



METSO Newsletter

THE FOREST BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN FINLAND (METSO) 2003-2007
Publishers: Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; Finnish Ministry of the Environment

2/2007

27 April 2007

SUCCESSOR TO THE METSO FOREST BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME ASSURED UNDER NEW FINNISH GOVERNMENT

The future continuation of the METSO programme has been written into both the forestry and nature conservation sections of the official programme of Finland's new coalition Government. According to the new Government programme: "Finland's national forest programme will be updated during autumn 2007, and the Government will allocate the necessary resources for its implementation. At the same time a decision will be made on the continuation, expansion and mixed funding of the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland. Voluntary conservation means will continue to be used in the conservation of forest biodiversity, and the continuation of the METSO programme will be ensured."

Working groups appointed to prepare and assess a new forest biodiversity programme

The Ministry of the Environment has appointed both a working group to prepare proposals for a new programme for forest biodiversity in Southern Finland for the period 2008-2016, and a supporting group of experts to provide inputs and assess the programme.

The preparatory working group has been assigned to set out: (1) the objectives of the new programme, (2) the means to be applied through the programme to safeguard forest biodiversity, (3) procedures that will promote collaboration between different actors towards these ends, (4) proposals for the financing of the programme, (5) preliminary assessments of the ecological, economic and social impacts of the programme, and (6) proposals for the monitoring and interim assessment of the programme.

The preparatory working group will be chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for the Environment, Sirkka **Hautojärvi**. Aarne **Reunala**, Forestry Director-General at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will serve as deputy chairman.

Key themes for the new programme

The new programme will focus on the following areas:

- Improving the functioning, effectiveness and representativeness of Finland's network of protected areas
- Increasing biodiversity in commercially managed forests
- Building up an improved knowledge base
- Enhancing training, advice, publicity and collaboration



The beautiful but threatened spring pasque flower (*Pulsatilla vernalis*) flowers in Finland in April or May in forest habits with sandy soils.

Looking to the future

The new programme will be prepared on the basis of evaluations of the impacts of the ongoing METSO programme (2002-2007), the recent review of the future of Finland's forest sector, and the new National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland 2006-2016. The Forest Council's review of the future of Finland's forest sector, published in 2006, defines the main issues that need to be considered in safeguarding forest biodiversity. According to this review, a new programme should be prepared during 2007 based on experiences with the earlier METSO programme, designed to significantly improve the state of forest biodiversity throughout Southern Finland.

According to the preparatory group's instructions, the



ANTTI KOTISAARI

METSO's new voluntary conservation schemes can provide an attractive alternative to the protection of forest biodiversity.

new programme should also provide for the purposes of decision-making a suitably comprehensive picture of the situation of forest species and habitats, and means to safeguard biodiversity.

The preparatory working group will publicise its work during the process, keep the Forest Council informed of progress, and finalise proposals for the new programme by 15 December, 2007.

Expert group assigned to support the preparation of the programme

The Ministry for the Environment has also set up a group of experts to support the preparatory working group by providing expert assessments related to the new programme. The tasks of this expert group will be (1) to assist in the definition of objectives and means for the new programme, (2) to update and enhance the criteria used to select sites for the METSO programme, (3) to assess regional needs and

how the programme's measures should be targeted, and (4) to participate in assessments of the impacts of the programme. The group is to complete these tasks by 30 November, 2007.

The expert group will be chaired by Professor Mikael Hildén of the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), with Nature Conservation Counsellor Pekka Salminen of the Ministry for the Environment serving as deputy chairman. For the latest news on the preparation of the new programme for forest biodiversity in Southern Finland for the years 2008-2016, see the METSO's English web site at www.mmm.fi/metso/international.

For additional information:

Mr. Mikko Kuusinen, Environmental Counsellor, Ministry of the Environment: Tel. 020 490 7113 or 050 345 0582, mikko.kuusinen@ymparisto.fi.

Ms. Marjukka Mähönen, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: Tel. +358 9 160 54626, marjukka.mahonen@mmm.fi.

METSO AND FINLAND'S INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The METSO Programme is an integral part of Finland's implementation of various international agreements. METSO makes significant contributions towards the sustainable development objectives set out by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). Maintaining and enhancing the biological diversity of forests is also one of the key resolutions agreed the MCPFE Vienna Conference (April 2003).

METSO IN BRIEF

METSO - the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland 2003-2007 - is part of Finland's National Forest Programme 2010. METSO contains 17 sub-programmes, including pilot projects designed to test innovative voluntary means for landowners to promote biodiversity in the forests of southern Finland. The METSO Programme aims to design and test cost-effective measures to acquire the most ecologically valuable forest sites in southern Finland for temporary conservation or permanent protection.

Forestry is typically practised on a small scale in Southern Finland, where average cutting areas are only 1-2 ha. METSO piloted new ways to increase biodiversity under such conditions, complementing the work done through several other programmes since the 1997 Forest Act.

The METSO Programme was carefully prepared through processes involving many stakeholders such as forest industry associations, forest owners' organisations, the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation and WWF Finland, as well as the two ministries responsible for the Programme, so as to complement and supplement Finland's National Forest Programme 2010. Like the rest of the National Forest Programme 2010, METSO is backed up by intensive research and evaluation work.



THE METSO NEWSLETTER IS PRODUCED BY ANTTI KOTISAARI, GREEN SOLUTIONS