

*Report from the COMMON FORUM secretariat
For 2011-2014*

Final report



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About Common Forum

The COMMON FORUM on Contaminated Land was initiated in Bonn in 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 an 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 Common Forum secretariat was created for doing so.

The CF Secretariat is funded as a multinational project with financial support from the CF members.

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. 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 main goal of this “end of project” report is to report back on the activities conducted under the contract period (September 2011 up to August 2014) and to support the decision about continuation of the secretariat.

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

2] *Assisting the Country organising the International Committee on Contaminated Land (ICCL) meeting every two (2) years*

- Liaise with country hosting the meeting (e.g. agenda), logistics of the meetings are managed by the hosting country
- Drafting agenda's for the ICCL meeting and, when approved, the ICCL Open workshop
- Creating and following the country contact list for the ICCL
- Promoting the events to the different stakeholder communities
- Registering participants
- Presenting the ICCL networking activities to special events

3] *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 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

4] *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 and maintaining the CF website

5] Networking with the existing international networks operating in the thematic area:

- Identified networks: NICOLE
- Participating to annual meetings of these networks (on invitation)
- Contributing to organising joint events
- Liaising with network contact points for elaborating joint position papers

6] On-going support to CF members:

- Elaboration of questionnaires, synthesis of the answers
- Publication of synthetic reports on member' special questions.
- Updating of the Strategic research agenda on contaminated land management
- Answers to members' daily questions

7] 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. Six CF meetings and two ICCL meetings have been organised. Reports and conclusions of each meeting can be found on the CF website (commonforum.eu):

1. Washington DC (USA), 3 October 2011 - back to back to the 10th ICCL meeting
Main subjects: European Agenda update (Industrial Emission Directive, European Roadmap on Resource Efficiency, Draft Soil Protection directive), ISO / CEN standardisation activities, feedback on international cooperation activities (NICOLE, SNOWMAN, RELASC, World Bank), Brainstorming on Sustainable land management, Communication activities
2. Basel (Switzerland), 26 & 27 April 2012
Main subjects: the situation in Switzerland (legal framework, The Contaminated land situation of the chemical industry), activities in member states, follow-up of the ICCL meeting (discussion with the World Bank, elaboration of an ICCL action plan), European Environment Agency and SNOWMAN activities on soil, the EC study on remediation market, update on the risk-based and sustainable land management paper, IMPEL demand, consultation on the INSPIRE directive
3. Bilbao (Spain), 23 & 24 October 2012 / back to back to the International workshop on Land protection
Main subjects: the contaminated land management in the Basque Country, update on NICOLE activities, international activities on sustainable remediation, ISO working group on sustainable remediation, the AMEC study on the IED baseline report guidance and the development in member states (Germany, Finland, Flanders, Lithuania), inventories and registers of sites, Revision of the EU Contaminated site indicator versus Resource Efficiency Roadmap.
4. Bratislava (Slovakia), 23 – 31 May 2013 - back to back to the International Conference on contaminated sites management
Main subjects: the contaminated land management in Slovakia, the 7th Environment Action Programme, brainstorming on the need of information and knowledge on ecosystem services,

Inventories – link to CIS015 indicator, presentation of the GREENLAND, HOMBRE, TIMBRE and NANOREM FP7 projects, the international mercury convention, IMPEL DECO project, Italian IED baseline report guidance, recent activities on ELD, the CF – NICOLE joint statement on risk-based and sustainable land management.

5. Durban (South Africa), 8 October 2013 / back to back to the 11th ICCL meeting
Main subjects: evolution in different CF countries, update on the European Agenda (IED, possible withdrawal of the Soil directive), the 2011 report on the CSI 015 indicator, Horizon 2020 / calls and possible CF contributions, reference documents on the EU legal documents impacting contaminated land management.
6. Berlin (Germany), 13 & 14 May 2014 / back to back to a joint workshop with NICOLE
Main subjects: contaminated land management in Germany, update on the ISO and CEN standardisation activities, presentation of the MAGPLAN and NANOREM projects, IED baseline report guidance documents (Germany, Finland, EC), the EC study on the implementation of the ELD, the European Soil Partnerships, update on the CF activities (answers to Horizon 2020, IMPEL project, communications at conferences and workshops).

International Committee on Contaminated Land

Since 2008 CF secretary has the duty to help the 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. Washington DC (USA), 4 - 6 October 2011

- 1.1. Elaboration of tasks list
- 1.2. Update of the invitee list
- 1.3. 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;
- 1.4. Contact with World Bank for financial support for the organisation of the meeting
- 1.5. Elaboration of the programme in collaboration with the hosting country
- 1.6. Contacts with invitees and speakers
- 1.7. Elaboration of the programme
- 1.8. Updating of website and relevant communication to the ICCL network,
- 1.9. Contacts for finding a new ICCL hosting country

