

CBFP Scientific College Meeting

Monday, 29.05.2020, Digital Meeting on MS Teams

Chaired by College Co-Leaders Richard Atyi & Donald Iponga

Alain Karsenty, Anne-Julie Rochette, Aurelian Mbzibain, Benoit Mertens, Christiane Käsgen (observatory), David Montgomery, Ehab Eugene, Bryan Featherstone, Eric Forni, Mary Gonder, Sylvie Gourlet-Fleury, Guillaume Lescuyer, Jennifer Cohen, Luc Janssens de Bisthoven, Maarten Vanhove, Mike Skuja Bioko, Robert Nasi, Désiré Nkwinkwa, Richard Nyirenda, Pascal Boeckx, Pierre Defourny, Denis Sonwa, Vivien Rossi, Christian Ruck (CBFP Facilitator), Iven Schad (CBFP Facilitation team), Raymond Mbitikon (CBFP Co-Facilitator), Dany Pokem (CBFP Facilitation team), Johannes Haas (CBFP Facilitation team)

Agenda

1. Welcome words (College Co-Leaders) – ca. 5min
2. Short technical intro (Facilitation team) – ca. 5min
3. Introduction to road map and consultation process (CBFP Facilitator Dr. Christian Ruck) – ca. 20min
4. Q & A / Discussion on ongoing consultation process (College members) – ca. 45min
 - a. Process and next steps
 - b. Areas of interest / Contributions from College members
5. Other current matters in the Colleges (College members) – ca. 15min
 - a. E.g. impact of Covid 19 on work of College members, short update on planned Summer School by University of Wolverhampton etc.

Notes

After College Co-Leaders and meeting Co-Chairs Richard Atyi and Donald Iponga welcomed all participants and Dr Christian Ruck, Facilitator of the Federal Republic of Germany to the CBFP who is present for his first full meeting with the Scientific College, the German Facilitation gave a brief technical introduction into holding digital meetings in times of the current global pandemic.

Facilitator Dr Christian Ruck then introduced himself and his team to the Scientific College. Dr Ruck gave a brief introduction to the German Facilitation's road map for the upcoming two years which was elaborated with partners and welcomed by the acting COMIFAC President as well as COMIFAC's Executive Secretary. Dr Ruck stressed the importance of continuing the work of preceding facilitations and of building up on previous efforts of the Partnership. He named the implementation of the N'Djamena declaration and a strengthened dialogue with Chinese partners as two important examples. Dr Ruck outlined the crucial importance of upcoming international conferences like UNFCCC and CBD COPs as well as EU summits with Africa and China, respectively, under German EU Council presidency and stressed that future international environmental policies will be strongly

influenced by these summits. He underlined that the Facilitation intends to work for a unified voice of Congo Basin for mentioned conferences and preparatory negotiations. According to the Facilitator, particularly important topics during these talks and during the German Facilitation period will include biodiversity conservation and protected area management, sustainable land use, ecotourism, Forest Landscape Restoration or an appropriate payment for the globally relevant services the forest ecosystems of the Congo Basin provide to the world. Furthermore, Dr Ruck stressed that to push the Congo Basin on the international agenda with regard to mentioned topics and other subject areas, scientific input will be needed. In that regard, he invited and strongly encouraged the Scientific College to contribute to the ongoing consultation process by means of answers to the technical questionnaire sent out to all CBFP members. The consultation and negotiation process is planned to move forward and presence meetings are to be held as soon as the Covid-19 pandemic allows for them.

In more detail, the consultation process shall be organized as follows:

- College members are invited to signal their interest to contribute to one of the topics indicated in the questionnaire as soon as possible to the facilitation and College Co-Leaders simultaneously
- Contributions are to be elaborated and sent to the Facilitation and College Co-Leaders until 01 July; Contributions will be collected and compiled
- Digital discussions and thematic workshops will be organized in the process to enable exchange on and streamlining of points of disagreement
- The objective is to agree on a common perspective of the CBFP and as many of its diverse members as possible and to present and offer this stance in international negotiations

Co-Chair Richard Atyi stressed importance of the mentioned consultation process and invited College members to contribute as scientific advice and expertise is crucially necessary to guide political decisions.

College members asked how the answers to the questionnaire will be used and if answers will be forwarded also to other colleges. In response, Facilitator Dr Ruck explained that the Facilitation will elaborate a methodology for each step of the consultation process. He mentions that it is so far not planned to publish them in the form of a scientific paper.

Further questions from the college concerned the intended outcome of the consultation process as specification could help College members in elaborating contributions. Facilitator Dr Ruck stated that the objective of a common position of the CBFP remains very clear and that the negotiation process will need to be based on scientific evidence from the College. At the same time, he made clear that it is not possible to foresee how negotiations will evolve. As a consequence, the work process will have to adopt to this and will develop step by step. The Facilitator mentioned that it is impossible to say now how far the negotiation process will go but that the Facilitation will try to push it as far as possible. The Facilitation team added that it is an additional objective of the Facilitation to dynamize intra-college interaction in the CBFP and that a clearer idea on how communication between colleges is to be organized will be elaborated.

Discussion continued on how CBFP will factor in resilience of Congo Basin forests in a post Covid-19 world and if it should become part of priorities of the CBFP. Christian Ruck explained that the technical questionnaire also included a part on Covid 19 and that all further input on Covid would be much welcome. The College mentioned two initiatives of the COVID-19 Task Force of the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities and the Distributed System of Scientific Collections, namely (1) a horizon scanning exercise on research priorities on pathogen transmission, and (2) and exploration on how biodiversity collections can be better integrated into understanding and preventing emerging

infectious diseases in general. Information on both initiatives was forwarded to all participants after the call via email.

On general matters, CIDT announced to organize a forest governance forum in DRC in November and stated that active involvement of the College would be very welcome. A concept note will be shared in June.

CIRAD asked if a planned project on preserving a forest continuum ("trame forestière") throughout Central Africa could be forwarded to other Colleges. Facilitator Dr Ruck welcomed the idea.

The College discussed if a side event of the CBFP Scientific College should be organized during the upcoming CBD COP. In that regard, Christian Ruck confirmed that the Facilitation plans a presence at CBD and UNFCCC COPs as well as at other international conferences like the next IUCN World Conservation Congress. He underlined that active support from partners will be necessary and that planning is also dependent on Covid 19.

CIDT announced that the summer school planned for this summer had been pushed to next year due to the Covid 19-pandemic.

Before closing the meeting, Co-Chair Richard Atyi asked for further contributions and then thanked the participants for their time and availability.