

Formal Methods Europe
Minutes of the 30th meeting (Annual General Meeting 2001)
held at South Bank University, London, UK, 19 October 2001

Present at the meeting were:

- Ali Abdallah
- Juan Bicarregui
- Dines Bjørner
- Eerke Boiten
- Jonathan Bowen
- Tim Denvir
- Lars-Henrik Eriksson
- Alessandro Fantechi
- John Fitzgerald (Chairman)
- Stefan Gruner
- Neil Henderson
- Cliff Jones
- Peter Gorm Larsen
- Dino Mandrioli
- Andrew Martin
- Nico Plat (Secretary)
- Wolfgang Reisig
- Marcel Verhoef

Apologies had been received from: Derek Andrews, Raymond Boute, Michel Chaudron, Manuel Fernandez, Andreas Fett, Marie Claude Gaudel, Stefania Gnesi, René Jacquart, Randolph Johnson, Peter Lindsay, José Oliveira, Jan Storbak Pedersen, Jun Pang, Michael Mac an Airchinnigh, Lynn Marshall, Kees Pronk (Treasurer), Bruce Watson and Jim Woodcock.

1 Welcome

John Fitzgerald welcomed all those present at the meeting and he thanked Jonathan Bowen for all the work involved in hosting the meeting. John also informed the meeting that Kees Pronk could not be present due to a death in his close family. John was asked by the members present to express condolences to Kees by the entire membership.

Action 30/1: John Fitzgerald to express condolences to Kees Pronk.

2 Agree upon agenda

The agenda distributed at the meeting was agreed with the modification that the meeting would accept a financial summary from one of the auditors in place of a full report from Kees Pronk (Item 5). The Treasurer is to be asked to produce the customary annual report in due course.

3 Minutes of the meeting held in Delft on 30 June 2001

The minutes were approved with one modification: Actions 29/9 and 29/17 are identical and therefore one (29/17) can be deleted.

4 Action list

Action 25/7: Carried forward.

Action 27/5: Has become obsolete, action closed.

Action 27/8: Done, see also agenda item 14. Action closed.

Action 28/1: Has become overtaken by new developments, see also agenda item 14. Action closed.

Action 28/5: John has started on this, he expects to have a draft by the end of November.

Action 28/8: Done. Action closed.

Action 28/9: No progress, carried forward.

Action 28/10: Only Marcel Verhoef (Subgroup on Marketing) had submitted a brief plan (see also agenda item 13). Carried forward.

Action 29/1: Done but Nico had received no reply. Action closed.

Action 29/2: Done but Nico had received no reply. Action closed.

Action 29/3: No progress, carried forward.

Action 29/4: Done, action closed.

Action 29/5: Ongoing, carried forward.

Action 29/6: To be done when editing the proceedings, carried forward.

Action 29/7: Will be discussed with the FME Treasurer. carried forward.

Action 29/8: Linked to 28/5, carried forward.

Action 29/9: Not yet done, carried forward.

Action 29/10: Not yet done, although it was clear that such costs would not be included in the global FLoC budget. Carried forward.

Action 29/11: Done. Paul Mukherjee had accepted the role of FME 2002 tools exhibition organiser. Action closed.

Action 29/12: Dines had been in contact with Springer editors Ingeborg Meier and Alfred Hoffman. No problems are foreseen, Springer intends to publish the FME 2002 proceedings. No action needs to be taken, it is best to wait a couple of months (end of January) and then contact Springer again.

Action 29/13: The JRA has been signed by FLoC but not by FME. Dines Bjørner will investigate and report on the situation, and will bring the JRA forward for signature if required.

Action 30/2: Dines Bjørner to make an FME-only budget for FME 2002.

Action 29/14: John has informally proposed a few candidates for PC-chairs but no names can be brought forward yet. Action carried forward.

Action 29/15: No progress, carried forward.

Action 29/16: No progress, carried forward.

Action 29/17: Doubles with action 29/9, action deleted.

Action 29/18: No progress, carried forward.

Action 29/19: Done (Stefan Gruner has volunteered to become the maintainer of these pages), action closed.

Action 29/20: Done, this will be done in a students assignment next year. Action closed.

