

## DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MC MEETING ON 18 JUNE 2024

### MC 10/2024 Doc 2.2

19 August 2024

The IUFRO Management Committee (MC) met in person on 18 June 2024 in Uppsala, Sweden at the Ultuna Campus of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). The meeting was chaired by IUFRO President John Parrotta. The list of participants can be found in the Annex.

### 1. Opening by the President, adoption of agenda and call for additions to agenda

**Document:**

- MC 6/2024 Doc 1.1: Draft agenda (IUFRO HQ)

The meeting was opened by the Chair, who welcomed the MC members. The Chair conveyed regrets from IUFRO Vice-President for Task Forces Shirong Liu who could not join the meeting due to the late arrival of visa.

The Chair presented the draft agenda of the meeting and called for any changes and additions to the agenda. The agenda was adopted without changes.

### 2. Approval of draft Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting on 11-12 March 2024, and pending actions

**Documents:**

- MC 6/2024 Doc 2.1: Draft Minutes of the MC Meeting on 11-12 March 2024 (IUFRO HQ)
- MC 6/2024 Doc 2.2: Implementation of actions from the MC meeting in March 2024 (IUFRO HQ)

Operations Manager Andre Purret informed the MC about the status of implementing the 16 actions agreed upon at the last meeting in Uppsala. Six actions had been implemented by the time of the current MC meeting; five actions had been partly implemented and related updates will be provided during the meeting; four pending actions will be implemented during the upcoming 63<sup>rd</sup> Enlarged Board Meeting; and one action will be implemented once the redesigned website has been officially launched.

The MC approved the minutes of the MC meeting held on 11-12 September 2023 in Uppsala and took note of the status of implementation of actions.

### 3. Brief reports by IUFRO President and Executive Director

**Documents:**

- MC 6/2024 Doc 3.1: Report of the President (J. Parrotta)
- MC 6/2024 Doc 3.2: Report of the Executive Director (A. Buck)

Both written reports to the Board will be considered as read and will not be presented to the MC and the Enlarged Board in detail. Oral highlights of information of relevance, and plans for presenting to the Enlarged Board were provided by the President and the Executive Director.

IUFRO President John Parrotta noted that his presentation to the Enlarged Board will consist of two parts: a) summary of activities since the last Board meeting in March 2023; and b) overview of the Board term 2019-2024. In the first part, he will highlight the intensive preparations for the World Congress 2024 and connected meetings of the IUFRO governing bodies taking place in Sweden; contributions to

and engagements with the CPF and the UNFF, participation in various IUFRO meetings and representation of IUFRO in other international events. In the second part, he will focus on the challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic that changed the ways of work by incorporating new technologies and formats for activities within the network, IUFRO's ability to adapt to new conditions and contexts to keep the network engaged, the historic decisions taken by the Board and International Council in 2023, and the generally healthy condition of IUFRO. The MC took note of the updates by the President.

IUFRO Executive Director Alexander Buck presented highlights from his written report that will be presented to the Enlarged Board. His slides included highlights about the host country (Austria) relations; IUFRO HQ staff growth and updates; overview of members and officeholders compared to year 2019; overview of the meetings and major events since 2019; Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024 and its evaluation; expanded communication activities during the term; IUFRO's role in international collaboration; and an overview of the solid financial situation including fundraising status. On IUFRO membership developments since the last Board Meeting in March 2023, he noted that 15 new Member Organizations and 28 Associate Members had joined IUFRO, while 14 Member Organizations and 14 Associate Members had withdrawn their membership. As usual, the new memberships require Board approval. Regarding the overall membership situation, it was discussed that there has been a consistent decrease in the number of members in Oceania region and that should be improved. It was added that due to time zone differences, virtual meetings are often not attended by the scientists from Australia and New Zealand. It was therefore suggested starting conversations within the region to activate the region. Regarding members from North America, it was noted that only about half of the NAUFRP<sup>1</sup> members are IUFRO members. On the income from membership fees, it pointed out that about 12% of the total income for Headquarters comes from membership fees. The MC also discussed the impact of IUFRO and forest research in international processes, noting that IUFRO participates in various forums and processes, but forest research is not implicitly recognized in these processes, as well as the lack of recognition and visibility for IUFRO in the not forest-centered processes (those working on climate, biodiversity etc.).

Regarding other agenda items of the Enlarged Board meeting that concern IUFRO HQ, A. Buck noted that the recommendation by the Management Committee, as agreed at its previous meeting in March 2024 (Action 1), regarding IUFRO HQ succession arrangements and organization of work post-2024 will be presented under the item 15. "IUFRO Board 2024-2029 and HQ". Under that same item, also the Terms of Reference and distribution of tasks by IUFRO HQ staff will be presented. Additionally, the item includes information about the Terms of Reference of Enlarged Board members and other officeholders, and on guidelines and tools with regard to "Working in IUFRO". The MC took note of the updates and presentation by the Executive Director.

