

Formal Methods Europe

Minutes of inaugural meeting held at the
Commission of the European Communities
in Brussels on 17th January 1992.

Present

Stephen Bear
Patrick Behm
Cristof Blau
Robin Bloomfield
Dominique Bolignano
Tim Denvir
Eugene Durr
Cliff Jones
Peter Gorm Larson
Kees Middelburg
Alejandro Moya
John Nicholls
Jan Storbank Peterson
Nico Plat
Kees Pronk
Martyn Thomas
K de Vlaminck
Jim Woodcock

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman, Martyn Thomas, welcomed those present and briefly summarised the objectives of Formal Methods Europe (FME). FME should be an umbrella organisation which is a central focus, keeping aware of and actively coordinating specific FM activities. He then opened the meeting to questions.

What funding will FME have? FME will have to determine what its activities are going to be first, then how funds are going to be sought. The conference (following on from VDM91 and its predecessors) should be self-supporting as in previous years. A membership fee could be charged once we have services to offer. ESSI funds could be applied for. We can seek funds from sources other than the EC.

Will membership be open to people from non-EC countries? The Chairman hoped that anyone could be a member, provided this does not put EC support in jeopardy. (There are precedents in VDM Europe for this.)

2. Objectives

It was agreed that the charter produced by Dines Bjorner would be rewritten as a briefer document of one or two pages.

It may be useful to incorporate FME as a legal entity. This will be considered in the near future.

3. Review of VDM'91

The conference was financially viable. 8,000 Dutch Guilders (approx 3.3kECU) were brought forward into FME funds. There had not been much outside sponsorship.

There were two main organisational differences from the previous conference: a professional organiser was hired and a tool exhibition held. ?

The technical level and balance of VDM91 was considered to be very good, although the number of industrial papers was as usual low. The possibility of including project reports in future conferences was discussed.

4. Finances

It was recommended (agreed?) that the finances for FME in future should not be linked to the financing of the conference.

There is BF1.2 million (approx 30 KECU) in the bank account which is being transferred from VDM Europe to FM Europe. The legal responsibilities associated with this are further reasons for establishing a legal identity for FME.

5. Activities

The following activities were discussed and proposed for FME:

5.1 FME93

Two locations for the next conference, proposed to be held in April/May 1993, were offered by IFAD at Odense in Denmark and by the University of Leuven at Leuven in Belgium. The respective merits of each location were presented. The meeting voted equally, 6 in favour of Odense and 6 in favour of Leuven. The choice was made by toss of a coin in favour of Leuven.

Jim Woodcock offered to chair the programme. This was accepted. The call for papers should be issued by the end of February 1991.

Action: 1/1 Jim Woodcock

The CEC agreed to provide mailing facilities and Martyn Thomas agreed to publicise the conference by other means, eg Usenet.

Action: 1/2 Alejandro Moya

The programme and organising committees will submit a budget to the next meeting of FME in 3 months.

Action: 1/3 Jim Woodcock

The programme and Organising committees may apply to the Chairman or Treasurer if reasonable preliminary working funds are needed prior to the next meeting.

5.2 Standards Activities

VDM

Tim Denvir and Cliff Jones reported on BSI-VDM and the Dynamic Semantics Review Board.

For such meetings where CEC support is needed, those concerned should write to the Chairman who would then write to the CEC requesting such support. In particular, the Chairman would write to the CEC requesting support for attendees at the next DS Review Board in May.

Action: 1/4 Martyn Thomas

The question of VDM macros was discussed.

Z

John Nicholls reported that Z is being standardised under the ESPRIT Project ZIP. The current document is being rewritten from existing sources, distributed for information only, and is not yet reviewed. A proposal has been presented to the BSI committee.

Cliff Jones and John Nicholls were asked to develop an account of the principal differences between Z and VDM. If this turns out to be a substantial piece of work, FME would seek funds. This will be useful in situations such as have occurred where the need for both formalisms has been questioned.

Action: 1/5 Cliff Jones and
John Nicholls

Other Standards

LOTOS, and probably ESTELLE

5.3 Newsletter

Martyn Thomas agreed to co-ordinate the production of a quarterly newsletter. Cliff Jones offered to provide input for a publications column, John Nicholls for a Z column, Robin Bloomfield for a safety critical column, and Eugene Durr for a column for project news on ESPRIT projects. Martyn Thomas will ask Paul Smith (Secure Information systems), if he will provide input for a tools column and John Dawes (ICL) if he will provide input for a BSI VDM column. It was agreed also to have a column on available courses. The first issue in March will include a call for papers for FM93.

