

**3<sup>rd</sup> CPF – GFIS Steering  
Committee Meeting  
October 24-25, 2005**

**MINUTES**

**Global Forest Information Service - GFIS**  
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## Version Control Page

### Document control

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<b>Author</b>	Peter Mayer IUFRO
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1.0	New document	Peter Mayer, IUFRO	4/11/2005

CPF - Global Forest Information Service (GFIS)

**3<sup>rd</sup> CPF – GFIS Implementation Group Meeting,**

October 24-25, 2005

FAO, Rome, Italy

## **MINUTES**

### **Participants:**

Peter Mayer, IUFRO

Michael Hailu, CIFOR

Michael Martin, FAO

Peter Csoka, UNFF Secretariat

### **1. Opening of the Meeting and adoption of the agenda**

Peter Mayer (IUFRO) opened the meeting and welcomed Michael Martin (FAO), Michael Hailu (CIFOR) and Peter Csoka (UNFF Secretariat) as participants of the meeting. The agenda was adopted with the understanding that the discussion would not necessarily follow the order of the agenda items. Consequently, at the beginning of the meeting Michael H. presented the outcomes of the recent meeting of the GFIS Implementation Group. The outcomes and suggestions of the IG meeting were highly appreciated by the SC and taken into account as background information for the whole SC meeting.

### **2. SWOT Analysis**

The SC discussed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of/to GFIS. There was consensus that the analysis is reflecting the current status of GFIS and that this result should be revisited and adapted to the changed status of GFIS in the subsequent SC meetings. The result of the SWOT analysis by the SC is as follows:

#### **Strengths**

- Working and visible prototype
- Good standards and tools
- CPF umbrella facilitates work
- Commitments from institutional members of IG and SC
- Strong institutional rooting in IUFRO
- Credible because it is a shared effort (partnership)

**Weaknesses***GFIS characteristics:*

- Limited domains
- Weakly populated
- Not yet user friendly
- Target audience unclear
- Limited contacts with developing country institutions

*Management process:*

- Surviving from “day-by-day” because of resource constraints
- Reliance on good will and voluntary contributions - thus development schedule is vulnerable to other organization demands on IG members
- Undeveloped working methods for GFIS development
- Geographic dispersion of the IG members
- Too much reliance on one partner for technical solutions

**Opportunities**

- Find a more stable basis for contributions from implementation group members
- Build up partnerships with high pay-off potential

**Threats**

- No clear resource commitment
- Perceived uncertainty of the future of the Coordination Unit
- Slower than expected development due to lack of resources results in GFIS being outdated or surpassed by other methods.

**3. Current status of GFIS**

Michael H. briefed the SC on the current technical status of GFIS. The information types news, vacancies and meetings have been agreed by the IG and meta-data standards have been published. Furthermore, for the information type “publications”, the AGRIS application profile has been accepted as meta-data standard.

As regards the partnership development Peter M. reported that the CPF members ITTO and IUCN are prepared to become involved in GFIS. ITTO is proposing resources for GFIS in their Bi-annual Work Programme 2006-07 which will be discussed at the ITTC meeting in Yokohama, November 2005. IUCN is interested to provide metadata to GFIS and requested user statistics of GFIS in order to be able to promote the participation of IUCN in GFIS.

GFIS was also presented at IUFRO World Congress at various occasions which led to an intensive contact between the GFIS co-ordinator and potential partners. Furthermore, a number of important future partners were informed of the progress in GFIS development and encouraged to submit their metadata.

#### 4. GFIS objectives and milestones

The SC had an intensive discussion on the mission, vision and purpose of GFIS drawing from the findings of the IG and the proposals in the Draft GFIS Business Plan. The SC agreed on the following definitions:

##### **Mission**

Create a common platform for forest-related institutions<sup>1</sup> to describe and share information using common standards and tools.

##### **Vision**

Support the conservation and sustainable management of forests through enhanced access to all types of forest information.

##### **Purpose**

Facilitate the exchange of information and research that will contribute to an improved understanding of forest-related issues and to better decision-making.

Based on these definitions, the work plan developed by the IG and the SWOT analysis the SC set the following objectives for the future of GFIS and identified the relevant actions and actors for implementation:

*Objective:* Achieve the technical tasks outlined in the GFIS work plan proposed by the Implementation Group with a first emphasis on stabilizing the functioning of the system

*Action:* Implement activities according to work plan

*Actor:* Implementation Group

*Objective:* All CPF members become GFIS partners (providing information to the system) within one year

*Actions:* IUFRO to contact CPF members and develop political and technical support to become a partner. IUFRO to present GFIS to next CPF meeting

*Actor:* IUFRO supported by SC members

*Objective:* 10 percent of IUFRO members become GFIS partners within a year.

