

**8<sup>th</sup> CPF – GFIS Implementation  
Group Meeting,  
IIA, Oak Ridge, Tennessee  
June 11-12, 2007**

**MINUTES**

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## Version Control Page

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**8th CPF – GFIS Implementation Group Meeting**

Oak Ridge, Tennessee, USA

June 11-12, 2007

**MINUTES****Participants:**

Peter Mayer, IUFRO (moderator)

Michael Hailu, CIFOR

Johannes Keizer, FAO

Eero Mikkola, IUFRO (secretary)

Juha Hautakangas, IUFRO

Toral Patel-Weynand, NBII

Eric Landis, NBII (observer)

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

As a representative of the host organization Toral Patel-Weynand (NBII) welcomed the GFIS Implementation Group (IG) to the meeting and emphasized importance of the group in terms of implementation of the whole GFIS concept on the partnership and the gateway.

Peter Mayer (IUFRO), the moderator of the meeting, welcomed the GFIS Implementation Group (IG) to the meeting, pointed out the importance of GFIS for IUFRO and thanked all partners for their contributions to GFIS, especially the host organizations (NBII and IIA) for all arrangements for the meeting.

**2. Welcome to Information International Associates (IIA)**

Shelaine Curd-Hetrick welcomed all participants to the Information International Associates (IIA, <http://www.iiaweb.com>) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, USA and introduced to IIA in terms Biodiversity Informatics Group.

**3. Approval of the agenda and minutes of the 7th GFIS IG meeting**

The participants approved the draft agenda which was circulated on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007 and the minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> GFIS Implementation Group meeting ([http://www.gfis.net/gfis/pdf/GFIS\\_WP12.pdf](http://www.gfis.net/gfis/pdf/GFIS_WP12.pdf))

#### 4. Current GFIS status - Partnership development and support

Based on the progress report for the GFIS Implementation Group Meeting on 11-13 June 2007) the coordinator (Mikkola) informed the participants of the following ongoing GFIS actions:

- New GFIS gateway was launched in January 2007;
- GFIS Training workshop concept;
- GFIS in Asia;
- GFIS in Russia;
- GFIS in Latin America;
- Current status of information provision to GFIS (59 information providers, 30 RSS feeds from 15 information providers, ~500 documents in the GFIS RSS search index, ~500 documents in the NBII Clearinghouse and > 200 000 documents in the FAO AGRIS information system)
- Partnership development 2007 – 2008

In this context, it was discussed how to invite new information providers and get more information to GFIS. The following aspects were pointed out during the discussion:

- Invitation to participate in GFIS for new potential information providers should be more targeted and identified;
- The GFIS partnership development and the gateway should together provide a platform for a global forest community of practice ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_of\\_practice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_of_practice));
- All CPF members which are not yet information providers should be contacted;
- When contacts are created to new potential information providers an appropriate level for communication should be found (e.g. not a letter to a president of an organization);
- Important international forest organizations and institutes located in countries on which forest sector plays important role should be contacted first (e.g. Canada, Brazil and USA);
- The GFIS workshop concept should be continued at regional and national levels;
- GFIS should be available at global forest conferences and
- Tools to simplify information provision to GFIS should be developed.

**Actions:** The following actions related to the GFIS partnership development and support were agreed by the participants:

- IUFRO will contact the CPF members which have not yet opened a GFIS account;
- IUFRO, CIFOR and NBII should agree how GFIS will be promoted at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties, 3-14 December 2007, Bali;

- CIFOR (Hailu), FAO (Keizer) and NBII (Patel-Weynand) will provide contact information to the coordinator about African networks to which the GFIS coordination unit should contact in order to invite new African partners;
- CIFOR (Hailu) informed that CIFOR has tentatively agreed to arrange a GFIS training workshop for potential Indonesian information providers in Indonesia November-December 2007;
- The coordinator (Mikkola) informed that Metla has tentatively agreed to arrange a GFIS training workshop for potential Finnish information providers in Finland in October - November 2007 and
- IUFRO will continue preparation of a follow-up project with ITTO in order to arrange GFIS training workshop for new African, Asian and Latin American partners in 2008.

