to provide a realistic plan how the current GFIS prototype can be brought into a production mode. The plan should be based on the list of components and the partner(s) that may be in a position to take responsibility presented on the concept paper “Development of a Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) as a CPF Initiative”, approved by CPF in September 2004.

2. Contributions by organizations in 2005

FAO (Holmgren) informed that FAO can fulfill commitments described in the GFIS concept paper, including to host the GFIS multilingual gateway, and has secured a person (Ms Rebecca Tavani) to work on the GFIS gateway development (i.e. continue to develop the website(s), web pages, incorporate external functionality, entries in browse bibliographies, list of partners, oversee translations etc.)

IUFRO (Mikkola) informed that IUFRO can cover the components “Information provider partnership” and GFIS co-ordination and documentation” and the contribution to the component “Training and capacity building” through IUFRO’s own in-house resources (Eero Mikkola – GFIS Coordinator; Michael Kleine through IUFRO-SPDC). IUFRO will be in the position to cover the component “maintenance and refinement of search functionalities” until the end of this year. IUFRO retains the lead on the development of metadata search functionality, but this commitment may have to be revisited later.

CIFOR (Joris Siermann) informed that CIFOR is committed to play an active role in supporting the development of the GFIS system by allocating 40% of a senior information systems specialist time plus junior staff/consultants to do specific tasks (i.e. graphic

design, adjusting the current search engine, software development, system testing and documentation).

It was assumed that the GFIS initiative would not be a funded body and that all contributions will have to be provided through partner organizations, which resembles the overall constitution of CPF and the implementation of other CPF initiatives. It was concluded that this should be verified by the Steering Committee

It was pointed that Waicent is not a separate partner, as indicated in the concept paper, but sorts under FAO.

Staff resources available for GFIS from 11/2004 until 12/2005, approximate number of man-months (using components as identified in the concept paper):

Component	IUFRO	FAO	CIFOR
Information provider partnership development, including to establish procedures and technology for extracting metadata	4 + 1 SPDC	0	1
Specification of metadata standards for use with all partners	2	3	1
GFIS multilingual gateway with information browsing functions and access to search function	1	8	0,5
Metadata maintenance and refinement of search functionalities	2	1(-4)	3
Training and capacity building	2 SPDC	0	2
GFIS coordination and documentation	5	1	1

3. Gap analysis of the components on the concept paper

It was agreed that the six components described in the concept paper all cover relevant items for the work at hand.

It was discussed whether the GFIS initiative will be an implementing organization or body on its own or rests with the partner organizations. In any case it was felt that it is important that each of the partner organizations will implement the components mentioned in the concept paper. In addition it is relevant to link activities, e.g. capacity building carried out in the respective field programmes, to the CPF-GFIS initiative. It was concluded that this should be discussed and verified by the Steering Committee.

4. GFIS partners

It was discussed that GFIS has different types of partners and the GFIS Partner can be linked onto GFIS e.g. in the following functions: information provision, system development, marketing, and capacity building.

5. GFIS functionalities

It was agreed that GFIS will initially use the information resource types identified in Annex II to categorize information.

It was agreed that GFIS should initially aim at including three different ways to find forest-related information:

1. Browse a core (small) database of information resources maintained as part of the GFIS gateway, covering all GFIS partners and CPF members and organized by the GFIS information resources categories.
2. Search and browse a virtual database of metadata provided by the partners through the agreed GFIS metadata specification.
3. Google search tailored to GFIS.

6. What makes the user come back onto GFIS?

The following motives were outlined as what makes a user come back to the GFIS gateway:

1. The user finds the right content/context
 - a. quick answers to frequent types of queries (e.g. contact details, publications);
 - b. detailed (breadth/depth) content;
 - c. forestry relevance.
2. Reliability (24/7 availability, accuracy/precision (“quality”) and good provenance of information)
3. Expectations to find new material (e.g. news, new publications)

The following resource types were outlined to probably be the most interesting to users in the GFIS gateway: News, events, vacancies, journal, contacts, publication and databases/datasets.

