

**4th CPF – GFIS Implementation
Group Meeting
August 10-11, 2005**

MINUTES

Global Forest Information Service - GFIS
E-mail: [gfris_coordinator@iufro.org](mailto:gfis_coordinator@iufro.org)
URL: www.gfis.net



www.iufro.org

©Copyright 2005 by IUFRO, Vienna

Version Control Page

Document control

Document title	MINUTES, 4th CPF – GFIS Implementation Group Meeting, August 10-11, 2005
Document subtitle	
Author	Eero Mikkola, IUFRO
Status of this version, (draft, issued for comment, approved)	Approved
Contribution from	CABI, CIFOR and FAO

Version history

Version	Summary of changes	Author/Organization	Date
1.0	New document	Eero Mikkola, IUFRO	14/09/2005
1.1	Amendments	Gillian Petrokofsky, CABI	15/09/2005
1.2	Amendments	Peter Holmgren, FAO	15/09/2005
1.3.	Amendments	Michael Hailu, CIFOR	15/09/2005

CPF - Global Forest Information Service (GFIS)

4th CPF – GFIS Implementation Group Meeting,
August 10-11, 2005
IUFRO XXII World Congress in Brisbane, Australia

MINUTES

Participants:

Eero Mikkola, IUFRO
Peter Holmgren, FAO
Michael Hailu, CIFOR
Gillian Petrokofsky, CABI
Toral Patel-Weynand, NBII (an observer during items 1-2)

1. Opening and objectives of the meeting

Eero Mikkola (IUFRO) welcomed the GFIS Implementation Group (IG) and the observer Toral Patel-Weynand (NBII) to the meeting and thanked all core partners for their valuable contribution to GFIS implemented before the XXII IUFRO Congress.

The participants agreed that the objective of the meeting was to discuss the state-of-art of GFIS, inform Toral Patel-Weynand (NBII) of GFIS and discuss next steps of GFIS after the Congress.

2. State-of-art at the XXII IUFRO Congress

IUFRO (Mikkola) informed the participants about the state-of-art of GFIS:

- The new GFIS search service was launched a week before the Congress.
- The service offers information exchange standards for job vacancies, meetings and news. The publication standard can be considered as draft version and has to be upgraded after the Congress.
- Based on the standards available on the GFIS site the core partners (CABI, CIFOR, FAO and IUFRO), CBD, EFI and Metla have provided their first sets of metadata feeds to GFIS. Those feeds are indexed and harvested by GFIS and searchable through the new search service. In addition to those partners there were discussions with some other information providers (e.g. UNFF secretariat, US Forest Service, UNECE TC and NBII) about metadata provision, but due to shortage of time they could not provide their feeds to GFIS before the Congress.

- FAO had exported the GFIS Africa metadata records for Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe from the old database to the new environment before the Congress. In this context the IG thanked FAO for its significant efforts to transfer the metadata of GFIS Africa partners.

In this context the participants acknowledged the contributions of the GFIS core partners – CABI, CIFOR, FAO and IUFRO - and thanked them for their inputs.

IUFRO (Mikkola) informed the participants that GFIS was presented at the following forums during the Congress:

- The first GFIS session was organized at the IUFRO-SPDC Pre-Congress Training Course on “The Use of Information and Communication Technology Tools in Forest Research” in Gympie on Friday, August 5th.
- A GFIS report was given to the IUFRO Enlarged Board on Saturday, August 6th.
- Two GFIS demonstrations were made in the Exhibition Hall on Tuesday, August 9th and on Wednesday, August 10th.
- Information about GFIS and demonstrations in person had been available at the IUFRO booth during the whole Congress week, and CABI distributed GFIS information and demonstrated it in person in the Exhibition Hall on Monday and Tuesday.

Based on that information the participants discussed the state-of-the-art of GFIS and they agreed that the GFIS process should move on more visibly from the technical development to the partnership, conceptual and strategy developments. It was noted that not all partners currently listed on the GFIS gateway had been informed by IUFRO about the changes in the approach and arrangements for GFIS, and that some previously provided metadata was now removed from the search function.

Action: The current status has to be communicated immediately after the Congress by the coordinator in order to inform existing Partners of the current status of the GFIS process, the fate of the metadata they had previously submitted to GFIS, and new expectations for metadata provision.

3. Next steps of GFIS implementation

3.1 How a new partner should become a GFIS information provider

The participants discussed different options to open a new account to an information provider on GFIS and they agreed that the best way to proceed was to be open to any interested information provider and that pre-approval of providers is probably not a viable solution due to (a) difficulties to define criteria for approval, and (b) high workload for the coordination of GFIS. Instead a possible solution would be a function through which an information provider sign up and automatically receives a user ID. The signing up would be open to any information provider and the validity of new information providers would be monitored regularly. No firm conclusions were arrived at in terms of how monitoring could be implemented nor what level of monitoring would be appropriate and/or feasible.

Action: FAO will investigate how the signing up function could be implemented in GFIS. Further discussions would be needed to assess the desirability or otherwise of attempting to restrict information providers in any way.

3.2 Process to support partners to provide metadata

The participants discussed how new information providers could be guided and supported, when they provide metadata to GFIS. In this context FAO (Holmgren) informed the participants that on the control panel there is a function for sending feedback to a contact person automatically, if the metadata feed added to a GFIS information channel was not valid. CIFOR (Hailu) and IUFRO (Mikkola) talked about a GFIS Asia model in which certain institutes and contact persons would take care of regional support to new partners when they provide first sets of metadata to GFIS. In this regard, CIFOR and IUFRO met with the representative of FRIM (Dr. Rashid) in Brisbane and agreed that two FRIM staff members will be sent to CIFOR for training in October. CIFOR agreed to cover the travel and accommodation cost of the two FRIM staff members.