## 5. Current GFIS status – Gateway

The GFIS web developer (Hautakangas, IUFRO) gave a presentation on the current status of the GFIS gateway and went through the following topics:

- Internationalization
  - Two ways to determine the language preferences on the GFIS interface: Transmitted from the browser or Selection buttons on the interface (en, es, fr);
- Latest documents
  - Five most recently published documents and Extended search using "more" buttons;
- Search box
  - Information types, Keyword box, Results ordered by publication date, Document metadata created in RSS/XML feeds to be harvested by GFIS (scheduled harvesting);
  - Datasets and databases: Document metadata created in FGDC compliant XML format to be harvested by the NBII Clearinghouse, RSS feed containing the GFIS-related Clearinghouse records maintained by NBII, Scheduled harvesting of the feed by GFIS and Loss of information (only part of the original metadata entry is searchable through GFIS)
  - Library and document collections: Document metadata created in AGRIS AP compliant XML format to be harvested by the FAO AGRIS and Queries handled by the AGRIS search engine (Query strings sent to AGRIS and Search results returned to GFIS and displayed to the user)
  - Inconsistencies in searching between different types, Different document formats and Original documents sometimes in different languages than metadata
- Becoming an information provider
  - Filling in and sending the registration form
  - Waiting for e-mail notification

- Need to wait for user account to be activated
- Adding feeds
  - Adding feeds to GFIS accounts by filling in the feed-add form
  - Exceptions: "Datasets and databases" and "Library and document collections"
  - Difficulties in making difference between various information types and creating valid RSS/XML documents
  - Need to create metadata in different XML formats for different information types
  - What could we do? Offer tools for information providers and Improve quality control and guidelines
- Most important features
  - Multilingual: User interface and content in diverse languages
  - Dynamically displays most recently added "News", "Events", "Publications" and "Job vacancies" on the front page
  - Provides keyword-based language-independent searching functionality
  - Organizations have control over feeds added to their GFIS account

Participants thanked the GFIS web developer and Metla for implementation and development of the GFIS gateway and agreed that all questions arisen during the gateway presentation should be discussed when future development of GFIS is discussed under the item "8.Further GFIS development" on next day.

## 6. NBII Technology Overview

Mike Frame and Tim Rhyne (NBII) introduced the participants to NBII technologies and methods used on biological information management. They also informed participants how harvesting from NBII Clearinghouse to GFIS has been implemented using RSS syndication. Peter Mayer (IUFRO) thanked NBII colleagues for the interesting presentations and NBII for their contribution to GFIS.

## 7. Approve final draft of Strategic Framework Document

The moderator proposed that the participants should discuss first the GFIS Strategic Framework process and document at general level and after that it would be possible to continue discussion at more detailed level.

At this phase the whole strategic process and need for different types of GFIS documents were discussed from various aspects and the following views were pointed out during that discussion:

- The current draft of the GFIS Strategic Frameworks gives the full and complete picture of the GFIS background, implementation and strategy;

- It's important that the GFIS core partners (Steering Committee and Implementation Group) have one document on which the whole GFIS concept has been described. That document has to be followed-up and reviewed regularly;
- First GFIS needs a base-line document based on which other documents can be created;
- There is need for different documents in order to serve needs of different interest groups e.g. users, potential new stake holders, information providers;
- GFIS should provide forum for forest community to share forest related information and to discuss global hot forest issues;
- GFIS documents and promotion material should define niche for GFIS and thus attract new partners, information providers and users and
- NBII (Patel-Weynand) had prepared a draft of a GFIS brochure which was shared to the participants. Content of the one A4 page brochure was adopted from the draft GFIS Strategic Framework.

**Actions:** The following actions related to the GFIS Strategic and Implementation document process were agreed by the participants:

- The current draft GFIS Strategic Framework will be reviewed by CIFOR (Hailu) and NBII (Patel-Weynand) and they will send their comments to the coordinator who updates the document. Then that document will be used as a base-line resource document for the GFIS core partners and it will be labeled as a "GFIS Development Framework";
- When **the GFIS Development Framework** is complete, based on that document the following GFIS documents will be prepared by IUFRO:
  - **A GFIS Strategic Plan** will be a high level statement for describe of existing GFIS issues to institutes and partners outside of the core group (SC and IC). It will be around 10 pages long and contain the following parts from the GFIS Development Framework: a brief history, vision, mission, objects and description of the current concept.
  - **A GFIS Funding Strategy** will be tailored for each marketing action to institutes who might be potential donors or have expressed their interests to fund GFIS. It should give a clear answer to a question "Why new partners should invest to GFIS?"
  - **A GFIS Action Plan** will be a short term plan about rules, roles and responsibilities of GFIS actions e.g. how to get more RSS feeds to GFIS and what the GFIS core partners do by end of this year.
  - **A GFIS Brochure** which can be easily shared to both potential information providers and users e.g. at conferences. The draft prepared by NBII should be used basis for the GFIS brochure.
- NBII (Patel-Weynand) offered to polish the new documents when the final drafts of the documents described above are available.

