

*Report from the COMMON FORUM secretariat
(2008-2011)*

Final report



July, 2011

Dr. Dominique DARMENDRAIL

Report from the COMMON FORUM secretariat (2008-2011)

First draft

Table of contents

About COMMON FORUM

1. Introduction
2. Tasks of the COMMON FORUM secretariat
3. Overview of activities
4. Evaluation
5. Financial aspect
6. The next secretariat

About Common Forum

The COMMON FORUM on Contaminated Land was initiated in Bonn 1994. It started as an informal group of those from national government and agencies in EU Member States who are involved with contaminated land and groundwater issues. In 1996 COMMON FORUM gained a more formal status as initiators of the EU funded CARACAS concerted action on risk assessment for contaminated land. COMMON FORUM was the group of formal country representatives in CARACAS, and this situation continued during the subsequent CLARINET concerted action, which ended in 2001.

The publication of the CLARINET reports introducing “Risk based land Management” as a central concept in European contaminated land approaches illustrates that EU wide harmonisation can arise at a strategic level if all stakeholders realise the benefits of this. COMMON FORUM is now recognised by the EC as an important “stakeholder network” in the development of a EU soil protection policy. It is also recognised by the industry-lead contaminated land network NICOLE (Network of Industrially Contaminated Land in Europe) as representing the European regulatory and policymaking community. After the end of CLARINET, COMMON FORUM wanted to keep its central position in the soil protection and contaminated land discussion, and succeeded due to the enthusiasm of its members. The need for more continuity was growing, as expressed during all meetings since 2001, for many actions to take place between meetings, and for more effective engagement with bodies like the European Commission.

The general objectives of COMMON FORUM are to develop strategies for the management and treatment of contaminated sites and for land recycling with respect to “sustainable resource protection” for contaminated land and groundwater. COMMON FORUM holds regular meetings to discuss important and current issues in these fields. When possible, common views are developed and expertise is offered to the European Commission, relevant stakeholder networks and EU research projects. Many COMMON FORUM members participate in stakeholder groups in EU research projects or participate in discussions at workshops where results of EU projects are presented.

COMMON FORUM has adopted the following mission statement:

- being a platform for exchange of knowledge and experiences,
- establishing a discussion platform on policy, research, technical and managerial concepts of contaminated land,
- being a platform for initiating and following-up of international projects among members,
- offering an exchange of expertise to the European Commission and to European networks.

1. Introduction

In August 2005 a semi-permanent secretariat has been formally established on a project basis for three years. The main goal of this “end of project” report is to support the decision about continuation of the project with another semi-permanent secretary.

Several ideas about the mission and the most appropriate structure for CF have already been developed long time before the start of the current secretariat in meetings in Antwerp (October 2001); Paris (June 2002), Berlin (November 2002) and Birmingham (January 2004). In a meeting in The Hague (November 2004) a decision has been made how to proceed with a more organised structure, in view of the following needs & benefits:

- Common Forum is recognised as a „stakeholder group“ by DG ENV (ref. EU soil strategy; GWD) Common Forum can provide statements and makes proposals to on-going EU policy discussions (“early-warning system”).
- A more active and strategic input to R&D at EU level has been agreed in Birmingham; long-term support for strategic projects beyond their EC funding horizon is needed (e.g. AQUATERRA, EURODEMO, SNOWMAN, EUGRIS). The Common Forum could provide overarching co-ordination/support to these projects.
- To ensure a long-term role of the Common Forum on EU level, voluntary contributions by members will not be enough. An organised structure is needed, which could achieve the following:
 - Stronger CF-viewpoints towards EC;
 - Permanent representation in other stakeholder initiatives/discussions;
 - Screening of information for CF-members; organise information exchange;
 - Continuity in FP5/FP6/FP7-initiated strategic projects; multinational cooperation;
 - CF-secretariat: one address – one person; management; representation;
 - CF-secretariat will provide an organised structure like the science community and industry (NICOLE) to make timely input in on-going developments/discussion.