#### **4. Divisions**

***Documents:***

- *EB 6/2024 Doc 5.1 Report of the Vice-President for Divisions (D. Kleinschmit)*
- *EB 6/2024 Doc 5.2 Compilation of slides by Division Coordinators (Division Coordinators)*
- *EB 6/2024 Doc 5.3 Compilation of proposed changes to the structure/units and officeholders (IUFRO HQ)*

IUFRO Vice-President for Divisions Daniela Kleinschmit informed the MC about the plans for the conduct of respective agenda item during the Enlarged Board meeting. She will not present her written report to the Board in detail, but rather provides highlights of information of relevance, to allow more time for reports/presentations by the Division Coordinators. Among the highlights, she planned to note

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<sup>1</sup> NAUFRP - National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (USA)

the important change to Co-Coordination of Divisions. As it is a new arrangement, it will take time to adjust to it, and also learn from it whether it could work also for the future. She added that an evaluation should take place well before the end of the term 2024-2029, to allow proposals of necessary changes to the IUFRO Statutes and Internal Regulations, if needed. The topic will also be added as a standing item to the meetings of Division Co-Coordinators in the next term. It was noted from the MC that one term (5 years) could be too short as a basis for evaluation, and perhaps it would make sense to evaluate the new arrangement only in the next term. Another topic that will require more discussion is the division of tasks and responsibilities between the two Division Co-Coordinators, including the voting issue in the IUFRO voting Board. According to the IUFRO Statutes and Internal Regulations each Co-Coordinator will have 0,5 (one half) vote. It has been suggested requesting 1 full vote per Division. In the latter case, a technical challenge will be to find out if the two Co-Coordinators have been consulting and agreeing on the voting items before their Divisional vote is submitted.

Following the presentation by D. Kleinschmit to the Enlarged Board, report on the pre-Board meeting(s) of Division Coordinators will be provided by W. Chung, followed by activity highlights/brief reports by Division Coordinators 2019-2024. All nine Division Coordinators will be asked to present to the Enlarged Board highlights (2 slides) of the achievements/activities undertaken during the whole term (since XXV World Congress 2019 in Curitiba). In the second part of the Divisions agenda item, D. Kleinschmit will invite brief statements by the incoming Vice-President for Divisions and incoming Division Co-Coordinators. At the end of the agenda item, the Board will be asked to approve the proposed changes in structure and officeholders as contained in the EB background document Doc 5.3. Lastly, D. Kleinschmit informed the MC about the planned workshop/meeting (21 June) of outgoing Division Coordinators, incoming Division Co-Coordinators and outgoing Task Force Coordinators, who had all been invited to join the meeting. It is planned to invite both new Task Forces and the SPPs to the next meeting of Division Co-Coordinators to be held in May 2025 in Vienna. The MC took note of the updates by the IUFRO Vice-President for Divisions, including plans for the Enlarged Board meeting.

Coordinator of Division 3 and representative of Divisions in the MC Woodam Chung informed the MC about the most recent pre-Board meeting of Division Coordinators, held virtually on 11 June. The topics discussed included the availability of time to report on behalf of Divisions during the Board meeting including the introductions by the incoming Co-Coordinators (2 min per person), challenges with getting responses from some officeholders about the suggested structure changes, membership requirement for officeholders from the Global South that is a big constraint and should be re-evaluated, high cost of attendance of Congress 2024, challenges in involving and recruiting early-career researchers, and how to better align divisional activities with the reporting on the future Strategy Action Plans. In the discussions at the pre-Board meeting, it was suggested considering the option of removing the requirement of being from an IUFRO member organizations for the officeholders from the Global South. The MC took note of the updates by Woodam Chung and agreed to discuss at its next meeting how to facilitate membership of officeholders from the global South.

## **5. Task Forces**

### ***Documents:***

- *EB 6/2024 Doc 7.1 Report of the Vice-President for Divisions (S. Liu)*
- *EB 6/2024 Doc 7.2 Compilation of reports by Task Force Coordinators (TF Coordinators)*

IUFRO Vice-President for Task Forces Shirong Liu was unfortunately not able to attend the MC meeting due to receiving his visa at a very late stage. He will arrive one day later than planned, but will be able to fully participate in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Enlarged Board Meeting. As he had submitted his slide presentation of the summary report of IUFRO Task Forces during the current term to the Enlarged Board, the MC briefly

looked through his presentation slides. Following his presentation to the Enlarged Board under agenda item 7. IUFRO Task Forces, all Task Force Coordinators will be asked to present highlights (2 slides) of the achievements/activities undertaken during the whole term (since World Congress 2019). The agenda item will end with a brief statement by the incoming Vice-President for Task Forces.

The incoming Vice-President for Task Forces Elena Paoletti informed the MC about the agreed timeline and the status of the call for new Task Forces. She reminded that the first important deadline is 1 September 2024 for new TF concept notes. She stressed interdisciplinarity and policy relevance as the main keywords and selection criteria. The MC took note of the information shared by Elena Paoletti.

## **6. Special Programmes, Projects and IUFRO-led Initiatives**

### ***Document:***

- *EB 6/2024 Doc 6.1 Compilation of reports by Coordinators of Special Programmes, Projects and IUFRO-led Initiatives (M. Kleine/Coordinators of SPDC, Directors' Forum, WFSE, SciPol)*

IUFRO Deputy Executive Director Michael Kleine provided brief update about the plans for conducting the respective item during the Enlarged Board meeting. Following an introduction by M. Kleine, the Coordinators of IUFRO Special Programme for Development of Capacities (SPDC), IUFRO Science-Policy Programme (SciPol), IUFRO Special Project on World Forests, Society and Environment (IUFRO-WFSE) and IUFRO Special Programme Directors' Forum (SPDF) will invited to present highlights (2-3 slides) of the achievements/activities undertaken during the Board term 2019-2024, based on their written reports. Some SPPs will also present an overview of their income during the ending Board term. As all SPPs had submitted written reports which were considered as read, M. Kleine did not go into details of these reports. It was suggested allowing questions from the Enlarged Board after all the SPP have presented their updates. The MC took note of the updates and plans by M. Kleine.

