

Minutes

EPNB-7, Feb 8, 2013, 10-12 CET, virtual meeting
[some subsequent information added in brackets]

Attendants:

Albert Bleeker (AB), Alessandra De Marco (AdM), Barbara Amon (BA), John Muldowney (JM), Jürg Heldstab (JH), Markus Geupel (MG), Natalia Kozlova (NK), Nick Hutchings (NH), Wim de Vries (WdV)

Chair and minutes:

Wilfried Winiwarter (WW)

Excused:

Adrian Leip, Ulli Dragosits

Agenda:

-- Annexes to the guidance document: Who? When? How?

With the adoption of the guidance document on national N budgets by the EB in their December session, there is additional reason and also interest by the convention parties to provide the annexes to the guidance document. Developing these annexes is now a first priority of the EPNB. All participants are willing to support the process, at least by reviewing the texts to be produced. It will be more difficult to commit to writing texts – depends on resources. The following offers were received:

WW (together with a PhD student) will start to work on one of the 7 annexes (one for each pool) to be produced. The idea is to develop a “showcase” that will provide the structure also to all other pools. In order to demonstrate activity, a first sketch should become available before the upcoming TFRN meeting in April.

MG is able to provide German funding for the development of an appendix, thinks of external contract, e.g. regarding the “terrestrial ecosystems” pool – possibly Klaus Butterbach-Bahl as contractor? Timeline: activities can start towards summer only.

JH had communication with Beat Achermann – while they see themselves not in a role of writing (should be done by scientists) they definitely can be active in reviewing.

NH, using a linked project funded by DK, will have support of a post-doc to provide an annex – preferentially on agriculture. The project will not start before March, the issue can be discussed again at the upcoming TFRN meeting.

AB may use funds in connection with an OECD activity to work on transport and energy

BA will follow up on Eurostat activities – currently country feedback is being provided on a related document [subsequently to the meeting, BA as well as Adrian Leip provide information on an “Nutrient Budgets Handbook” developed by Eurostat/OECD – it will be paramount to use that document as a cornerstone to anything that EPNB produces. A Eurostat meeting Feb 18-19 will discuss that document – to be published or linked to at the EPNB web site].

MG suggests that also other countries’ financial support should be sought following the adoption of the guidance document. He also suggests to follow suit to first concepts of OECD guidance developed by AB regarding a multi-tiered approach. After all, countries operate on very different levels of data availability.

-- interaction with other initiatives: INI, OECD, Eurostat

EPNB, not being equipped with funding itself, is forced to maximize synergies with other, related activities. This involves Eurostat (see above – links are Adrian and BA), OECD (link via AB, who develops N indicators for OECD) and INI (WW as newly appointed Director of the European Centre is setting up activities with the Austrian Academy of Sciences – establishment may take a few more weeks).

-- dynamic tool on N budgets: next step

The tool is being developed by Adrian, JH reports on the status. Its development, despite of high scientific interest, is currently put on hold. The latest developments have been presented at a meeting at IIASA in October 2012. In order to bypass limitations of Excel, Adrian intends migrate to GAMS. According to JH, it would be of interest to have also other country results available than CH. [subsequent to the meeting, Adrian confirms the status – there is no new developments expected before the TFRN meeting – however the latest results have not been shared with EPNB. In case using GAMS proves to be licenced software preventing free distribution of results, he believes that reprogramming by a technician could be performed after he completes development]. WdV notes his scientific interest in the topic.

-- farm nitrogen budgets

As the draft revised Annex IX contains reference to nitrogen budgets to be improved on test farms, EPNB has been tasked to also develop guidance on farm N budgets. This activity is of interest to several EPNB members, but so far it has not received major attention in terms of output. Current ongoing activities will allow to improve the situation. NH is involved in the EU project AnimalChange – one task of which is to establish a Tier 2+ farm budget model. This will be widely tested (e.g. by project partners in Ireland, but also Brazil and Senegal) and made freely available. WdV mentions the use of a farm gate budget programme (kringloopwijzer) used in the Netherlands that he is acquainted with and may be of use in this context.

In Switzerland, the proof of a farm-specific nutrient balance calculated in accordance with given rules (so called Suisse-Bilanz) is a prerequisite for a farm to get direct payments

NH will be in contact with WdV and JH and other potential contributors in order to coordinate the respective activities within EPNB.

-- work plan 2013/2014

The EPNB workplan results from the activities described above:

April 2013 –

- EPNB-8 in Copenhagen, back-to-back with TFRN meeting (to be confirmed)
- first sketch (Showcase) of an annex to the guidance document
- confirmation of work distribution along the respective pools

Fall 2013 –

- EPNB-9, either along a conference or again as a virtual meeting
- Exchange of draft final “showcase” document
- Status discussion of further annexes
- Initialize work on any annexes (pools) still remaining
- Roadmap for farm nitrogen budgets
- Progress on dynamic tool on N budgets

Spring 2014 –

- Finalize first annexes, aiming to complete all annexes by the end of 2014
- First draft paper on farm nitrogen budgets
- Dynamic tool on N budgets available for more general application and evaluation

-- reports of country activities

DE: MG explains that an update for the German N budget is expected by mid-2013 – substantial progress has been made already. German data would then be available also for the dynamic tool as test case.

CH: JH mentions the tool “Agrammon” which is used to calculate ammonia emissions for single farms, for regions and for entire Switzerland (www.agrammon.ch). The farm activity data needed to perform the national calculation are taken from a detailed survey of about 3000 farms. According to JH, the N budget projection for 2020 should be available in print in the very near future. Practical guidelines to handle nutrients in an environmentally sensitive way are available in the internet (<http://www.bafu.admin.ch/gewaesserschutz/01308/10890/index.html?lang=en>), a new project on nitrate losses (currently underrepresented in N budgets) has started.

RU: NK reports on a cooperation project (2 years) that has just started, with EU funding, which will allow N budgeting on farms or on smaller administrative entities. Among others, partner in Finland are involved (Pentti Seuri from MTT)

-- AOB:

AdM notes that participation from Mediterranean countries is quite poor, and offers to use her networks to attract further contributors. WW will support this exercise by sharing the EPNB e-mail list.

In general, attendants approve of the virtual meeting, and consider it a viable alternative to a face-to-face meeting despite minor technical issues. They recommend to also, in between face-to-face meetings, organize future meetings in this fashion.

The next EPNB meeting is to be held back-to-back with the TFRN meeting late April. WW is requested to contact organizers and ask to quickly provide details on dates and venue, as travel preparation needs some time when additional administrative tasks have to be performed beforehand.

Summary: Attribution of work on pools following from discussion and subsequent communication:

Pool

Energy and fuels

Material and products in industry

Humans and Settlements

Agriculture

Forest and semi-natural vegetation including soils

Waste

Atmosphere

Hydrosphere

lead author (tentative)

Albert Bleeker

tbd

Wilfried Winiwarter – “showcase”

Nick Hutchings (link to Eurostat
“Nutrient Budgets”)

Klaus Butterbach-Bahl (tbc)

tbd

Alessandra De Marco

tbd