Action: IUFRO will proceed to develop the necessary helpdesk functions, possibly by inviting other partners to fill this role. CIFOR will arrange the training or the FRIM staff members.

3.3 Marketing and promotion

The participants discussed how GFIS should be marketed and promoted and how GFIS could receive new information providers efficiently. It was agreed that marketing is the important element in order to receive more users to search through GFIS and partners to provide metadata to GFIS and a marketing plan has to be included into a GFIS concept paper.

Actions: IUFRO/The Coordinator will a) request the IUFRO President to send an invitation to all IUFRO members to become a GFIS Information Provider and b) investigate how GFIS could be acknowledged and promoted by the IUFRO Enlarged Board.

3.4 Current data exchange standards

The current GFIS data exchange standards available on the GFIS site were discussed and it was agreed that the standards for job vacancies, meetings and news were acceptable in their current form, but the draft standard for publications had to be upgraded. Information providers should be informed that they need to take this into account when providing publication data to GFIS.

Action: CABI (Petrokofsky) will make a proposal for an improved version of the metadata standard for publications.

3.5 Next data exchange standards to be prepared

The participants discussed information types for which new GFIS data exchange standards could be prepared in terms of availability on sites of information providers and potential interest by information providers and users. The following information types were listed: contacts, courses/education, datasets, maps, projects/programmes, web pages and spatial standards related to all information types. In this context FAO (Holmgren) noted that GFIS can offer the added benefit of providing internal search service focused only on a site of a partner.

Action: FAO will develop standards in collaboration with IG members, incorporate them in the harvest and search functionalities, and publish the standards specification on the GFIS gateway.

3.6 Gateway management and maintenance

The participants discussed the GFIS gateway management and maintenance from various aspects as to how to define updates, who to decide on updates and prepare initiatives, how to deal with feedback from users and information providers, how to document changes done on the site. FAO (Holmgren) offered that FAO could take the responsibility for the gateway maintenance, seeking input from the IG as needed.

Action: No actions identified.

3.7 Preparation of a GFIS Concept

The participants discussed a GFIS concept which would be prepared after the Congress in September-October as agreed by the GFIS Steering Committee. It was agreed that the first GFIS concept paper "Development of a Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) as a CPF Initiative" should be used as a basis. During the discussion it was also agreed that the GFIS Concept should address the central question, both for information providers and users: "What is the value-added information which GFIS can offer to the forestry community that is not available at the moment?".

Action: IUFRO/The Coordinator will prepare the concept paper in collaboration with all IG members. A draft concept paper should be available at the next IG meeting. The concept paper will be approved by the GFIS Steering Committee.

4. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Implementation Group was tentatively scheduled for 17-18 October 2005 in Rome, to deal specifically with the draft GFIS concept paper.

5. Closure of the meeting

IUFRO/The Coordinator thanked all partners for the productive meeting and closed the meeting.

Other matters

A side meeting was held with NBII and OLS on Thursday August 11th, see Annex 1.

Annex 1

Notes from the side meeting with NBII and OLS on August 11th 2005.

A side meeting chaired by Peter Mayer (IUFRO) with the GFIS Implementation Group (Eero Mikkola/IUFRO, Peter Holmgren/FAO, Michael Hailu/CIFOR and Gillian Petrokofsky/CABI), Toral Patel-Weynand (NBII), Jennifer Pollock (NBII), Eric Landis (NBII) and Roger Mills (Oxford University Library Services) was made to outline potential contributions of potential partners to GFIS beyond metadata provision.

Peter Mayer welcomed all participants to the side event and informed them briefly of the state-of-the-art of GFIS and the GFIS activities at the Congress.

NBII (Patel-Weynand and Pollock) informed the participants of NBII's collaborative program to provide increased access to data and information on the nation's biological resources in the US: three regional nodes, assistance in terms of getting metadata of information providers up and workable, spatial metadata development and conceptual work. After that information NBII representatives listed potential areas of NBII's contribution to GFIS: Metadata resource discovery in the US; Metadata training, Metadata quality control of records submitted through NBII node; Technical assistance as requested by GFIS; User support; User needs assessment data; and Metadata development strategies.

Oxford University Library Services (Mills) said that OLS was willing to assist in the following areas: increase content, promote use, offer training, provide feedback, develop local networks and support document delivery. This support can be implemented either independently or as part of the IUFRO 6.03.00 network. It was agreed that areas listed by OLS are important for GFIS and further discussion on potential contribution is needed between OLS and GFIS.

Both NBII and OLS representatives emphasized that GFIS should offer a clearer mission to potential partners in terms of the role of CPF and its impact on GFIS, organizational structure of GFIS (e.g. Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee and the Implementation Group) and what would be the value added by GFIS for users and information providers. Peter Mayer informed all participants that a GFIS concept would be prepared after the Congress in September-October and it would give clearly defined answers to those issues.

Based on the discussion at the side event, it was proposed that NBII should become a member of the GFIS Implementation Group, and it was agreed by IUFRO (Mayer), CIFOR (Hailu) and FAO (Holmgren) as representatives of the GFIS Steering Committee that NBII is invited as a new member of the GFIS Implementation Group.