In the second part of this agenda item at the EB meeting, D. Kleinschmit will be invited to inform the Board about the outcome of discussions on the future of the Special Programme Directors' Forum (SPDF). D. Kleinschmit informed the MC about the content of her presentation. She plans to describe the general challenges for the SPDF: the membership of the programme operates in heterogenous policy environments; challenges in organizing dedicated meetings across all time-zones; issues with identifying focus areas (managerial vs topical issues); regional differences and heterogenous environment limitations for topical exchange; lack of identified services or products; and limited resources including leadership. Based on recent discussions, it is suggested focusing on strengthening science-policy interface through supporting regional forest research leadership. This could be achieved through strengthening regional exchange and networks; identifying issues requiring political action; organizing Policy Briefings; and developing scientific policy options. It is thus suggested adapting the programme by integrating it into the IUFRO Science-Policy Programme and developing regional blueprints. The next steps include discussing this with the Board, with Directors at the informal meeting of SPDF at the Congress, and with policymakers. A detailed concept note should be ready for Board's review and approval at its next meeting in May 2025. The MC thanked D. Kleinschmit, endorsed the proposed process, and recommended to the Board to approve these changes to the programme.

## **7. Strategic partnerships, international cooperation and IUFRO in international processes**

### ***Document:***

- *MC 6/2024 Doc 7.1 Partnership Strategy 2025-2028 for Teaming Up 4 Forests (IUFRO HQ)*

IUFRO Executive Director Alexander Buck provided a brief update on recent developments regarding

IUFRO's partners and partnerships since the last MC meeting. Highlights included collaboration within the Resilient Future Forests Laboratory (RFFL); participation in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) and in the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR). Latest projects and updates included: joint report on addressing human dimensions in Forest Landscape Restoration by WWF, SER and IUFRO-SPDC; collaboration with CITES; and IUFRO being accepted as a formal partner organization of AFoCO (Asian Forest Cooperation Organization).

A. Buck also informed the MC about the launch of the report in the frame of the Wood for Globe project, including about the upcoming High-Level dialogue “WOOD for GLOBE: Leading pathways to carbon neutrality and resilience” to be held on 19 July FAO Headquarters in Rome, back-to-back with the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) and World Forest Week 2024. A. Buck added that, as reported during the last MC meeting, FAO wishes to strengthen collaboration with IUFRO and two FAO representatives will also attend the upcoming Enlarged Board meeting virtually. Concrete collaboration ideas floated so far include proposing a new IUFRO-FAO Joint Task Force on Innovation in Forest Science and the participation by IUFRO in a High-Level dialogue on innovation at the upcoming FAO COFO meeting in July 2024.

Finally, he reported on the updates from the IUFRO-Mondi “Teaming Up 4 Forests” science-business platform and noted that discussions are currently ongoing with companies both in Europe and outside Europe, including Suzano, Klabin, Stora Enso, UPM and Mercer (the latter one is likely to join soon). As can be seen from the draft Partnership Strategy (MC Doc 7.1), circulated to the MC prior to this meeting, the new phase of the platform should start in the beginning of 2025. A. Buck clarified that the partnership strategy has been developed by the TU4F internally. In response to a question on how IUFRO handles funding from partners for specific-purpose projects such as Teaming Up 4 Forests, A. Buck responded that every partner makes a financial contribution that is used only for the project. All funds are managed by IUFRO and administered according to set principles and based on agreed work plans. In case content work is done by any (contracted) IUFRO officeholder, he/she can be compensated through a sub-contract between IUFRO and the officeholder or his/her organization. During the discussions, it was also pointed out that having the industry on board is important, but considerations related to potential partners' reputation as well as information sharing are also important. It was clarified that IUFRO hosts a platform that allows structured exchange between scientists and businesses, and does not provide consulting services to any individual company. Partners are selected based on clear principles and criteria, as described in the draft partnership strategy 2025-2028 and in accordance with IUFRO's General Rules and Procedures for Partnership Development. It was suggested being cautious about the partners and their reputation, as there are clear risks of people and NGOs coming up and having protests etc. Working with environmental organizations is planned in the future as well, in the frame of the future stakeholder dialogues. Additional MC member commented that there needs to be a clear legal basis in case IUFRO cannot accept any specific partner, beyond just the decision by the partnership. D. Kleinschmit noted her wish to be part of the future discussions about the platform and its expansion.

**Action 1:**

- *MC members to send comments and suggestions, if any, on the draft Partnership Strategy 2025-2028 of the Teaming Up 4 Forests to A. Buck by the end of July 2024;*

During the respective agenda item at the upcoming Enlarged Board meeting, update on activities by IUFRO HQ will be provided by A. Buck, followed by statements from IUFRO's partner organizations. It is expected that statements will be provided by the representatives of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BML), the International Forestry Students'

Association (IFSA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet). The MC took note of the updates by the Executive Director.