7. What makes partners stay?

It was discussed what makes the GFIS partners stay with the GFIS initiative and the following reasons were outlined:

1. low costs (no or little overhead for the partner for e.g system development);
2. internal gains (internal information management improves by participating);
3. high visibility (wider use of own information);
4. influence on GFIS concept and implementation.

8. Milestones and deliverables

The following milestones, deliverables and responsibilities were agreed:

Milestones and deliverables	Responsible	Date
1. Production system with limited functionality		15.12.2004
a. Gateway	FAO/RT	
b. Browse links to partner information resources (CPF members and current information providers)	FAO/RT, IUFRO/EM	
c. Metadata search (current prototype)	IUFRO/EM, CIFOR/JS	
d. Google domain search (demo)	JS	
e. Partner info	RT,EM	
f. Feedback	MG,RT	
g. Forum	MG,RT	
h. Copyright/ownership statement	EM,JS	
i. New graphic design	JS	
j. Move www.gfis.net to FAO	EM/MG	
From each action (a-j) documentation should be provided		
2. Documentation of production system	EM	15.1.2005
a. Website: minutes, system development, presentation etc.		
b. Working papers to indicates progress, EM investigates,	EM	
3. Metadata standards website	MG	15.1.2005
initial data types: news, events, jobs, publications		
establish procedures to develop metadata standards in the future.		
4. Implementation of search/browse functionality	EM,JS,MG	15.4.2005
implement initial data type standards at CIFOR/FAO/IUFRO	EM	
service operable for initial data types in GFIS gateway		
5. Implement standards in (3) for other providers		
6. Develop standards for additional information resource types		
7. Migrate old data from prototype		
8. Google deal + implementation		
		8.-
Release in World Congress 2005 - Brisbane, Australia		13.8.2005

MG= Magnus Grylle, FAO
EM= Eero Mikkola, IUFRO
JS= Joris Sierman, CIFOR
RT= Rebecca Tavani, FAO

9. Future meetings and Preparation of the SC meeting

The next meeting of the Implementation Group was tentatively scheduled for January 2005, to deal specifically with the development of the metadata standard.

Mikkola and Holmgren discussed and agreed that the following items should be dealt with in the next GFIS Steering Committee meeting, which try be arranged as a telephone meeting with the three GFIS core partners (IUFRO, FAO and CIFOR) either on Thursday November 11th or Friday November 12th:

- Approval of the working plan developed by the implementation group.
- Verify commitments by partners.
- Organizational matters: We have the GFIS Steering Committee with three core partners (IUFRO, FAO and CIFOR) and the GFIS Implementation Group with same partners for the moment. Trough which mechanism we invite new partners (non CPF members) to work with the GFIS initiative either in the SC or the Implementation Group?

Other matters

A side meeting was held with FAO-GILW, see Annex 1

Annex 1

Notes from side-meeting with FAO-GILW

A side meeting with Johannes Keizer and Margherita Sini was made to exchange views related to metadata standards.

Keizer introduced Open Archive Initiative and the AGRIS application profile:

- Open Archive Initiative was raised as a potential interesting initiative for GFIS. The OAI is a data warehousing technique coming from the academic world to harvest information on distributed servers by means of standardized interfaces. The OAI has full production status and rumour has it that Google is interested in the underlying technology.
- The AGRIS application profile (international information system for the agricultural sciences and technology) has developed a standard, created specifically to enhance the description, exchange and subsequent retrieval of agricultural Document-Like Information Objects (DLIO's). It is a format that allows sharing of information across dispersed bibliographic systems and is based on well-known and accepted metadata standards.

The following fields were discussed where FAO can further contribute to the GFIS initiative:

- Development of a GFIS application profile; possibly adopt the AGRIS profile.
- Exchanges of experience for development of metadata standards (for news, events, jobs etc).
- Feedback and “best practices” on information harvesting and search methodologies.
- Development of a GFIS thesaurus