Editorial

Feature cluster on papers presented at the FRANCORO IV conference

This feature cluster includes a selection of papers presented at the FRANCORO IV conference that took place in Fribourg (Switzerland) from August 18 to 21, 2004. The aim of FRANCORO meetings is to gather French-speaking researchers in OR, so that they can freely exchange ideas and participate to discussions without being limited by the languages barrier. After Mons (Belgium, 1995), Sousse (Tunisia, 1998) and Québec (Canada, 2001), this fourth edition of the francophone meeting in OR attracts 82 participants, who were pleased to listen to five plenary lecturers of international fame: Michel Bierlaire (EPFL), Dominique de Werra (EPFL), Bernard Roy (University of Paris Dauphine), Catherine Roucairol (University of Versailles) and Jean-Philippe Vial (University of Geneva).

The 79 talks of the scientific program of the conference were distributed into 10 streams, namely: one invited stream on *bioinformatics* organised by Jin-Kao Hao (University of Angers, France) and nine contributed streams on *combinatorial optimization*, *decision support – multi-criteria analysis*, *graphs*, *human resource management*, *location – logistics*, *meta-heuristics*, *networks*, *scheduling* and *telecommunications*.

Researchers from every fields of OR are participating to this conference. So, the subjects of the papers submitted for publication at the issue of the FRANCORO IV conference cover at least five of the main topics included in the various streams of the conference and they provide a good balance between theoretical papers and valuable applications. The guest editors had to face the challenge of finding referees in various domains. Finally, nearly 100 referees have been solicited for evaluating nearly 30 papers. After a strict refereeing process, nine papers have been retained, illustrating the variety of researches undertaken by French-speaking researchers.

- Bioinformatics
  - Neighborhood functions and hill-climbing strategies dedicated to the generalized ungapped local multiple alignment, by D. Hernandez, R. Gras and R. Appel.

- Decision support and multi-criteria analysis
  - Simulation with system dynamics and fuzzy reasoning of a tax policy to reduce CO_2 emissions in the residential sector, by P. Kunsch and J. Springael.
  - Extended use of the cards procedure as a simple elicitation technique for MAVT: application to public procurement in Switzerland, by J. Pictet and D. Bollinger.

- Meta-heuristics
  - Feasible Job Intersections in the multi-processor-task job shop, by H. Gröflin, A. Klinkert and N. Pham Dinh.
  - An improved simulated annealing algorithm for bandwidth minimization, by E. Rodriguez-Tello, J.-K. Hao and J. Torres-Jimenez.
  - Few statistical tests for proportions comparison, by É. Taillard, P. Waelti and J. Zuber.

- Scheduling
  - The multi-item capacitated lot-sizing problem with setup times and shortage costs, by N. Absi and S. Kedad-Sidhoum.
  - Optimization of multi-position machines and transfer lines, by A. Dolgui, N. Guschinsky, G. Levin and J.-M. Proth.

- Telecommunications
  - Simple bounds and greedy algorithms for decomposing a flow into a minimal set of paths, by B. Vatinlen, F. Chauvet, P. Chrétienne and P. Mahé.

The guest editors want to express their gratitude to the authors for the quality of theirs contributions, and to the referees for their careful, insightful and generally timely reviews.

Finally, the guest editors thank Professor Jacques Teghem, EJOR Editor, for his support and assistance in the preparation of this feature cluster.

Éric Taillard
HEIG-VD,
University of Applied Sciences of Western
Switzerland,
1, Route de Cheseaux, Case postale
CH-1401 Yverdon-Les-Bains,
Switzerland
E-mail address: eric.taillard@heig-vd.ch

Marino Widmer
University of Fribourg