## **8. Finances and fundraising**

### ***Documents:***

- *EB 6/2024 Doc 13.1 IUFRO Annual Account 2023 (IUFRO HQ)*
- *EB 6/2024 Doc 13.2 Status of Budget 2024 and Budget Proposal 2025 (IUFRO HQ)*

### Financial statement 2023

Astrid Toppel (IUFRO Finances and Administration) started by informing the MC about the overview of the financial income and expenditures throughout the current Board term (2019-2023). The annual income of the IUFRO HQ has increased, with variations, from roughly 2.4 Million EUR to 3.4 Million EUR (the annual income each year includes also carried over rest-balances of previous year). A. Toppel then presented the financial figures of the audited Annual Account 2023 (see Doc 13.1). A hard copy version of the audited account was circulated among the MC meeting participants (soft copies can be requested from IUFRO HQ). She clarified that the profit (21,212 EUR) made by the Secretariat in 2023 will balance out the planned deficit in the current year in line with IUFRO's legal nature of a non-profit organization. As the Strategic Fund was not tapped in 2023, the amount in the fund remained the same. At last, she also presented an overview of the investment portfolio distribution 2023. The MC did not have further questions and recommended to the Board to approve the income and expenditures of the Union in 2023 and release the President and Executive Director of legal obligations deriving from financial issues and the annual account 2023.

### Budget status 2024 and budget proposal 2025

While the expenditures in 2024 were currently on track, a deficit has been planned due to the Congress year and related increases in costs (see also above). Regarding the income so far in 2024, the contribution by the largest donor (BML in Austria) had not been received by April (and thus not yet included in the presented figures), but the contribution was actually received in May 2024. Regarding pending funds from NiFoS, IUFRO HQ has received a letter of confirmation, but is still waiting for the funds. A withdrawal for the last tranche from the USFS partnership agreement has not yet been made, and the approval of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) grant is anticipated hopefully in July 2024. Regarding the status of the Strategic Fund, roughly 9,000 EUR had been used for sponsoring Board members to attend the Enlarged Board meeting and Congress 2024, and cover the Congress 2024 registration fees for Honorary Members. For the budget proposal for 2025, she noted that 3,8% inflation rate on expenditures has been included. The MC did not have any comments and recommended to the Board to approve the budget proposal for 2025.

### Update on fundraising activities

A. Buck and D. Kleinschmit visited the Eva Mayr-Stihl Foundation in Germany to discuss the approval of their grant to the incoming IUFRO President D. Kleinschmit. The Foundation has approved a grant for duration of 5 years, to support D. Kleinschmit as President in addressing priorities for the further strategic development of IUFRO in the coming Board term. M. Kleine informed the MC that the proposal for the next, 5-year cycle of the USFS grant has been approved, resulting in an increased annual amount (from current 255,000 USD to 280,000 USD in the future). He added that also the funding agreement with the Audemars-Watkins foundation has been approved for another two years. Regarding the Finnish MFA, it was noted that general budget cuts and reallocations in Finland may affect funding

for IUFRO in the future. IUFRO HQ has submitted a budget proposal for next years, but the MFA has requested an impact evaluation of the use of their grants in the last 10 years. If seen as an impactful investment, including the activities coordinated in Finland by WSFE, their funding could potentially continue, but it is hard to anticipate the outcome of the impact assessment. It was discussed whether it could be possible to add another Finland-centered activity in the future, e.g., in the context of the planned new European science-policy hub, or include the African science-policy hub under the MFA, as it supports their development work. In general it was suggested to discuss the potential continued support to the SPDF by the BFW in Austria, and also invite support from other organizations in the future. The MC took note of the presentation by A. Tippel and updates by A. Buck and M. Kleine.

## **9. Strategic issues**

### Implementing IUFRO Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024 and development of next Strategy Action Plan

#### ***Document:***

- *EB 6/2024 Doc 14.1 Summary report of the work and findings of the IUFRO Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024 Evaluation Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee)*

Operations Manager Andre Purret informed the MC about status of work of the IUFRO Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024 Evaluation Advisory Committee. On behalf of the Chair of the committee, Mónica Gabay, he presented the summary report of the work of the committee including findings and recommendations. At first, the mandate of the committee was described, followed by a description of the methodology for evaluation that included the following steps: synthesis of developments and trends for each action by IUFRO HQ; review of the synthesis, scoring and recommendations for each action by the committee; aggregation and average scores for each action/objective by IUFRO HQ; virtual meetings of the committee to reach consensus on the summary statements, scores and recommendations; and drafting of the summary report by the committee's Chair with support by HQ, followed by review and finetuning of the report. A. Purret then presented the spider-web diagrams mapping the average scores for actions under 9 objectives, grouped by the 3 institutional goals. As conclusions from the evaluation, he highlighted that good progress has been made in the overall implementation of the goals related to IUFRO's core elements of scientific excellence (Goal 1) and impact (Goal 3), while more work is needed on the goal related to the networking (Goal 2).

Suggestions from the committee included: revising 36 actions (of the total 55) by realigning their indicators; further discussing potential modifications for 8 actions; deleting 6 actions as these have been completed or their implementation is not feasible/practical; specific suggestions related to indicators and actors responsible; and re-considering the Action Plan's format for the next term (e.g., consolidating actions into broader strategic directions/groups that can be implemented and reported more flexibly). There is also a list of concrete detailed suggestions regarding proposed changes to each of the 55 Actions that have been compiled and will be made available for use by the group tasked with developing the next Strategy Action Plan. The next steps suggested by the committee include the establishment of a Strategy Committee, inviting expressions of interest in joining the committee and a proposal for a timeline to develop the next Action Plan. He ended by noting that the committee wished to express gratitude to Michael Kleine and Andre Purret for their outstanding work and valuable support during the evaluation process. The Board will be asked to decide on the further steps in developing the Strategy Action Plan post-2024, including the timeline, based on any recommendations by the MC.