## 8. Further GFIS development

Based on the “Future Development of GFIS” document which was shared before the meeting to the participants via email by the coordinator the following development ideas were dealt with:

### 8.1 GFIS Information Types

The current GFIS information types are News, Events, Recent publications and Job vacancies based on RSS2.0, “Library and document collections” based AGRIS AP hosted by FAO and “Datasets and databases” based on FGDC/USGS hosted by NBII Clearinghouse.

The list of the potential GFIS information types was developed using the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative’s (DCMI) by FAO and CABI in 2005. The following information types could be considered to add to GFIS: Contacts, Country Data, Courses / Education, Dictionaries & Terminology, Images, Interactive Resources, Projects/Programmes, Site Data, Software, Sound, Species Data and Web Page.

In this context, it was discussed, if new information types should be added and which method should be used for new information types: The following aspects were pointed out during the discussion:

- CIFOR (Hailu) emphasized that the current information types should be populated more and GFIS should get more experience before the new information types are added to GFIS:
- FAO (Keizer) criticized that the current list of potential new information types is mixture of objects and resource type and proposed that the list should be reviewed;
- NBII (Patel-Weynand) informed that NBII Clearinghouse manages many potential new GFIS information types through the clearinghouse mechanism e.g. species data (Taxonomy & Systematics), images and maps and those information types with metadata specifications could be adopted by GFIS;
- The coordinator informed that the International Partnership for Forest Education (IPFE) implemented a pilot GFIS project with IUFRO in 2005 on which education resource information type was tested as a GFIS information type (see more <http://www.forestry.ubc.ca/ipfe/>). IPFE has expressed its interest to continue cooperation with IUFRO and GFIS in order to have forest education resources and information as resource of information exchange and dissemination tool on the GFIS gateway and have forest education resource providers such as IPFE act as a key information provider;
- It was discussed which kind of information exchange standards should be used on GFIS. At this phase FAO (Keizer) pointed out that RSS2.0 doesn’t allow very semantic and multilingual data management and therefore more comprehensive metadata specifications/schemas should be used on GFIS. In this context FAO

(Keizer) referred to development work done by FAO on Agricultural Information Management Standards (AIMS at <http://www.fao.org/aims/index.jsp>) for example on organization metadata. The coordinator agreed on the views of FAO but emphasized that based on experience of the GFIS Coordination Unit metadata specifications/schemas should be kept quite simple (e.g. as RSS) so that institutes create their first metadata feeds with slight efforts and when institutes have learnt more about the metadata concept, then it's reasonable to offer more comprehensive metadata specifications/schemas.

**Actions:** The following actions related to the new GFIS Information types were agreed by the participants:

- First the current information types should be populated more by the current and new GFIS information providers and then new information types can be discussed, agreed and added to GFIS;
- There should not be too many different metadata specifications/schemas available on GFIS in order to keep the GFIS information exchange standard user-friendly for information providers;
- Close cooperation with FAO/AIMS and NBII Clearinghouse should be done on new information types and metadata specifications/schemas. FAO (Keizer) will send information about "Organization" type metadata schema developed by FAO/AIMS;
- Definition for "Datasets and databases" has to be revised and updated so that information providers can understand that spatial data can be already now linked to GFIS via that information type;
- The Coordination Unit will continue discussion with IPFE in order to add an "Education resource" type to GFIS.

## 8.2 Developing a Multilingual Forestry Thesaurus (MFT)

Based on the information shared before the meeting (Developing a Multilingual Forestry Thesaurus, Concept paper, Annex1) need for Multilingual Forestry Thesaurus was discussed from various views. It was agreed that there is need for the Multilingual Forestry Thesaurus (MFT) to the whole forest community and when MFT has been implemented, it could be utilized also beyond GFIS.