Action: 1/6 Martyn Thomas,
Cliff Jones, John Nicholls,
Robin Bloomfield, Eugene Durr,
(Paul Smith, John Dawes)

5.4 Other Activities

Other activities were suggested. These included:

- Producing a catalogue of FMs, brief description, contact etc. For this the appendix to the proceedings of FM89 held in Halifax N.S, being revised for FM91, was suggested as a source. Martyn Thomas offered to contact Dan Craigen or Peter Ryan to obtain a draft.

Action: Martyn Thomas

- Holding an industrial seminar to seek views as input to FME. This was discussed and it was agreed to hold a single event at which 20-30 industrial representatives with some interest in FMs would be invited. A subset of the committee will present the activities and aims of FME. An information document would be circulated in advance. Martyn Thomas offered to draft this. Company presentations could be included. Stephen Bear offered to present HP's uses of FMs and Eugene Durr agreed to present CAP Gemini's use of FMs. The meeting would not dwell heavily on the benefits of FMs as those present would be so selected that they would already understand this.

Action: 1/8 Martyn Thomas
1/9 Stephen Bear,
Eugene Durr

- FME should be able to provide speakers and liaison with other organisations
- Consideration of further publications from FME was deferred for the present. It was noted that the VDM DS will be published as 2 volumes by Springer, also Springer would publish the proceedings of FM93.

6. Officers

The following were proposed and accepted:

Chairman: Martyn Thomas
Secretary: Tim Denvir
Treasurer: Kees Pronk

7. Structure of FME

Having discussed the activities in some detail, the following three-level structure for FME became clearer and was agreed:

- The coordinating committee would consist of 8-10 people.
- Various active groups to carry out tasks and activities. The sum of these is expected to be about 50 people.
- A mailing list of perhaps 1000 would be set up.

There is thus a need to announce the formation of FME and invite people on to the mailing list. Providing details of projects using FMs etc. would be a "ticket" to get onto the mailing list.

Action: 1/10 Martyn Thomas

It was noted that as part of an on-going project Surrey University was interested in gaining knowledge of projects and uses of FMs.

Martyn Thomas volunteered to have a FME logo designed. This was accepted.

Action: 1/11 Martyn Thomas

8. Other Business

The meeting was in favour of a repeat (after 10 years) concurrency workshop, suggested by Professor W P de Roever to Tim Denvir.

The meeting agreed to liaise with national FM groups, although the only one identified was the UK BCS-FACS. Tim Denvir volunteered to act as liaison.

Action: 1/12 Tim Denvir

9. Next Meeting

June 5th 1992 in Brussels

The industrial seminar is planned for 20th March at which a core of the committee would be present.

T Denvir
Secretary

4.April.92

Summary of Actions

1/1	Call for papers for FME93 by end February	Jim Woodcock
1/2	Provide mailing facilities for FME93	Alejandro Moya
1/3	Provide a budget for FME93 by next meeting	Jim Woodcock
1/4	Request financial support for VDMDS Review Board	Martyn Thomas
1/5	Draft differences between VDM and Z	Cliff Jones, John Nicholls
1/6	Provide input for newsletter, coordinate	Martin Thomas, Cliff Jones, John Nicholls Robin Bloomfield Eugene Durr (Paul Smith, John Dawes)
1/7	Contact Dan Craigen/Peter Ryan for draft appendix to FM89 proceedings	Martyn Thomas
1/8	Draft information document for industrial seminar	Martyn Thomas
1/9	Present HP uses of FM at industrial seminar	Stephen Bear, Eugene Durr
1/10	Write to Trade Journals, newsnets about FME	Martyn Thomas
1/11	Provide logo design	Martyn Thomas
1/12	Liaise between FME and BCS FACS	Tim Denvir

Stephen Bear:	1/9
Robin Bloomfield:	1/6
Tim Denvir:	1/12
Eugene Durr:	1/6, 1/9
Cliff Jones:	1/5, 1/6
Alejandro Moya:	1/2
John Nicholls:	1/5, 1/6
Martyn Thomas:	1/4, 1/6, 1/7, 1/8, 1/10, 1/11
Jim Woodcock:	1/1, 1/3