The Chair thanked A. Purret for the presentation. The MC took note of the plans for presenting the summary report to the Enlarged Board and suggested making slight changes in the conclusions slides,

to aggregate the current text on suggestions. A. Purret will inform M. Gabay about MC's suggestions. The MC did not have any additional recommendations than the next steps suggested by the committee.

#### Networking in the post pandemic 'new normal' era

Andre Purret presented the slides that will be presented to the Enlarged Board under the respective sub-item of agenda item 14. Strategic issues. The survey aimed to map the experiences, challenges and expectations of IUFRO officeholders regarding the hosting of meetings, including participation and use of various formats and tools since the start of the pandemic. The results could guide IUFRO about what practices it should keep, and what to let go, as well as how IUFRO can better support its officeholders with meetings in the future. The main limitation of the survey was the response rate (only 128 respondents filled in the survey, ¾ answered virtual meeting questions only, and 47 answered also questions on hybrid meetings). The majority (59%) of the responses came from Europe and Northern America. The results of the survey indicate the following: a) smaller meetings (less than 25 people) worked generally better in virtual formats than larger meetings (more than 25 people) organized by the respondents; virtual meeting formats worked generally better than hybrid formats (higher average scores); for both hybrid and virtual meetings, generally more people attended that would have attended in an in-person meeting; meeting aspects such as presentations, productivity, efficiency, moderation and time management, inclusivity and diversity, flexibility and costs were similar or better for virtual meetings compared to in-person meetings. Hybrid meetings were similar or somewhat better compared to in-person meetings on the aspects of inclusivity and diversity, flexibility and costs; majority (66%) of the respondents were not familiar with the IUFRO online events and virtual meeting best practice guidelines, 25% knew about these and used these, while 9% knew about these but did not use them. Zoom was clearly the most used platform among the respondents (63%), followed by MS Teams (19%) and other platforms. Recommendations for the future IUFRO meetings included the following: the most suggested format for business meetings of IUFRO units is virtual (47%) and hybrid (37%); hybrid format is recommended for workshops (47%), conferences (59%) and seminars (53%); 94% suggested holding in-person field trips; networking activities can be held best during in-person (47%) and hybrid (45%) meetings. Regarding future IUFRO World Congresses, in-person format is the most preferred (55%) while 45% suggested holding these as hybrid meetings. Respondents had less concrete ideas or suggestions regarding improving hybrid meetings, but had some suggestions for improving virtual meetings (e.g., asking IUFRO to provide a Zoom account for the officeholders to use). In conclusion, the survey showed that despite lacking options for networking and discussions, virtual and hybrid meetings certainly have positive aspects in terms of costs, flexibility and inclusivity. Especially for longer virtual and hybrid events, proper preparation, competent moderation, and understanding of the used platform is crucial. To make the most out of virtual, hybrid, and in-person meetings now and in the future, it would be necessary to identify the most suitable platform and format to the meeting type and objectives, and overcome the current challenges. A. Purret ended by thanking, on behalf of IUFRO HQ, Alina Lehtikoinen (former President of IFSA and current masters' student at the University of Freiburg) who was instrumental in setting up the survey and analysing its results. The MC took note of the information and thanked A. Purret for the presentation of the survey results.

#### Proposal for the establishment of an IUFRO Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

##### **Documents:**

- *EB 6/2024 Doc 14.2: Organizational analysis (TF on Gender Equality in Forestry)*
- *EB 6/2024 Doc 14.3: Draft Terms of Reference for IUFRO DEI committee (MC)*

Following the recommendation by the MC at its meeting in September 2023 in Ghana to create IUFRO Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, the incoming Vice-President of Divisions Woodam Chung was asked to develop a draft ToR for the committee, to be reviewed by the MC (and potentially

approved by the Board). W. Chung presented to the MC the slides that will be presented also to the Enlarged Board. He highlighted that the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are vital to the global science community and that the committee would build on the insights gained from the work of the IUFRO Task Force on Gender Equality in Forestry. The central goal is to promote DEI principles throughout IUFRO's management, operations, and programs. The envisaged responsibilities of the committee are to: identify and analyse key DEI challenges within IUFRO; develop DEI guiding principles within the framework of IUFRO; formulate strategies and measures to implement DEI principles, and develop and recommend DEI policies, procedures, and practices to IUFRO Board; assess the effectiveness of DEI initiatives; and maintain open communication with all relevant groups within IUFRO to fulfil the DEI Committee goals. The committee should be composed of the Chair, minimum of 5 and maximum of 10 members with diverse backgrounds, and optionally also invited non-voting External Advisors. The envisaged qualifications of the members and advisors should be: demonstrated DEI experience; IUFRO familiarity; strong DEI commitment; openness to learning on DEI; and comfortability with sensitive conversations. The committee would meet regularly in every quarter (virtual or in-person) and the initial term would be 5 years with the possibility of extension by the Board. The committee would report regularly on progress to the Management Committee and the Board.