2. Durban (South of Africa), 9 - 11 October 2013:

- 2.1. Elaboration of tasks list
- 2.2. Update of the invitee list
- 2.3. Meetings with SA department of Environmental Affairs 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 International funders and member states for financial support for the organisation of the meeting
- 2.5. Elaboration of the programme in collaboration with the hosting country
- 2.6. Contacts with invitees and speakers
- 2.7. Updating of website and relevant communication to the ICCL network,
- 2.8. Contacts for finding a new ICCL hosting country

Meetings at National Level / Presentations by Common Forum secretariat

- Symposium on Soil Geochemistry Atlas – Cyprus, 5-7 September 2011 / European Soil legal framework
- 20 ans SPAQUE, Brussels (BE), 3 November 2011 / European Legal Framework for Soil / Land Management
- Workshop on remediation, operating procedures and potential redevelopment of abandoned mine sites, Cagliari (IT), 22 – 23 March 2012 – ICCL survey on mining site remediation and reuse.
- International Conference Contaminated Sites 2012 Bratislava (SK) – 20-22 June 2012 / European regulations concerning contaminated site management and status of the directive for soil protection
- China SiteREM 2012 conference, Yantai (CN), 24-26 September 2012 / Risk-informed and sustainable land management: basis for a fourth generation of Contaminated Land Management policy
- EC « Land and soil degradation post Rio+20' » Conference, Brussels (BE) 16 November 2012
- Global Soil Week, Berlin (DE), 19 – 22 november 2012 <http://www.globalsoilweek.org/>
- SURF21 Sustainable remediation around the world meeting, Washington, 12 – 13 December 2012 <http://www.sustainableremediation.org/news/2012/9/19/surf-21-december-12-13-2012-sustainable-remediation-around-t.html>
- Americana 2013, Montreal (CA), March 2013 - Risk-informed and sustainable land management: basis for a fourth generation of Contaminated Land Management policy
- Aqua Consoil <http://www.aquaconsoil.org/AquaConSoil2013/Start.html>
- Tagung „Alte Lasten – neue Chancen“, Zurich (CH), 27 August 2013 / SWITZERLAND: An Island in Europe?
- EC Workshop “THE ECONOMICS OF SOIL IN THE [PERI-]URBAN CONTEXT”, Brussels (BE), 21 October 2013 – remarks on the draft report
- Innovative sediment management, Lisbon (PT) – 6 -9 November 2013
- SNOWMAN knowledge dissemination meeting, Paris, 19 & 20 November 2013
- Miljøringens 20-årsjubileum, Oslo (NO), 20-21 November 2013 / Contaminated ground in the EU, working on common ground?
- 9th International conference on remediation of chlorinated and recalcitrant compounds, Monterey (USA) – 19 – 22 May 2014 – Challenges for Europe in Contaminated land management.
- NORDROCS 2014, Stockholm (Sweden) – 16-18 September 2014

Contributions to the organisation of European / International events:

- Sustainable remediation 2012 Conference, Vienna (AU), 14 – 16 November 2012 http://www.umweltbundesamt.at/sustainable_remediation2012
- 2nd Global Soil week, Berlin (Germany) – 27 – 31 October 2013 - www.globalsoilweek.org
- Sustainable Remediation 2014 conference, Ferrara (Italy) – 17 – 19 September 2014
- CABERNET – HOMBRE - TIMBRE conference, Frankfurt (Germany) – 14 – 16 October 2014.

3.b] INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

NICOLE meetings

1. Nicole steering committee Bruxelles, 6 September 2013: Discussions about IED issues and a possible Joint Workshop on legal issues
2. Workshop “Mercury contaminated sites”, Brussels (BE), November 2012

3. Workshop “Implementation of Sustainability in Management of Contaminated Land”, Lisbon (PT), June 2013: Contribution on the Common Forum-NICOLE joint position statement on sustainable remediation.
4. Joint workshop “A European policy framework on contaminated land: Enabling integrated land management and promoting sustainability”, Berlin (DE), May 2014: presentation of CF activities and of the inventory on soil related issues in EU legislation.
5. Contribution to NICOLE working groups: Regulations, Brownfields / liability transfer, Sustainable Remediation

SNOWMAN Network

1. SNOWMAN Advisory Group meeting, Paris (FR), November 2011
2. SNOWMAN Advisory Group meeting, Mechelen (BE), November 2012
3. Fine-tuning of the 4th call for proposal, 2012 “Socio-Economic Issues related to research on soil contamination and agricultural and forest soils with special emphasis on climate change.
4. Contribution for a future workshop on knowledge dissemination about natural attenuation (November 2011)
5. Contribution to the advisory board of the SNOWMAN ImaHg project.

IMPEL Network

1. Contribution to the DECO project: elaboration of the questionnaire, assessment of national / regional answers, co-drafting of the interim and final reports, presentation.
2. General Assembly, La Valetta (Malta), October 2013 – presentation on the interim results of the DECO project

SEDNET Network

1. Sednet International Conference, Lisbon (Portugal), November 2013 – presentation on The Common Forum on Contaminated Land in Europe: from national policy setting to RTD needs identification

CONSOIL

1. Programme committee meeting (Barcelona, September 2012) of AquaConsoil conference (Barcelona, 16 – 19 April 2013)
2. Organisation of a Common Forum Special session on “Contaminated Sites, Environmental Contamination and Health Issues”.
3. Contribution to the 2 SURFs Special Session on “Common Themes and Practice in Achieving Sustainable Remediation Worldwide, with Case Studies ?”
4. Contribution to the HOMBRE / TIMBRE Special Session on “Sustainable Brownfield Regeneration”.
5. Contribution to the SEDNET Special Session on “how to connect science to river basin management?”

