FORMAL METHODS EUROPE
Minutes of the 19th Meeting held at The Technical University of Graz on 16 September 1997

Present: Göran Anger (GA)
Dines Bjørner (DB)
Andrew Butterfield (AB)
Tim Denvir (BTD)
Adreas Fett (AF)
John Fitzgerald (JSF)
René Jacquart (RJ)
Cliff Jones (CBJ)
Peter Gorm Larsen (PGL)
Peter Lucas (Chair) (PL)
José Oliveira (JNO)
Nico Plat (NP)
Jan Storbank Pedersen (JSP)
Kees Pronk (KP)

Item 1: Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

Item 2: Minutes of the 18th meeting

Action 10/5: Provide a periodic report on FME to the Commission. Peter Lucas, Kees Pronk and Tim Denvir will put this in hand soon. Continues.

Action 13/3: Peter Lucas to write to members of the committee who have not attended the last four meetings. JSF to derive the relevant list of members from the records of minutes. Continues.

Action 17/1: Dissemination action teams to ensure co-ordination between actions, in particular to provide links to each other's web pages. Continues TD, ED, PGL

Closes at end of actions (See Item 8).

Action 17/2: Adjust FME'97 Symposium budget to split the deficit due to the change in travel support for the PC meeting. Continues PL, KP Completed (See Item 4).

Action 17/5: DB assisted by RJ will initiate finding chairs for the industry-specific sectors; DB will start to establish a programme committee and other structures for the event, in particular exploring the feasibility of 3 or 4 separate sector oriented sub-programmes, and contacting some of the other organisations hoped to be associated with the event such as ACM and IEEE. In this he will be assisted by FME (PL). RJ will initiate the organisational and local planning in particular contacting possible local industrial associates, by the next FME physical meeting in 6 months.

Continues with progress DB, RJ, PL: It was felt to be too early at this stage to find chairs. The 22/23 February edition of the FM'99 working paper suggests settling the choice of chairs by the time of the FME'97 Symposium in Graz.

Continues. Overall PC chairs have been appointed (See Item 6).

Action 18/1: DB to pursue the issue of balancing financial contribution and influence over content. Continues. (See Item 6)

Action 18/2: DB to seek support from the relevant DGs at the European Commission. Continues.

Action 18/3: DB to write notes on

(i) organisational interfaces (how the committees will work together);

(ii) the modalities of participation for the relevant sub-groups of participants (students, chairs of departments, application groups, researchers etc.); and

(iii) a description of the overall programme.

by the end of April 1997 for delivery to the interested subgroups. Responses from interested parties would be sought by June with the aim of completing a budget which takes account of risk levels by the end of June. Continues.

Action 18/4: BTD, DB agreed draft of an A4 flyer. Continues.

Action 18/5: All members to obtain the latest version and distribute it at any meetings attended. Continues.

Action 18/6: BTD and KP to report to the committee on UK charitable status with regard to the risk of a loss in FM'99. Completed.

Action 18/7: KP, BTD, RJ (cc GA) to bring proposals for incorporation as a legal entity with consideration of the consequences for the organisation of the Symposium. Completed.

Action 18/8: All members to make initial suggestions for leveraging actions. Continues.

Action 18/9: KM to report to the committee on suitable trade fairs for tool suppliers. Continues.

Item 3: Short summary of electronic meeting, June 16-20, 1997

The electronic meeting was affected by the rescheduled FMEIndSem industrial seminars.

Item 4: Treasury

(a) Financial report: there had been little change in the Committee's financial position. FME'97 Programme Committee travel costs had been met directly from FME funds. Those PC members sponsored by the Commission were to refund the travel costs to the Treasurer.

(b) Administrative overhead: there was a serious administrative overhead associated with the mechanism used for covering PC travel expenses, including the need possibly to pursue PC members for refunded travel costs when eventually met by the commission.

(c) One-time personal float: In order to expedite repayment of expenses for members, it is proposed that a one-time personal float will be issued to FME Committee members to be repaid when the member leaves FME. The committee approved the issuing of one-time floats at the Treasurer's discretion.