Action 29/21: Done, action closed.

5 Financial report by the Treasurer covering the period 31 December 1999 – 31 December 2000

In absence of Kees Pronk, Marcel Verhoef gave a brief report on FME's financial situation, in his capacity as a member of the audit committee (see Item 6). Marcel did this on the basis of the report that was also presented by Kees at the previous meeting, discussing the few changes that had taken place since then. John thanked Kees for all his work as FME's Treasurer during the period discussed.

6 Report by the Audit Committee regarding the period 31 December 1999 – 31 December 2000

The members of the audit committee (Jan Storbank Pedersen and Marcel Verhoef) had individually checked the FME accounts and had found no irregularities. Jan Storbank had sent in a written report (enclosed with the minutes) and Marcel reported orally at the meeting. The meeting discharged treasurer Kees Pronk from his responsibilities in this period. John thanked the auditing committee for their work.

7 Account of activities for the past period

Nico Plat clarified the activity report over the past period (enclosed with the minutes). The members present accepted the report. John thanked especially those members who contributed to the FME 2001 symposium and to the FME web site.

8 Board member election

In accordance with Article 10.5 of the FME Statutes, Kees Pronk stepped down as Treasurer of

FME. There were no other candidates to take his position and Kees was re-elected *nem con*.

9 Plans for the coming period

John Fitzgerald presented the policy plan for 2002 (enclosed with the minutes).

Stefan Gruner suggested that the society should select geographically local persons to address local FME issues.

Tim Denvir suggested that actions focussing on newcomers to formal methods should be sought.

The policy plan will be adjusted to include actions addressing these comments.

Action 30/3: The FME Board to revise the policy plan for 2002.

10 Report on FME 2001

Wolfgang Reisig reported briefly on the event, as almost all aspects of the symposium have been finalised. The only thing left is the payment of 60% of the surplus back to FME, when any remaining financial commitments have been settled.

11 FME 2002

Lars-Henrik Eriksson reported on the state of affairs with respect to the symposium programme. The Programme Committee has been established and Call for Papers has been issued: deadline for submissions is 15 January 2002.

Some potential invited speakers are being pursued. One position is still open, for somebody from Europe. The third invited speaker is Natarajan Shankar, who will be shared with one other FloC'02 conference.

There will be a physical PC meeting in Uppsala, Sweden. The exact date remains to be determined (expected around 23 or 24 March 2002, depending on Peter Lindsay's plans).

Dines Bjørner reported on the state of affairs with respect to the organisation of the symposium.

Dines' responsibility in the FLoC organisation is that of finding sponsors for FloC in cooperation with Neil Jones, the FloC'02 Conference Chair. He is trying to be creative in this respect, e.g. trying to formulate different modes of sponsorship. Detailed information can now be found on the FLoC web site at <http://floc02.diku.dk/>.

Two proposals for workshops have been received: one by Peter Moses on Action Semantics and one by Eerke Boiten on refinement. Cliff Jones asked if the Z, VDM and B people intend to organise any workshops. John Fitzgerald and Juan Bicarregui replied positively to this: they intend to submit a proposal for a VDM workshop. Lars-Henrik said that as long as there is enough space workshop proposals can be submitted. Cliff Jones suggested to approach the people who are working on the formalisation of UML. Jonathan Bowen was asked to enquire whether the B people would be interested in organising a workshop during the symposium.

Action 30/4: Jonathan Bowen to enquire whether the B people are interested in organising a workshop during FME 2002.

Marcel Verhoef asked whether there were any plans for organising workshops focussing on specific application domain, such as the rail domain. Dines replied that there were no such plans and Peter Larsen added that it would be very hard to interest companies working in these fields for such an event.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to include the workshop contributions in the FME 2002 proceedings as the proceedings require a rather early deadline. Perhaps it will be possible to issue a CD-ROM which includes (amongst other things) the workshop contributions.

The fee for attending the symposium will probably be around EURO 350.

Dines will seek for another OC candidate whose job it will be to look after the specific FME interests in the overall FLoC organisation.

Action 30/5: Dines Bjørner to seek an additional OC member.

John encouraged all FME members to submit papers for the symposium.