The MC thanked W. Chung for the presentation of the proposal and discussed the various aspects of the proposal. It was asked when best to assemble the committee – a suggestion was to do this right after the Congress and form the committee latest in the fall. Debating the various approaches on how to select the members of the committee, it was suggested to handpick 5-10 people, rather than issue an open call. Related to the latter option, it was not clear who could review the proposals for committee members. Lastly, it was noted that in the very likely case, it will be a challenge to hold the meetings of the committee due to extreme time zone differences. The MC did not have any additional comments and recommended to the Board to approve the establishment of IUFRO DEI committee, based on the draft ToR circulated before and presented at the meeting.

## **10. XXVI IUFRO World Congress 2024 in Stockholm**

### ***Documents:***

- *EB 6/2024 Doc 8.1 Report of the Chair of the Congress Organizing Committee (COC Chair)*
- *EB 6/2024 Doc 8.2 Report of the Chair of the Congress Scientific Committee (CSC Chair)*
- *EB 6/2024 Doc 8.3 Draft IUFRO World Congress 2024 Declaration/Statement*
- *EB 6/2024 Doc 8.4 Draft agenda of the meeting of the IUFRO International Council*

### **Updates by CSC Chair**

The Chair of the Congress Scientific Committee (CSC) Elena Paoletti reported on the updates on the scientific planning of the Congress. The scientific programme consists of 5 Plenary, 30 Sub-Plenary, 186 Technical, and 211 Poster sessions, adding up to a total of 432 sessions. Accepted abstracts: 1607 oral, 1471 short oral by poster and 312 poster only presentations. There will only be electronic posters (called short-oral by poster presentations) that are included in the poster sessions, while the abstracts accepted as poster only will be available in the Congress app for the duration of the Congress. The final program, updated regularly, can be accessed at <https://external.invajo.com/events/1ede4d0e-263c-66a8-9e2b-020287552602/scheduling/142b0211-4fa3-46a0-b815-83bf798d347a/dates/1ede4d0e-2673-61da-a674-020287552602> as well as at <https://iufro2024.com/detailed-programme/>. On behalf of the CSC, the CSC Chair acknowledged the brilliant work carried out by Andreas Andersson and the Invajo team, whose experience, patience and attention were instrumental to the success of the Congress. She also wished to thank all CSC members and the continuous IUFRO HQ support provided by Carola Egger. The Chair thanked E. Paoletti and the members of the CSC for the excellent preparations for the

scientific programme of the upcoming Congress. The MC took note of the update by E. Paoletti.

Updates by COC Chair, including overview of Congress ceremonies and activities by day, and communication activities during the Congress;

The Chair of the COC Fredrik Ingemarson presented to the MC the slides that will be presented also to the Enlarged Board, asking for suggestions from the MC on what kind of information is the most relevant for the Board. He started by informing the MC of the final preparations for the Congress, Congress ceremonies and activities by day. The Congress in figures: 4,200 delegates; 200+ sessions; 3,400 presentations including posters; 50+ presentations on Innovation Stage and Green Job Arena; 70+ exhibitors; 15 in-Congress excursions and 184 accredited journalists. The countries with the top 5 registrations of delegates among the top 20 were Sweden, USA, Germany, Finland and China. The gender of registered delegates: 55% men; 43% women; and 2% other. The age distribution shows that the majority of delegates are between the age of 30-60, with 610 delegates under the age of 30. The weekly programme includes scientific sessions, events on Innovation Stage and Green Job Arena, exhibition and side events, social events and museum offers. F. Ingemarson elaborated more on the social events where also the Enlarged Board members are invited: Swedish mid-summer celebrations in Skansen on 21 June; tree planting ceremony in Skansen; opening of exhibition at the venue; two welcome receptions (ABBA-themed one in the venue; more formal event in the City Hall of Stockholm); and the Outdoor Mingle. He then described the distinguished speakers and performances during the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, including the presence of His Majesty The King Carl XVI Gustaf, distinguished representatives of IUFRO's partners (FAO, IFSA, CIFOR-ICRAF), and the Host Country Scientific Award winners (3) at the Opening Ceremony. F. Ingemarson described the museum offer for delegates; an overview of the pre- and post-Congress excursions including the details about the in-Congress excursions on 26 June; the venue map and the daily programme including the registration opening and rehearsal of the Opening Ceremony. Regarding the Closing Ceremony on 29 June, he will highlight during the Enlarged Board meeting that the incoming Board members and members of the Congress Scientific Committee (CSC) will also be invited to come up on stage during the Closing.

The COC Chair then presented to the MC the Congress budget, noting that the costs (amounting to roughly 3.9 Million EUR) exceed the planned revenues (roughly 3.6 Million EUR), and that the negative balance excluding the amount set aside for potential financial claims is 124,000 EUR. F. Ingemarson also referred to the letter of support provided by the Swedish Government stating that the SLU will have the resources to carry out all Congress activities according to the submitted bid and signed contract.

The COC Chair then informed the Board about the communication activities during the Congress. A media desk consisting of nine SLU employees will cover various aspects of the Congress, supported by IUFRO HQ communications team. He described the main communication channels, deliverables, and the sessions to be live-streamed, noting that only events at the main plenary room – Victoria Hall – will be streamed and that all streams are accessible against a payment during the Congress. All streams will be available on the website after the Congress for free. He ended by presenting the main features of the main communication channel – the Congress App. The Chair of the meeting thanked F. Ingemarson, the team of the Congress Secretariat and the members of the COC for all the preparations for the Congress. The MC took note of the report by F. Ingemarson.