*Action:* IUFRO to contact members and follow-up with GFIS-Africa project nodes. CIFOR to contact 20 potential partners in Asia

*Actor:* IUFRO and CIFOR supported by SC members

*Objective:* Seek funding to help involve developing country institutions in GFIS

*Action:* Prepare and submit at least one project proposal during the next year

*Actor:* Coordination Unit, in collaboration with the Implementation Group

*Objective:* Seek funding to accelerate system development

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions are legally defined entities with an international or national standing.

*Action:* Prepare and submit at least one project proposal during the next year  
*Actor:* Coordination Unit in collaboration with the Implementation Group

*Objective:* Evaluate the utility and functionality of GFIS based on a user and partner survey at the end of 2006 and adapt the system accordingly

*Action:* Conduct survey and adapt system  
*Actor:* Coordination Unit and Implementation Group

In general, the SC welcomed the Draft GFIS Business Plan as prepared by the Coordination Unit. The SC confirmed that the comments from the IG made during its meeting should be incorporated in the Business Plan by the GFIS Coordination Unit. Peter M. was asked to contact the Coordination Unit and the IG on behalf of the SC in order to submit its decisions and to assure that those will also be incorporated in the GFIS Business Plan.

## 5. ToR for SC and IG

The SC thoroughly discussed the GFIS Governance and Implementation Structure. Taking into account the recommendations made in the Draft GFIS Business Plan and the proposals developed by the IG the SC defined the ToR for the various GFIS entities as follows:

### **Steering Committee**

*Provides strategic guidance to GFIS*

Responsibilities:

- Set policy and provide strategic direction
- Review and approve work plans and budget prepared by the Implementation Group
- Establish fund raising objectives and help mobilize resources
- Monitor progress and assess the progressive development of GFIS
- Keep CPF informed of progress
- Build political support among donors and key partners

Membership:

IUFRO (Chair), UNFF Secretariat, CIFOR and FAO

### **Implementation Group**

*Develops, implements and maintains GFIS*

Responsibilities:

- Develop work plans and budget and assign responsibilities for implementation.
- Develop technical solutions such as the development and publishing of metadata standards, exchange protocols, thesauri, etc.
- Identify and engage potential partners of GFIS
- Monitor progress of the work plan
- Report to the Steering Committee

**Membership:**

Institutions willing to provide human and financial resources in support of the GFIS work plan. Institutions are appointed by the Steering Committee for a two-year period. Each institution should identify a focal person. The GFIS Coordinator is the Secretary of the Implementation Group.

**Coordination Unit**

*Promotes GFIS and serves as central point for partnership development. Acts as Secretariat.*

**Responsibilities:**

- Promote GFIS
- Identify, engage and work with partners of GFIS
- Follow-up on the progress of the work plan and keep the implementation group informed
- Prepare funding proposals

Host organisation: IUFRO

**Partners**

*Institutions providing forest-related information using GFIS standards*

**Responsibilities:**

- Provide and update meta-data on a regular basis.

Based on these ToR the SC took the following **decision**:

The following partners are appointed to the Implementation Group for 2006-07:  
CABI, CIFOR, FAO, IUFRO and NBII

**6. Further implementation of GFIS***Technical and Partnership development*

In a discussion on the next steps for implementation of GFIS the SC reaffirmed the ideas outlined in the work plan of the Implementation Group. The SC recommended that in the current state the work with existing information types should be continued in order to attract new partners and increase the number of institutions submitting meta-data. However, the SC also noted that an increase of user-friendliness, display and search as described in the work plan of the IG would constitute necessary improvements for the further development of GFIS. Furthermore, the SC recommended to gradually add new domains to GFIS, which is hoped to be a self-generating process. In general the SC shared the view that building user enthusiasm for GFIS would be an important prerequisite for the success of the service.

*In-kind contributions from Steering Committee members*

In a thorough discussion on the current level of commitment and the future prospects of the in-kind contributions by the member organisations of the SC it was confirmed that, despite past and possible future structural changes in some of the institutions, the intention is that the level of in-kind commitment will be maintained at the current level.

## **7. Next meeting**

The SC agreed that telephone conferences should be conducted as needed (being aware of the time difference between the partners - Bogor 6PM equals 6AM NY). In addition it was agreed that at least one "physical" Steering Committee meeting per year should be conducted.

## **8. Other matters and closure of the meeting**

No other matters were reported. Peter M. thanked all participants for the constructive discussion and FAO for kindly hosting the meeting. He then closed the meeting.