Dines will make a specific FME budget as part of the overall FLoC budget which will include the production of a CD-ROM. The CD-ROM could perhaps also include tools or tutorial material on tools (idea by Eerke Boiten), so that the life cycle of the CD-ROM could perhaps be extended beyond FME 2002 itself.

12 Status report on FME 2003

As Stefania Gnesi was ill and therefore not present at the meeting, Alessandro Fantechi reported on the current state of events. He and Stefania had sought if there were any conflicting events in the same period and had, on the basis of this, concluded that the best period for the Symposium would be the 2nd week of September 2003 (8 - 12 September 2003).

Alessandro presented an initial draft budget for the symposium (enclosed with the minutes). He asked whether having a physical PC meeting was normal in the FME tradition. The reply was that this very much depended on the PC chairs and their preferences.

Alessandro said that the intention was to only distribute the call for papers via e-mail. Cliff Jones commented that people are flooded with electronic calls these days and many go unread. Stefan Gruner added that many prefer to browse the internet searching for calls in which they are interested, and apparently there are web services these days which send calls to people on the basis of their interest. Dino Mandrioli replied that he would also not read a paper call, and would not want to return to the days of high printing costs. It was concluded that it would be worth investigating the costs associated with re-introducing a paper call and Alessandro was asked to do this.

Action 30/6: Alessandro Fantechi to investigate the costs of a paper CfP for FME 2003.

The break-even point in the budget was at 50 attendees and it was remarked that this low: a better aim would be at 100-120 attendees. Alessandro was asked to adjust the budget accordingly.

Action 30/7: Alessandro Fantechi to adjust the FME 2003 budget with a break-even point of 100-120 attendees.

Marcel Verhoef remarked that the attendance fee was rather high and that it would be best to formulate the budget as a matrix in which break-even points are set out against attendance fees.

It was remarked that the EURO 5000 shown as sponsorship from FME on the budget was *not* sponsor money, but just a float which would have to be repaid in the event of the Symposium making a surplus. Also, it was remarked that the expected income on sponsor money was rather high and that preferably the break-even point in the budget should be set not taking sponsor money into account at all. Alessandro was asked to revise the budget taking these suggestions into account and to have it checked by Kees Pronk.

Action 30/8: Alessandro Fantechi to revise the FME budget with respect to expected sponsor income and to check the budget with Kees Pronk.

John Fitzgerald said that he would start a discussion with Stefania Gnesi on PC chairs for FME 2003.

Action 30/9: John Fitzgerald to start a discussion with Stefania Gnesi on PC chairs for FME 2003.

Nico Plat expressed his happiness that the control over the organisation of FME 2003 seemed to be so well in place at an early stage.

13 Reports and plans by the subgroups

Subgroup on Scope

John Fitzgerald reported that there had been no progress with the formation of this subgroup yet and the intention was to split up the subgroup into one focussing on internal issues and one focussing on external issues.

Subgroup on Education

Convenor Andrew Martin reported that the subgroup has many members but that not much progress had been made so far. Jose Oliveira had made a web page with FM educational resources but not much response had been received on this so far, and Andrew suggested that, perhaps, the aims of the subgroup had been set too high.

Jonathan asked if there had been any contact with Neville Dean: apparently he is also in the process of making a web page with formal method education resources. Jonathan's virtual library also has material: Cathy Fisher is in charge of this, perhaps she could be contacted.

Cliff Jones remarked that this subgroup was very important as in the next research framework by the EU a link will be made between education and research. Dino Mandrioli encouraged the subgroup because he thought their work was very important, and he also offered to join the subgroup. John Fitzgerald remarked that if the subgroup felt that their activities could benefit from a solidly funded action plan, they should not hesitate to send in a proposal to the FME board.

Subgroup on Symposium

Stefania Gnesi was not present and could therefore not report on the activities of the subgroup, but Nico Plat and John Fitzgerald reported that she had already made up an initial list of questions to investigate the needs of (former/potential) FME Symposium attendees.