Stockholm Congress Statement

The Chair informed the MC about the draft Stockholm Congress Statement, noting that it had been endorsed by the MC prior to its circulation as background document for the meetings of the MC and the Enlarged Board. The draft statement will be presented to the Enlarged Board, pending Board's endorsement and recommendation for its final approval by the International Council at its meeting on

27 June 2024. The final statement will be communicated to the media and via Congress App to the delegates on Friday, 28 June, and presented at the Closing Ceremony of the Congress on Saturday, 29 June. The MC took note of the information presented by J. Parrotta.

#### Update on Scientist Assistance Programme (SAP)

M. Kleine updated the MC about the Scientist Assistance Programme (SAP). Out of 1,400 SAP applications, 120 were selected, resulting in 110 SAP participants plus facilitators/trainers. 53% of these are female, and the participants come from 43 countries. 60 of the SAP participants plus trainers attended the Pre-Congress Training Workshop (18-22 June) that started today also on the campus of the SLU here in Uppsala. M. Kleine noted that due to additional funding from SIDA, the Congress Secretariat was able to bring 30 additional senior scientists to Sweden, selected by the Congress Secretariat. In that context, it was noted that if similar funding would be available also for Nairobi Congress, there should be a criterion for selection added that recognizes the scientists who worked hard for planning and preparations of the scientific sessions in the Congress, including as members of the CSC. The MC took note of the update by M. Kleine.

### **11. Honours and Awards Committee (HAC)**

#### ***Document:***

– *EB 6/2024 Doc 9.1 Report of the Chair of the Honours and Awards Committee (HAC Chair)*

The Chair of the Honours and Awards Committee (HAC) Elena Paoletti provided an update on the HAC's activities and the IUFRO awards to be presented at the Congress. Since the last MC meeting, the HAC worked on developing the scripts for the daily award ceremonies at the Congress. The following IUFRO awards will be announced and handed over during the 5 Plenary Sessions (30 min per each ceremony): 10 Scientific Achievement Awards (SAA), 9 Outstanding Doctoral Research Awards (ODRA), 9 Student Award for Excellence in Forest Science (ISA) and up to 69 Best Poster Awards (BPA). Three Congress Host Scientific Awards, organized by the COC, will be handed over during the Opening Ceremony. The ceremonies for two Honorary Memberships (M. Wingfield and B. Hånell) and four IUFRO Distinguished Service Awards, DSA (G. Lidestav, M. Krott, E. Johann and M. Agnoletti) will take place during the Closing Ceremony. E. Paoletti explained the two-phase evaluation procedure for selecting the Best Poster Awards: 1) two months before the Congress, the uploaded PDF posters by the applicants were reviewed through a remote evaluation, resulting in a shortlist of at least 6 applications per each Division, Congress Theme and Task Force. It was followed by a HAC consensus meeting; and 2) in-Congress evaluation of the shortlisted poster presentations, where each Division representative organizes the evaluation per Division, and the HAC Chair organizes the evaluation per each Congress Theme and Task Force. The BPA award recipients will be announced during the final Plenary Session on Saturday. She added that the CSC suggested revising the BPA criteria in the future, as the requirement to be a member is too restrictive and IUFRO should encourage the submission of posters by also non-members.

Lastly, E. Paoletti thanked all HAC members for their time and collaboration in the last years, as well as the President, Executive Director and IUFRO HQ continuous support by Eva Schimpf. The Chair thanked E. Paoletti and the HAC for the great work done. The MC took note of the update by E. Paoletti.

### **12. IUFRO Communication**

#### ***Document:***

– *EB 6/2024 Doc 16.1 Report on communication activities (IUFRO HQ)*

### Summary of activities since the last meeting

A. Buck informed the MC about the recent communication activities by IUFRO HQ since the last MC meeting. From the written report submitted by IUFRO HQ to the Enlarged Board (Doc 16.1), he highlighted the latest publications including an overview of the successful podcast series; press releases and media campaigns; major events; collaborative activities; and a brief overview of the website and social media development. The MC took note of the information provided by A. Buck.

### Information Systems Redesign, including new website

M. Kleine updated the MC about the redesign of the IUFRO website and the plans for presenting it to the Enlarged Board. He noted that 80% of the tasks related to the redesign process have been finalized, including development of a full new design, structure and logic; new forms and webpages; and data migration from the old system. The remaining tasks to be implemented include the finalization of programming and reworks; polishing and testing; uploading of content, editing of data transfer and additional software additions (newsletter, translation, search function). From the total available funding (2022-2024) of 371,209 EUR, half were attributed to the software development, 25% for the design and structure development, 10% for project management and 5% each for additional tools, server costs, and testing and polishing. All development costs until the end of 2024 have been covered by available funding. Strategic Fund has not been so far used at all but may be tapped in 2025 as a back-up for possible software additions. The MC members congratulated IUFRO HQ for the good progress and looked forward to the launch of the final redesigned website. It was highlighted that websites of such a large scale often cost many times more and take much longer to develop. Responding to a question about coverage of the annual maintenance and server costs in the future, M. Kleine responded that 55,000 USD have been earmarked annually for the that purpose from the USFS grant (5-year agreement). It was further added that the maintenance is planned to be done by the same company who developed it. Concerning the data storing and following the EU GDPR, it was clarified that the new server behind the website including the related cloud-based system are located in Europe. During the Enlarged Board meeting, a presentation of the website redesign will be delivered by B. Burger and C. Egger from IUFRO HQ, followed by a live demonstration of the website in early access. The MC took note of the updates M. Kleine and thanked the project team in IUFRO HQ for all the hard work and efforts.