There was a short discussion the FME Committee's travel expenses repayment mechanism. It appears that Alejandro Moya's office actually treat claims as the responsibility of the committee members rather than the Secretary. If members send their own claims directly to the commission, this might reduce work for the secretary and avoid the need to copy tickets etc. at the meeting. Currently the secretary has to collate claims, obtaining photocopies of travel documents at the meeting, checking these and bank details later. This can lead to delays when the submission of the whole group of claims is held up by the need to gather missing details from members.

Action 19/1: PL, JSF to find out if Alejandro Moya's office would be happy to receive committee members' claims directly from members rather than through the meeting secretary after the meeting.

Item 5: FME'97, preliminary financial report

The conference was expected to yield a modest surplus. There may be additional costs for PC travel not covered by the Commission.

There was a total participation of 98 people, composed of 37 speakers, 3 tutors, 8 tools demonstrators, 1 book presenter and 49 participants.

Latest estimates were as follows (in ECU):

Estimated Income	
Conference Fee:	53162.13
Sponsorship:	4185.22
Demo. Fee:	2001.47

Estimated expenses	
Printing & Posting:	10537.17
Coffee/Lunch/Dinner:	24442.82
PC & Invited:	5742.28
Rest:	10954.42

This yielded an estimated surplus of 7672.13 ECU.

Item 6: FME'99: Toulouse

There was extensive discussion of arrangements for FM'99. This summary is organised under relevant headings, rather than being a chronological account.

1. Dates

The date of the symposium is to be the week beginning 20 September 1999.

2. Cooperation with different groups

FM'99 will be sponsored by FME, ACM, EATCS AND IEEE. These organisations will share the risks with pro-rata returns. The event should be an IFIP World Congress. The FME Committee should be aware that IFIP cooperation may be at the price of a diminution of FME's role.

ETAPS are also cooperating. They have nominated a team consisting of Marie-Claude Gaudel, Ed Brinksma and Egidio Astesiano to liaise with the FM'99 organisation.

Jim Woodcock and Jeanette Wing had agreed to be Programme Co-chairs. The congress chairmanship would be shared between DB and RJ.

The committee expressed support for cooperation with other organisations. There was some concern that this may strengthen the central scientific focus at the expense of support from professional institutes. We should have national institutions (e.g. the UK Institution of Mechanical Engineers). DB recognised this and relies to some degree on the PC chairs and regional groups to ensure this level of involvement.

3. Global positioning and technical content

The conference's overall theme will be the maturity of formal methods in terms of both convergence and the successful application of tools.

René Jacquart was concerned with the event's global positioning. He felt that the word "development" in the event's title is too restrictive. FM'99 must be placed with respect to system aspects such as performance, cost, security, safety, environment. He sensed a changing emphasis in the use of formal methods, with more mathematical techniques underpinning software development generally. DB invited suggestions for improved titles.

Action 19/2: DB to fix the congress title.

Changes in emphasis and title will not necessarily make the congress attractive to industrial users. Because such people will not be reached by the conventional Call for Papers, proactive advertising is required. This is helped by the structured PC with targeted sub-groups.

The meeting made the following recommendations:

- Attractiveness to industrial participants is enhanced by indicating that meeting rooms will be available for ad-hoc discussions, there will be pre-arranged forums for "buyers" and "sellers".
- Automotive engineering warrants inclusion. Such a stream could be announced as a separate publicity exercise when it is set up.

4. Congress Structure

Each day in the congress will begin with an invited speaker, followed by wide-interest papers for the remainder of the morning. Specialist papers are given in parallel with industry tutorials in the afternoon sessions.

User group meetings could be held over the weekend or in parallel with the industry tutorials and specialist papers.

All this is in parallel with the co-located European Software Engineering Conference (ESEC), helping to further share the Risk. RJ is negotiating with ESEC on the deal.

5. PC structure

A large PC would be sought, with wide geopolitical spread. Members would be chosen for their leadership in their countries or regions and may not necessarily be very active in reviewing. Those from developing countries will be encouraged to contact the United Nations through their own nations for access to training funds to participate.

The conference is to be structured into tracks, with a smaller PC for each track. The track PCs will select their own best papers and meet in order to compete for sessions in which to present them. The tracks with the best papers will have the most sessions.