Subgroup on Marketing

Marcel Verhoef had sent in a written report on the activities of the subgroup and the plans for next year. Given the fact that only a few people are a member of this subgroup, the aims of the subgroup have been set out modestly. With respect to the web-based survey on the symposium and on formal methods (see Action 29/9), Marcel remarked that there are commercial companies who can set this up and analyse the results, for relatively modest fees. He was encouraged by the members present to pursue this path. Eerke Boiten reported that he also had access to software capable of doing such statistical analysis.

Action 30/10: Eerke Boiten to inform Marcel Verhoef on software for analysing web-based surveys.

14 FME web site

Nico Plat presented his plan for the further development and maintenance of the FME web site (enclosed with the minutes). A central part of it is to have the web site content maintained by different FME members, each responsible for a separate section. Two new volunteers had stepped forward: Stefan Gruner, who now maintains the "events and job openings" section of the site, and Neil Henderson, who maintains the "organisations" section. More volunteers are still needed, for an overview see the FME web site maintenance plan.

It was suggested to seek a tighter integration with the virtual library. A first step in this will be to make prominent links to each other on the respective home pages.

Action 30/11: Nico Plat to make a link on the FME home page to the virtual library.

Action 30/12: Jonathan Bowen to make a link on the virtual library home page to the FME web site.

Raymond Boute had come up with a plan to make the graphical redesign of the web site a student assignment for a course at his university in the first half of 2002. Nico had welcomed this

plan: in his opinion it is not a problem to have to wait so long. This also removes the need to work on an invitation to tender for a "professional" redesign of the web site, as was attempted earlier.

On the technical side, Neil Henderson suggested that the web site should only use standard HTML so that it could be viewed using browsers from different vendors.

15 Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be the day before or the day after the PC-meeting for FME 2002, around 23 - 24 March 2002, either in Uppsala or Stockholm in Sweden.

16 Other business

- Cliff Jones, Editor-in Chief of the Formal Aspects of Computing Journal (FACJ) proposed the establishment of a link between the journal and FME, as had already been established BCS-FACS. One idea was that FME members could get a considerable discount on the subscription rate, and perhaps each issue could devote one page to FME and its activities. The journal currently has about 400-500 subscriptions, with many library subscriptions among them, suggesting that FME could potentially reach many people through a link to FACJ. The members present welcomed this idea strongly and asked Cliff and John Fitzgerald to take next steps to establish collaboration in conjunction with Springer-Verlag, the journal's publisher.

Action 30/13: John Fitzgerald and Cliff Jones to make a proposal for a link between FME and FACJ.

- Stefan Gruner suggested that FME perhaps could act a book publisher, After much discussion, the idea was rejected in that form. However, many book series exist and perhaps it would be better to establish a relationship with one of them, e.g. FME "endorsing" tests in a series and helping to solicit manuscripts. Stefan Gruner was asked to summarize the discussion and to keep the discussion alive.

Action 30/14: Stefan Gruner to formulate an FME position on publishing and make a proposal to take next steps.

- Stefan Gruner suggested publishing a list of names of FME members on the web site with their associated skills, so that it would become easier to get in contact with the right people, if needed. Nico Plat was asked to find a volunteer to take care of this.

Action 30/15: Nico Plat to find a volunteer to set up a web page with FME members and associated skills.

- Jonathan Bowen pointed the attention of the members to Z and B conference which will be held in January 2002 in Grenoble, France. See <http://www-lsr.imag.fr/zb2002/> for more information.
- Tim Denvir reported that BCS/FACS was attempting to become active again. Recently a newsletter had been published on the Internet. Since no significant costs were being incurred under this arrangement, no subscription fees are envisaged. BCS/FACS will organise an event in December at King's College in London, but no concrete subject was known yet. Eerke Boiten said how much the work of BCS/FACS had been appreciated in the past, especially in relation to the refinement workshops organised in the past.
- Ali Abdallah reported that in July 2003 a summer school will be organised in Lebanon, possibly followed by a conference on formal methods and he hoped that this in some way could be supported by FME, for example by participation of FME members or their willingness to give lectures here. The FME members present agreed with this. More generally, Ali and others expressed support for technology transfer activities in and with third world countries.

Technical presentations

At the end of the meeting there were two technical presentations by two people from Jonathan Bowen's group:

1. *Sergiy Vilkomir*: "Formalization of Software Testing Criteria using the Z Notation"
2. *Zhu Huibiao*: "From Operational Semantics to Denotational Semantics for Verilog"

John thanked Sergiy and Zhu for giving these interesting presentations.