Sustainable Remediation Conference 2012 and 2014

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

3.c] DISCUSSION PAPERS

1. Proposals for text changes in some articles of the proposed soil framework directive, (4 drafts, November 2011)
2. Contribution to the AMEC Study on the baseline report guidance (November 2011)
3. Contribution to the Ernst & Young study on the Evaluation of expenditure and jobs for addressing soil contamination in Member States (February – May 2012)
4. Joint Statement Paper with NICOLE on Risk informed and land management (June 2013).
5. Durban Statement on the possible withdrawal of the Soil Framework Directive draft (October 2013)
6. Contribution to the BIOS study on the Environmental Liability Directive (ELD) Effectiveness: Scope and Exceptions" (November 2013 – January 2014)
7. Final CF-secretariat report (2014)

4.0 Evaluation

4a) CF –meetings: Agenda and participation

Agenda of most CF meetings were dominated by discussions about the European Agenda, in particular Soil Framework Directive draft and the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED). Apart from SFD, developments in other EU directives (Environmental Liability Directive – ELD, Waste Directives revision) and national approaches for their transposition have been discussed.

Technical subjects and research issues were reintroduced in the meeting agendas. Different European and national RTD projects have been presented during CF meetings (e.g. HOMBRE, TIMBRE, NANOREM, GREENLAND, Urban SMS, Magplan). Brainstorming sessions were organised to discuss opportunities of collaboration on ecosystem services (Bratislava 2012 meeting) and soil knowledge agenda (Durban 2013 and Berlin 2014 meetings).

Exchanges with other scientific European networks were developed (SEDNET, SNOWMAN). Contact with ISO & CEN committee chairs was established for discussing the challenges of the current revision of the standardisation documents.

New contacts in European Countries have been established to promote CF activities and increase participation to CF meetings (e.g. Portugal, and Turkey).

Conclusions:

1. Maintain a balance in the different topics addressed during CF meetings by addressing legal and regulatory issues, 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.

4b) 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:

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

4c) ICCL meetings

Since 2008 CF secretary has the duty to help the hosting country for the preparation and the organisation of the ICCL meetings, in particular with the on-going updating of the list of contact points, the proposal of themes for discussion and survey, the agenda setting, the registrations, the communication on the events, the contribution to the ICCL website update (costs bared by the Swiss Ministry for Environment). Since Washington DC (2011), ICCL organises also an extra workshop (third day) open to all other stakeholder communities for exchanging on key challenges of contaminated land management.

As for Common Forum, the hosting country is in charge of finding an appropriate meeting place and covering the costs of the meeting and workshop organisation.

The level of support requested by the hosting country varies from one country to another.

Conclusion:

1. The organisation of ICCL meetings is to be continued in the same way. If possible, alternative solutions for the organisation of the Open workshop should be found (e.g. co-organisation with an already established event – conference).
2. The expansion of the ICCL activities (communication about the results of the meetings, follow-up action plan, and contact with new representatives and countries) will generate extra costs that should be considered within CF secretariat budget for the upcoming period.

4d) Capitalisation of experiences and knowledge in Countries

In order to allow comparison between countries several thematic questionnaires have been elaborated and sent to country representatives. National / regional answers are provided on line on the Common Forum website. When possible promotion of these answers should be done.

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

Conclusion:

1. 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.

4e) 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. CF is now identified as a key stakeholder and is now regularly consulted by EC and its subcontractors on possible evolutions of European legislation, regulations and related documents.

CF is also requested to contribute to EC projects via its participation to advisory boards. Regulators and policy-makers' points of views can be presented and considered. This opportunity should be continued for the projects which can afford travel and accommodation costs for the CF secretariat.

Conclusion:

1. Contacts with EC should be actively maintained and representatives from the relevant commission services (DG ENV, DG MARK, JRC, EEA) need to be invited.
2. Contribution to EC projects should be continued, considering CF secretariat budget availability.

4f) 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:

1. Continue optimisation of the communication tools.

5. Financial aspects

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	Total in €
1] Work hours, including office costs, internet access and other related costs	49.640,00
2] Travel expenditures	6.680,00
3] Website hosting and support	7.680,00
Total	64.000,00

Contributions from CF countries PM

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

The CF meetings have been hosted by USA (October 2011), Switzerland (April 2012), Spain / Basque Country (October 2012), Slovakia (May 2013), South Africa (October 2013), and Germany (May 2014).

6. The next secretariat

The next secretariat needs to start in September 2014 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, this can be used for inviting new participants (Eastern European country representatives for example).