**Actions:** The following actions related to the Multilingual Forestry Thesaurus (MFT) were agreed by the participants:

- The Multilingual Forestry Thesaurus (MFT) project outlined on the concept paper should be implemented.
- The Global Forest Decimal Classification (GFDC) implemented by the IUFRO 6.03.03 – Global forest decimal classification unit should be used as resource for the project, see more <http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/60000/60300/60303>;

- IUFRO themes/subjects areas should be also used as resource for the project, see more <http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/>;
- The coordinator invites the IUFRO Global forest decimal classification unit to participate in the project
- All partners (IUFRO, CIFOR, FAO and NBII) should first investigate resources (money and in-kind) which could be allocated to the project, because there were immediate resources available for the project by the participants and
- The Coordination unit will coordinate the project.

### 8.3 User Interface Languages

The coordinator informed that for the moment the interface service of GFIS is available in English, Spanish and French and that in principle, the architecture of the new GFIS gateway supports information provision and use of service in divers languages. He also informed that South Korean, Russian, Chinese and Finnish information providers have expressed their interest to have the GFIS interface in their own language when the latest/freshest RSS items would be displayed on the entry page of the GFIS gateway on their own language. Based on that information the participants discussed language management on GFIS.

**Actions:** The following actions related to GFIS languages were agreed by the participants:

- English, Spanish and French are the official GFIS global interface languages;
- The freshest items (news, events, recent publications and job vacancies) in English, Spanish and French should be displayed on the GFIS entry page at the same time (not to link them to the interface language). Metla will investigate how this will be possible to implement in terms of technical solution and usability of the entry page;
- All other interface languages will be recognized as a national language and they can be added to the interface when there is enough content in that language based on RSS feed provision. Additional GFIS interfaces in different languages can be created with the help of GFIS partners in the regions. These partners will also be in-charge of maintaining the GFIS interface in these languages and thus assist in promoting GFIS in the region/country. Once several language interfaces are operational, GFIS users can select the desired language from a list of available languages on the GFIS entry page.

## 8.4 Gateway functions

**Events calendar:** Based on the information shared before the meeting a proposal for the GFIS calendar was discussed.

**Action:** The GFIS calendar function should be implemented by Metla.

**"Information providers" page:** The participants were informed that the current GFIS information providers are listed on the "Information providers" page and information on the static page is currently not up-to-date. It was discussed how this page should be reconstructed so that it would be dynamically updated.

**Action:** A new dynamic "Information providers" page should be implemented by Metla so that information provider information will be automatically updated. In addition to contact information RSS feeds of an information provider can be listed on that page. A green light of an information provider has to be got before its RSS feeds can be posted to the "Information providers" page on the GFIS gateway.

**Discussion board:** It was discussed if a discussion board could be built in order to improve communication among the information providers.

**Action:** It was agreed that the discussion board for GFIS contacts e.g. information technologies and metadata specifications should be built on the GFIS gateway by Metla.

## 8.5 Content quality

The GFIS web developer (Hautakangas, IUFRO) informed that quality control of the information provided to GFIS needs to be paid attention to, because the GFIS Coordination unit has faced the following problems, when information providers have created their metadata feeds to be linked to the GFIS gateway:

- Information providers have difficulties to make difference between various information types;
- The original information is shown in different language than the metadata items/feeds added to GFIS;
- The original information is available in a format is difficult or impossible for some users to read (e.g. RAR packages);
- A feed added to GFIS contains items in different languages and
- Feeds are not always easy for the information providers to create.

All participants agreed that quality of metadata feeds of GFIS information providers have to be improved and different options how to improve the quality were discussed (e.g. improving the definitions of the information types, writing a comprehensive "User's manual" for the information providers and a RSS generator application)

**Action:** CIFOR will prepare a proposal for a "RSS generator application". Metla and CIFOR will agree how the application should be implemented on GFIS.

## 8.6 Graphical facelift of GFIS

Based on the material shared before the meeting need for the graphical face lift of the GFIS gateway was discussed and it was agreed that there is no urgent need for graphical facelift of GFIS but it the design of the GFIS gateway could be improved slightly.

**Action:** CIFOR and Metla will prepare a proposal for improvements of the GFIS gateway design based on the current GFIS graphical elements.

## 9. Other matters

The coordinator informed that a IT-company EDISOFT (<http://www.edisoft.pt>) has contacted the Coordination unit and proposed a cooperation in terms of metadata sharing with European information providers, because the EDISOFT is implementing an European Forest Information and Communication Platform (EFICP) portal which has been launched with the objective to help on reporting and monitoring forest resources at the EU level and to provide information on this resources to interested EU, national, and stakeholder communities. The coordinator has asked the EDISOFT to send a proposal for the cooperation in order to discuss and agree on in with the GFIS IG and SC, but so far the proposal has not been provided.