CF-members decided, after considering various options, that the establishment of an informal secretariat would be the most promising and cost-effective option. A knowledgeable person should be contracted as an informal secretary. The secretariat should be funded as a multinational project for a limited number of years. The project could be continued after an evaluation, for which the current report aims to provide the necessary information concerning tasks and activities of the secretariat and the financial aspects.

The first period of the secretariat, 2005 – 2008, has been hold by Dr Joop Vegter, NL. Since September 2008, the secretariat is held by Dr Dominique Darmendrail, Fr.

The present report gives an overview of the activities of the CF (COMMOM FORUM) network secretariat from September 2008 up to August 2011.

2. The tasks of the secretariat

General aims

In view of the mission of CF the aim of the 'secretariat' project is to keep the CF active as a network in their current field of interest, which according to the CLARINET reports can be defined as (Risk based) management of the system of (contaminated) land and water resources. The secretariat should organise the collective CF-efforts effectively and carry out agreed actions. Because of the EU soil strategy, which is currently being developed, the field of interest of CF may become broader. The soil strategy recognizes other threats to soil than contamination, the mitigation of which may require a similar management philosophy as was developed for contamination by CF during the CARACAS and CLARINET concerted actions and within the Technical Working Group Contamination in the EU soil strategy discussion. Although CF can offer expertise and experience with management strategies in other fields, the core business of CF will remain the management of contaminated land and related water resources.

Specific Tasks

1] *Preparing and Organizing 2 CF meetings per year*

- Liaise with country hosting the meeting (e.g. agenda), logistics of the meetings are managed by the hosting country.
- Drafting agenda's
- Prepare discussion papers and draft CF statements
- Drafting the reports of the meeting
- Organising and consulting the CF Agenda committee (when necessary)
- Carrying out agreed actions
- Creating and following the country contact list for the CF (and the ICCL)

2] *Being the formal 'speaker' on behalf of Common Forum:*

- Representing CF in NICOLE steering committee and participating in NICOLE workshop discussions on behalf of CF.
- Participating in meetings of the ICCL (International Committee on Contaminated Land).
- Participating in review panels or advisory forums of EU DG Research projects and projects by European Environmental Agency (EEA) or Joint Research Centre (JRC):
 - To ensure that projects work in a way that meets the needs of Member States and that projects can benefit from CF knowledge and resources (e.g. for data collection in European Countries).
 - To present CF as a platform for discussing long term support for initiatives.
- Maintaining an active communication with DG ENV concerning the development of the thematic strategy for soil protection and contaminated land related policies (for instance on IPPC, waste, on sediments and on groundwater).
- Reporting to CF about the activities mentioned above.

3] *Taking care of communication and information exchange by:*

- Answering email questions by CF members, email consultations of Agenda committee.

- Feeding the EUGRIS website with CF news.
- Publishing an email newsletter, with active cooperation of CF members.
- Updating the CF website.

4] Elaborating final activities report (one at the end of the contract).

- To justify the financial contributions for those countries that contributed.

3. Overview of Activities

3.a] Meetings .

CF-meetings

CF meetings involve preparation and chairing of meetings sessions by the secretary. The CF secretariat is responsible for the agenda, the time schedule of the sessions at the meeting and the invitations of speakers/ guests. The CF secretariat consults the agenda committee consisting of contributing CF members (see financial aspects). Eight meetings have been organised. Reports and conclusions of the first seven meetings can be found on the CF website (commonforum.eu)