Summary of actions

Action 25/7: Kees Pronk and Peter Lucas to inform the EU that the grant provided by them will be renounced.

Action 28/5: John Fitzgerald to coordinate the production of a document on “Best practices while organising a FME symposium”.

Action 28/8: José Oliveira to browse the internet for educational material on formal methods.

Action 28/9: John Fitzgerald to form two new subgroups on ‘Scope’.

Action 28/10: (Convenors of the) FME subgroups to formulate a plan for the coming year.

Action 29/3: John Fitzgerald to inform FME members on the purpose of the subgroups.

Action 29/5: Kees Pronk to make a financial planning for FME for next year.

Action 29/6: Dines to honour organisations that support attendance of FME meetings in the FME 2002 proceedings.

Action 29/7: John Fitzgerald and Kees Pronk to enquire with Wolfgang Reisig on the tax charges made on the surplus of FME 2001.

Action 29/8: John Fitzgerald to include Michael Goldsmith’s remarks in the guidelines document on organising a FME symposium.

Action 29/9: Marcel Verhoef to set up a web-based survey for FME symposium attendees in the past.

Action 29/10: Dines Bjørner to enquire with Lars-Henrik Eriksson and Peter Lindsay about the costs for a physical FME 2002 PC-meeting (if needed) and to include that within the budget.

Action 29/14: John Fitzgerald to propose (a) PC-chair(s) for FME 2003 in consultation with members of the Symposium subgroup.

Action 29/15: John Fitzgerald to draft an action plan for the Subgroup on Scope.

Action 29/16: John Fitzgerald to give Andrew Martin feedback on the action plan for the Subgroup on Education.

Action 29/18: John Fitzgerald to invite Manuel Fernández Iglesias to become FME EU watcher for funding possibilities.

Action 30/1: John Fitzgerald to express condolences to Kees Pronk.

Action 30/2: Dines Bjørner to make an FME-only budget for FME 2002.

Action 30/3: The FME Board to revise the policy plan for 2002.

Action 30/4: Jonathan Bowen to enquire whether the B people are interested in organising a workshop during FME 2002.

Action 30/5: Dines Bjørner to seek an additional OC member.

Action 30/6: Alessandro Fantechi to investigate the costs of a paper CfP for FME 2003.

Action 30/7: Alessandro Fantechi to adjust the FME 2003 budget with a break-even point of 100-120 attendees.

Action 30/8: Alessandro Fantechi to revise the FME budget with respect to expected sponsor income and to check the budget with Kees Pronk.

Action 30/9: John Fitzgerald to start a discussion with Stefania Gnesi on PC chairs for FME 2003.

Action 30/10: Eerke Boiten to inform Marcel Verhoef on software for analysing web-based surveys.

Action 30/11: Nico Plat to make a link on the FME home page to the virtual library.

Action 30/12: Jonathan Bowen to make a link on the virtual library home page to the FME web site.

Action 30/13: John Fitzgerald and Cliff Jones to make a proposal for a liaison between FME and FACJ.

Action 30/14: Stefan Gruner to formulate an FME position on publishing and make a proposal to take next steps.

Action 30/15: Nico Plat to find a volunteer to set up a web page with FME members and associated skills.

Members of the Subgroup on Education:

- Dines Bjørner
- Eerke Boiten
- Raymond Boute
- Andrew Butterfield
- John Fitzgerald
- Randolph Johnson
- Steve King
- Peter Lucas
- Michael Mac an Airchinnigh
- Dino Mandrioli
- Andrew Martin (Convenor)
- José Oliveira
- Kees Pronk
- Wolfgang Reisg

Members of the Subgroup on Marketing:

- Peter Gorm Larsen
- Marcel Verhoef (Convenor)

Members of the Subgroup on Scope:

- Dines Bjørner
- John Fitzgerald
- René Jacquart
- Cliff Jones
- Peter Gorm Larsen
- Peter Lucas
- José Oliveira

Members of the subgroup on the FME symposium:

- Stefania Gnesi (Convenor)