**Action:** The coordinator will continue communication with a representative of the EDISOFT and will inform the GFIS IG of the proposal.

## 10. Closure of the meeting

Peter Mayer (IUFRO) thanked all participants for the productive and open discussion and closed the meeting.

**Annex 1:**

**Developing a Multilingual Forestry Thesaurus  
Concept paper**

*For the GFIS Implementation Group Meeting on 11-13 June 2007, prepared by  
Johannes Keizer/FAO and commented by Eero Mikkola/GFIS Coordinator, June 7,  
2007*

**1.1 Introduction**

The development of a Multilingual Forestry Thesaurus (MFT) has been recognised as a priority since some years, in particular by the three leading organizations (IUFRO, FAO, and CABI) and now days also by NBII, both for the Global Forest Information System (GFIS) project and to provide a tool to improve access to forestry information within and outside of these organisations. There is general agreement that SilvaVoc is still limited in scope, CABI lacks multilinguality and AGROVOC and Biocomplexity Thesaurus are too general. Additionally, the main impetus for producing a multilingual thesaurus quickly is that Global Forest Information System (GFIS) is in development and needs a good, multilingual subject indexing tool. Regional contacts have been developed in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Russia and plans are in place to do so in all other major forestry regions, and resources submitted to this system will need to be subject indexed in multiple languages. However, a comprehensive MFT will also be useful for indexing and accessing forestry information outside of GFIS, and will be an important building block in the development of the forestry domain in the AOS.

**1.2 The project**

In order to develop the MFT, already existing resources will be considered, such as AGROVOC, Biocomplexity Thesaurus, CABI Thesaurus and SilvaVoc. The following elements will be needed:

1. inventory of forestry related resources;
2. mapping components of AGROVOC, Biocomplexity Thesaurus, CABI and SilvaVoc keyword lists to generate comprehensive GFIS MFT;
3. a project-web site integrated to the GFIS as a tool for GFIS information providers and users

Considering language coverage, the following languages are considered as essential: English, French, Spanish, Arabic (do we need forest keywords in Arabic?), Chinese and Portuguese. Russian is also highly desirable.

In the case of mapping, it will initially be only for the keywords which have exact or very near matching (e.g. Forest policy and Forestry policy) between AGROVOC, Biocomplexity Thesaurus, CABI Thesaurus and SilvaVoc as subject experts will need to be involved to take this further. The identification of gaps also involves more substantial time and may have to be done at a later stage.

In order to collect all different terminologies related to forestry, it will be needed to develop a web site with the following characteristics:

- develop a starting point for the creation of a thesaurus by including the mapping of AGROVOC, Biocomplexity Thesaurus , CABI Thesaurus and SilvaVoc forestry terms;
- ability to submit new terms related to forestry and to organize them in a coherent hierarchy;
- ability to edit, revise, enrich already submitted terms;
- ability to specify the source of a term and to perform a mapping with existing resources;
- possibility to gather user feedback of terms;
- store links to relevant sites (i.e. AGROVOC, CABI thesaurus, Biocomplexity Thesaurus and SilvaVoc web sites\*);
- User-friendly interface.

The development of the MFT should consider the ISO standards formats and guidelines for the development of multilingual thesauri.

### 1.3 Work plan and resources

Task	Expertize	Time required	Cost
inventory of forestry related resources	IMS <sup>1</sup>	0.3 p/m	1500 USD
automatic mapping resources	IMS	0.6 p/m	2500 USD
manual revision of mappings	IMS	1 p/m	4500 USD
a project-web site	IT <sup>2</sup>	1 p/m	3000 USD
population of the MFT using the web site	IMS	2 p/m	8500 USD
TOTAL			20000 USD

#### Thesauruses on which forest keywords available:

CAB Thesaurus, <http://www.cabi.org/AbstractDatabases.asp?PID=277>

FAO, AGROVOC Thesaurus, [http://www.fao.org/aims/ag\\_intro.htm](http://www.fao.org/aims/ag_intro.htm)

IUFRO, SilvaVoc, <http://www.iufro.org/science/special/silvavoc/en/>

NBII, Biocomplexity Thesaurus, <http://thesaurus.nbii.gov>

<sup>1</sup> Information Management Specialist or Officer

<sup>2</sup> Information Technology expert