The General Chair heads the FM'99 organisation. The Programme Committee Chair heads a committee containing chairs of individual subject tracks, each of which has its own scientific PC and industrial stream PC. There are separate chairs for User Groups, Tools Fair and Tutorials.

Action 19/3: DB to enquire of user groups what they require by way of proceedings, printing costs etc.

The meeting made the following recommendations:

- A paper selection meeting should be held about 6 months before the event. Care is required to ensure good flow of information between heads of subcommittees, the PC chairs and the organisers.

6. Finance

Participants will pay one fee. ESEC and FM'99 will send out their own brochures and people will register separately. Attendees will receive the proceedings of the event for which they register, but may attend any sessions they wish in either conference.

Lunches will not be supplied. This reduces the outlay and allows flexibility in timetables. A wide range of dining facilities are available in the environs.

Action 19/4: DB to propose means of financing user groups including differential sharing of risk and profits.

Action 19/5: RJ to resolve the participation fee and attendance conditions by next physical meeting.

Action 19/6: RJ to prepare a budget of fixed and variable costs and the per-participant fee structure.

There was some discussion of the level of risk to FME. DB referred to an earlier action on the General Chair to come back to FME in February with a detailed statement of risk and revised budget.

The current risk is that a satisfactory deal with ESEC might not be reached, or that the event might be rejected by the venue. If these do not happen, then the committee urged consideration of the acceptability of the risk of not reaching sufficient numbers of participants.

The first binding financial commitment is likely to be the deposit, reserving the congress venue in Toulouse. The date of such a commitment is the subject of negotiations with the venue. Current expectation is February 1998.

The committee liability was limited at a previous meeting to the profit from the Oxford Symposium.

Decided: The committee will allow payment of FME's share of the deposit provided the budget is acceptable and the risk in total does not exceed the Oxford income.

Action 19/7: PL,JSF to produce guidelines for the FM'99 PC based on experience in FME Symposia.

Item 7: Legal Status of FME

Tim Denvir and Kees Pronk had investigate incorporation as a voluntary or charitable body under UK and Dutch law respectively.

Decided: The committee would proceed to incorporation in Dutch law. The details of a suitable constitution were deferred to e-mail discussion.

Item 8: Formal methods dissemination activities

FMGuides has ended and has been scrutinised by the Commission. Project partners were reminded of the need to ensure financial records are available for possible examination by the commission.

FMEInfRes ends at the end of September 1997.

FMEIndSem ends at the end of December 1997.

New proposals for dissemination actions are based on sector-specific workshops with presentations on the state of the and opportunities for industrial participants to present their problems to experts. A coordinating action (Formentor) would support FMESpace, FMERail and FMEConsumer, working in particular business sectors.

Item 9: Support of standardization effort

PL reported that Eugene Dürr had asked for a letter of support for the Standardisation proposal for VDM++ (a dissemination action proposal to the Commission). It had not been possible to provide the letter in time for submission of the proposal.

Item 10: FME domain name

NP reported that a ".org" domain name replacing the hub URL currently at Trinity College, Dublin, would cost $50 per year. The choice of a domain name was deferred to discussion by e-mail.

Action 19/8: Andrew Butterfield to take an electronic vote on domain names. Nico Plat to set up the "winning" domain.

Item 11: FME Secretary

JSF was unable to continue as FME Secretary because of academic commitments. NP will take over as Secretary at the next meeting.

Item 12: Next meetings

The next meeting will be held on 2nd February 1998 at the Technical University of Denmark, Lyngby. DB will act as host.

Item 13: Other business

None.

Summary of Actions

Carried Forward

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Action 17/1: Dissemination action teams to ensure co-ordination between actions, in particular to provide links to each other's web pages. Closes at end of actions.

Action 17/5: DB assisted by RJ will initiate finding chairs for the industry-specific sectors; DB will start to establish a programme committee and other structures for the event, in particular exploring the feasibility of 3 or 4 separate sector oriented sub-programmes, and contacting some of the other organisations hoped to be associated with the event such as ACM and IEEE. In this he will be assisted by FME (PL). RJ will initiate the organisational and local planning in particular contacting possible local industrial associates, by the next FME physical meeting in 6 months. Continues.

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New actions

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