



# METSU Newsletter

FOREST BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN FINLAND (METSU) 2003-2007

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## The Second Interim Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the METSU: EMPHASIS ON VOLUNTARY ACTION AND A WIDE RANGE OF MEASURES

The general acceptance of forest conservation attained through the new voluntary measures to land owners was considered a key achievement in the Second Interim Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the METSU Programme that has just been completed. A wide range of different measures was considered essential for protecting biodiversity. It was stated that the cost-effectiveness of these measures from the point of view of biodiversity should be examined. In addition to the ecological significance, economic and social aspects should be taken into consideration while selecting the sites for conservation. The Report compiles the views of researchers and stakeholder groups on the monitoring and evaluation of the METSU Programme.

### Voluntary measures work

Voluntary measures within METSU consist of trade with natural values and co-operation networks, and also competitive tendering, which has been tested both as a separate pilot project and used in the acquisition of permanent State conservation areas since 2005. Voluntary measures have been well received by forest owners and tenders for all actions have been received in excess of the funds available.

### Acceptance by forest owners important in conservation

Both researchers and stakeholders considered it important that the conservation methods applied are acceptable to the forest owners. They felt that the voluntary measures within METSU tended to make conservation more acceptable to forest owners and also served to improve the general attitude towards forest conservation. The most popular voluntary action has been trade with natural values. However, too short fixed-term contract periods in trade with natural values were criticised for being an ecologically uncertain solution.

The special ecological criteria METSU sites have to meet to be selected for conservation were considered functional and appropriate for selecting the conservation sites. It was also hoped that the selection criteria would be developed so as to take social aspects more into account.



Protection of the Baton Blue, a rare and threatened species of butterfly, may require conservation and management of dry, sunny forest slopes.

### Impact and cost-effectiveness of measures have to be examined

Both researchers and stakeholder groups alike hoped that monitoring and evaluation of the METSU Programme would answer the question of what types of sites the METSU measures can provide protection for and whether these sites differ from the sites protected through traditional conservation programmes. They also hoped for studies of the cost-effectiveness of the different measures in terms of natural values.

With a view to all this, the researchers and stakeholders felt that a wide variety of measures was needed for the conservation of biodiversity. They suggested those having the highest ecological impact and



METSÄTILISUUDEN KUVA-ARKISTO

Permanent conservation areas form the basis of Finland's nature conservation areas.

being the most cost-effective should be taken into use.

### Conservation targets on ecological basis

Researchers and stakeholder groups considered important to set targets for conservation but the setting the target in terms of percentages or hectares was criticised by some respondents. It was considered important to take into account economic and social aspects in addition to ecological ones. Such aspects would include the impact of conservation on the forest sector as a whole, the regional and local impact on employment and on the general vitality of rural areas.

### Nature management in commercial forests essential

Both researchers and stakeholders considered improved nature management in commercial forests to be an essential means of ensuring biodiversity, particularly in view of the great areas of commercial forests. In the METSO area, 72% of forests are owned by private families, 5% is State-owned, and

the rest 12% is owned by public communities and companies.

The potential of nature management in commercial forests was subject to varying estimates. Taking into account key biotopes and structural features (e.g. occurrence of decaying trees, large aspen trees, standards), it was estimated that the effects could comprise a high proportion of threatened forest species, particularly in the conditions for less threatened or not yet threatened species.

It was estimated that nature management in commercial forests is not enough on its own as the only way of securing biodiversity, but that the benefits it can produce even as a result of fairly modest actions would be considerable, at least at first, due to the large area that they cover. Nature management in commercial forests was also considered important because it can have an impact on consumer acceptance of forest industry products and, consequently, on sales of the products in question. The importance of advisory services and guidance through information provision was emphasized, particularly if nature management and voluntary conservation measures are to be among the key means of protecting biodiversity in the future.

#### METSO reports in English:

- First interim report, Summary (April 2005)
- Second interim report, Summary
- Becoming: Third interim report (June 2006)
- Becoming: MOSSE Research report (Sept 2006)
- Becoming: Final evaluation report (Oct 2006)

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English pages of the METSO Programme: [www.mmm.fi/metso/international](http://www.mmm.fi/metso/international)



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