1. Toulouse (France), 16 & 17 October 2008
Main subjects: Implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive in European Countries, Draft Directive on Soil Protection, IPPC directive review and research issues.
2. Dublin (Ireland), 26 & 27 March 2009
Main subjects: Historical Mines/ Assessment and Management, Draft Directive on Soil Protection, Joint Statement with NICOLE and EURODEMO+ on Research needs,
3. Helsinki (Finland), 18 September 2009 :
Main subjects:
4. Trieste (Italy), 5 July 2010 / back to back to the 9th ICCL meeting :
Main subjects: decisions on work to be continued on EU Directives (Soil Protection, Waste, IPPC / IED, renewable energies), ELD transposition comparison study, launch of the questionnaire for updating information available on CL management legal framework in Member States, Joint Statement with NICOLE on innovative technologies, discussion with EURODEMO+, SNOWMAN for developing collaborations,
5. Salzburg (Austria), 21 September 2010 / back to back CONSOIL 2010
Main subjects: discussion on the proposal of Soil Framework Directive and on the implementation of the Mining Residues Directive; feedback from the Trieste Joint Workshop, update on the CF Questionnaires.
6. Nottingham (United Kingdom), 14 & 15 April 2011
Main subjects: Measures to prevent companies to avoid their environmental liability by private or business transactions, European Regulatory issues (Industrial Emissions Directive / baseline report, Environmental Technologies Verification pre-programme), proposal of an alternative draft for the Soil Protection Directive, update on ISO/CEN activities.

International Committee on Contaminated Land

Since 2008 CF secretary has the duty to help hosting country for the preparation and the organisation of the ICCL meetings. ICCL meetings take place every two years. Under this secretary contract the following meetings have been prepared:

1. Helsinki (Finland), 16 & 17 September 2009:

- 1.1. Secretariat of the Organisation
- 1.2. Contacts with invitees and speakers
- 1.3. Elaboration of the programme in collaboration with the hosting country
- 1.4. Updating of website and relevant communication to the ICCL network,
- 1.5. Contacts for finding a new presidency (South Africa, Japan, USA)

2. Washington DC (United States of America), 4 & 5 October 2011:

- 2.1. Elaboration of tasks list
- 2.2. Update of the invitee list
- 2.3. Meetings with US-EPA for the choice of location and dates for the 10 ICCL meeting, the issues of concern and for an extra workshop on mining activities impacts;
- 2.4. Contact with World Bank for financial support for the organisation of the meeting
- 2.5. Elaboration of the programme

Meetings at National Level

1. Swedish Contaminated Land Network, 24 march 2009, Stockholm: Presentation on "Ongoing work with EU directives related to contaminated land management – possible demands for harmonisation";
2. 2nd French national days on R&D dedicated to contaminated soils – presentation on "Evolution of contaminated land policies at national and European levels";
3. Thematic day 2009 - Technosols, the man-made soils, a challenge for urbanised societies, Bruxelles, 2 December 2009 - Strategic and technical tools for land contamination management in EU: where do we come from and where are we going to?";
4. SARCLE Conference on "Sustainable Approaches to Remediation of Contaminated Land in Europe", Gent, 6-8 June 2010: contribution to the International Advisory Board.

3.b) INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

NICOLE meetings

1. Nicole steering committee Bruxelles, 2 September 2008: Discussions about the continuation of the collaboration between CF and NICOLE
2. Workshop Madrid, October 2008: Contribution on the case study exercise.
3. Workshop "Environmental Legal Issue", 31 March 2009
4. Workshop "Closure of sites", Douai, November 2009: participation to the Organising committee

5. Co-organisation of the Trieste Joint workshop on opportunities challenges and financial consequences of evolving legislation in Europe, July 2010
6. Workshop “Site Characterisation”, Copenhagen, May 2011
7. Contribution to NICOLE working groups: Soil, Brownfields / liability transfer, Sustainable Remediation

SNOWMAN Network

1. SNOWMAN Advisory Group meeting, Paris (France), November 2011: contribution on research programme and knowledge dissemination
2. Fine-tuning of the 3rd call for proposal, 2010
3. Contribution for a future workshop on knowledge dissemination about natural attenuation (2011).

SEDNET Network

1. Sednet Advisory Board meeting, Vienna (Austria), February 2011

CONSOIL

1. Programme committee meeting (Amsterdam, February 2010) of Consoil conference (Salzburg, 22-24 September 2010)
2. Organisation of a Special session on EU Soil Strategy / Legal issues.
3. Contribution to the SNOWMAN Special Session on “How to enhance the uptake of research findings?”
4. Contribution to the EURODEMO / US-EPA Special Session on “Reaching a European Sustainable Remediation Consensus – some ideas”.