## **13. XXVII IUFRO World Congress 2029**

### Update on COC activities, including activities planned at the Congress

A. Purret communicated an update on the activities since the last MC meeting on behalf of the COC of the 2029 World Congress. In April 2024, a Steering Committee meeting of IUFRO local members was held, chaired by the Principal Secretary, State Department of Forestry in the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (MOECCF) of Kenya. The members of the Committee are the CEOs of KEFRI, Kenya Forest Service, CIFOR-ICRAF and African Forest Forum (AFF). In that meeting, a single approach to representation of Kenya at the 26th IUFRO World Congress in Sweden was adopted. All local partners, including the Cabinet Secretary and the Governor of Nairobi, agreed to join hands in welcoming delegates to Kenya by pre-recording short messages which would be played back to delegates visiting Kenya's exhibition stand at the Congress. The Director KEFRI and Prof. Avana of AFF confirmed their planned attendance of the IUFRO International Council meeting on 27th June 2024. In May 2024, the original financial support pledged by the Government of Kenya towards hosting the 27th IUFRO World Congress in Kenya was confirmed and the Cabinet Secretary confirmed her attendance at the Closing Ceremony to receive the Congress hosting flag as leader of Kenyan delegation to the Congress. In June 2024, KEFRI worked on the development of the IUFRO 2029 World Congress

website that could be launched during the Closing Ceremony in Stockholm as well as on the final branding and design of the Kenya exhibition booth. KEFRI appreciates the effort of the MC to ensure that the IUFRO 2029 World Congress in Nairobi, Kenya is meticulously planned and executed. KEFRI wishes to thank the MC for arranging free registrations for attendance of the Congress 2024 for the representatives of COC 2024 and looked forward to receiving further advice and guidance from Enlarged Board members in Sweden. The MC took note of the information provided by A. Purret.

#### CSC 2029

The incoming IUFRO President Daniela Kleinschmit addressed the MC by noting that, as discussed at the last meeting, the Chair of the CSC 2029 should ideally come from the African region, ensuring that the scientific content fits the context and location. Based on consultations within IUFRO HQ and with the current President, an excellent person who could Chair the CSC has been identified. Ernest Foli from FORIG, Ghana is a globally recognized scientist who has worked with the UN, coordinates the FORNESSA network and is a good friend of IUFRO-SPDC. He knows research from bottom up and has experience from fieldwork to organizing research. J. Parrotta and D. Kleinschmit spoke with E. Foli in May 2024 in New York, where he indicated his availability for the proposed role. It was added that the CSC 2029 Chair can be supported in his work by J. Parrotta, if needed. It was also commented by a MC member that the very useful support provided by IUFRO HQ to the CSC in this term should also continue in the future. The MC agreed with the proposal and found E. Foli suitable for serving as the Chair of the CSC 2029. The MC took note of the information provided by D. Kleinschmit and recommended to the Board to approve Ernest Foli as the Chair of the CSC 2029.

### **14. Major IUFRO and other events**

#### Proposed Schedule of IUFRO Board and MC meetings

The Chair informed the MC about the proposed schedule of IUFRO Board and MC meetings under consideration in the Board term 2024-2029. Almost all locations have been proposed without prior consultations with the respective Board members from these regions, and are up for discussion and confirmation. In general, the idea is to have more meetings in Global South. The first meeting of the Management Committee will be held from 22-23 October 2024 in Freiburg, Germany, and the first Enlarged Board Meeting of the new term will be held in Vienna, Austria on 21-22 May 2025, followed by an excursion on 23 May. It will be preceded by the pre-Board MC meeting on 19 May and pre-Board meeting of Divisions on 20 May.

#### All-Division IUFRO Conference in Edmonton, Canada

IUFRO HQ informed the MC about the updates regarding the all-Division IUFRO conference in Edmonton, Canada from 9-13 August 2027. All IUFRO Divisions and Task Forces are invited to participate in this event, being organized jointly by the University of Alberta and the Canadian Forest Service. Tod Ramsfield, Coordinator, Division 7 and incoming Co-Coordinator of Division 7 will inform the Enlarged Board about the event and its details. The MC took note of this information.

### **16. Any other items**

The MC did not discuss any other items.

### **17. Closure of the meeting**

The meeting of the IUFRO Management Committee was closed by the IUFRO President.

**ANNEX: List of participants**

John Parrotta (President)

Daniela Kleinschmit (Vice-President for Divisions)

Woodam Chung (Coordinator, Division 3 – Forest Operations Engineering and Management)

Alexander Buck (Executive Director)

Erich Gomes Schaitza (President's Nominee for liaison with Latin America)

Elena Paoletti (Chair, Congress Scientific Committee, IUFRO World Congress 2024; Chair, Honours and Awards Committee)

Fredrik Ingemarson (Chair, Congress Organizing Committee, IUFRO World Congress 2024)

**IUFRO HQ:**

Michael Kleine (Deputy Executive Director; Coordinator, IUFRO Special Programme for Development of Capacities)

Astrid Toppel (IUFRO Finances and Administration)

Andre Purret (IUFRO Operations Manager; Minutes)

**Regrets:**

Shirong Liu (Vice-President for Task Forces)