Sustainable Remediation Conference

1. Member of the Scientific Advisory Board (evaluation of abstracts, recommendations of invited speakers and presenters, advices on conference activities and dissemination of information)

International conferences / presentations

1. Soil Degradation, Riga (Latvia), February 2009: contacts with Eastern European Countries representatives for developing the CF and ICCL networks,
2. Montréal – Americana 2009 – Intervention on “tendance européenne en matière de gestion des sites par analyse des risques et avantages / bénéfiques de recourir à un tel mode de gestion »
3. Brastilava – Conference 2009 on contaminated sites – Presentation on « Contaminated land management Policy development in Europe : Situation, Aims and Proposal of a New Concept”,
4. Green remediation conference, Copenhagen, November 2009 – speech on “Contaminated Land Management Policy development in Europe: Evolution in Member States and at European Union Level, need for harmonisation or Common Ground?”

5. Pollutec 2009, Paris, December 2009 – Presentation on the states of discussion and evolution of legislation on contaminated land management (soil, wastes, IPPC, renewable energies).
6. INTERSOL 2010, Paris, March 2010 – introduction speech on Regulatory progresses amongst European Nations for management of contaminated sites, with a special focus on excavated soil management.
7. SETAC 2010, Sevilla, 26 May 2010 – Co-organisation (with TCB – NL) of two platform sessions on Soil Quality Assessment – cf. www.sevilla.setac.org
8. Brastilava – Conference 2010 on contaminated sites – Presentation on “Contaminated Land Management Policy Development at European level: Soil issues in European Directives”.
9. Belgrade – NATO SPSP Workshop 2011 on Drinking water protection by integrated management of contaminated land.
10. INTERSOL 2011, Lyon (France), March 2011 – Presentation on the IPPC Directive recast / the Industrial Emissions Directive.
11. 2nd Sustainable Remediation Conference, Amherst (USA), June 2011 – presentation on Development of a fourth generation of policy concept for remediating contaminated land in Europe.
12. TASK Symposium, Leipzig (Germany), June 2011 – presentation on European Legal Framework for Contaminated Land Management.
13. International conference “Protection of agricultural soils against joint stress of natural and anthropogenic factors”, Pulawy (Poland), June 2011 – presentation on European Directive and Soil Issues.

SETAC

1. Contribution to the Soil Advisory Group.

3.c] DISCUSSION PAPERS

1. Contribution to European Court of Auditors audit on brownfield regeneration fundings in Europe (September 2010)
2. Joint Statement Paper with NICOLE on Innovative technologies for Contaminated Sites (October 2010).
3. Proposals for text changes in some articles of the proposed soil framework directive, (4 drafts, 2011)
4. Final CF-secretariat report (2011)

3.d] PUBLICATIONS

Sinke A., Spira Y., Darmendrail D. - Joining international forces towards clean and green remediation - Bodem (NL), July 2009.

Halen H., Darmendrail D., Vegter J., Swartjes F., Goidts E. – Strategic and technical tools for land contamination management in EU: where do we come from and where are we going

to? - TECHNOSOLS, THE MAN-MADE SOILS, A CHALLENGE FOR URBANISED SOCIETIES, SSSB
–Thematic Day 2009 –Brussels 2/12/2009.

D’Aprile L., Darmendrail D., Reinikainen J. - Gestione dei materiali provenienti da attività di bonifica: l’esperienza italiana a confronto con le pratiche adottate in altri paesi europei, 2010.

4.0 Evaluation

CF –meetings: Agenda and participation

Agenda of most CF meetings were dominated by discussions about the Soil Framework Directive. Apart from SFD, developments in other EU directives and national approaches have been discussed. Following some demands technical subjects and research issues were reintroduced in the meeting agendas and exchanges with other scientific European networks were developed (SEDNET, SNOWMAN).

New contacts in European Countries have been established to promote CF activities (e.g. Poland, Serbia, and Turkey).

Conclusions:

1. Broaden the scope of CF discussions by addressing technical themes, financial aspects of contaminated land management and case studies in addition to EU and national policies.
2. Develop contacts with policy makers in new EU member states.

CF meetings: Organisation

The responsibilities for the organisation of a meeting are divided between the CF secretariat and the country representative of the country that hosts the meeting. The CF secretariat is responsible for the agenda, the time schedule of the sessions at the meeting and the invitations of speakers/ guests.

The hosting country is in charge of finding an appropriate meeting place and covering the costs of the meeting organisation.

Meeting place:

- One room for plenary meetings (40 persons) chairs and tables in conference lay out.
- 2 or 3 smaller rooms for group discussions
- Coffee breaks and 2 lunches at the meeting facility.

The hosting country will organise (and bear the costs possible and financially feasible) for:

- A get-together (evening before 1st day),
- a joint dinner (1st day),
- A “field trip” if proposed.

The formula for CF meeting outlined above proved to be adequate.

Conclusion:

3. The organisation of CF meetings is to be continued in the “traditional” way.

Capitalisation of experiences and knowledge in European Countries

In order to allow comparison between countries several thematic questionnaires have been elaborated and sent to country representatives. National answers are provided on line on the Common Forum website.

The questionnaires area of the website is one of the most visited pages. Positive feedbacks from members and visitors have been collected.

Conclusion:

4. These types of actions should be maintained for the issues of concern in the upcoming years and incentives for updating continuously the related pages should be pursued.

Effectiveness of CF network

During the debates in EU council and parliament about the SFD CF acted as a platform for exchanging opinions of EU member states, especially among those in charge of coordinating the national point of view in their countries.

Conclusion:

5. Contacts with EC should be actively maintained and representatives from the relevant commission services (DG ENV, DG MARK, JRC, EEA) need to be invited.

Communication

The website has been optimised in order to allow better dissemination of the information collected and elaborated within the network. 3 – 4 CF newsletters have been published per year.

Conclusion:

6. Continue optimisation of the communication tools.

5 Financial aspects

The project description (2008) for the secretariat described the deliverables of the secretariat and a motivation for an annual budget of € 50.000 (including 19,6% VAT)..

The breakdown of the annual budget for the CF secretariat is given in table 1.

Table 1. Breakdown of annual cost of the CF secretariat.

Type of cost	€ without VAT	€ incl. 19,6% VAT
1] Work hours, including office costs, internet access and other related costs	33.040,00	39.515,84
2] Travel expenditures	4.500,00	5.382,00
3] Website hosting and support	4.450,00	5.322,20
Total	41.990,00	50.220,04

The project budget has also covered costs of travels and accommodations of Joop VEGTER during the transfer of the CF secretariat to Dominique DARMENDRAIL.

Contributions from CF countries PM

The secretariat budget has been supported by Austria, Belgium / Brussels Capital region, Belgium / Flanders, Belgium / Wallonia, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden Spain / Basque Country and Switzerland.

The CF meetings have been hosted by France (October 2008), Ireland (Mars 2009), Finland (September 2009), Italy (July 2010), Austria (September 2010), and United Kingdom (April 2011).

6. The next secretariat

The next secretariat needs to start in September 2011 to assure the continuity of CF. France will continue the secretariat with a new three year contract taking into consideration the additional tasks (e.g. ICCL meeting secretariat).

The funding contracts (one per country) need to be elaborated for a three years period, with annual invoices to improve the financial management of the project. 50.000€ will remain the basis for covering an annual secretariat budget. If additional budget can be collected for some meetings by the hosting country (or if the more than €50.000 is collected for the secretariat), this can be used for inviting new participants (Eastern European country representatives for example).

The first meeting managed by the new secretariat will be held back to back the ICCL meeting in Washington (USA), 4 and 5 October 2011.