



Silva Mediterranea

Working Group on “Forest Fires in the Mediterranean Region”

2009-2012 Work Plan

Submitted by

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*Forest Fires: Prevention through Sustainable
Forest Management practices at local level,
and building forest resilience at landscape level,
a key issue to limit the increasing risks of
Mediterranean forest fires
in a context of Climate Change*



A. Background and context

During the last five years, the activities of the Forest Fires Working Group (FFWG) have been focused on the visibility of the Mediterranean region and raising awareness on fire related issues in most events, promoted by international organizations:

2003

- 3rd International Conference on Wildland Fire, Sydney, Australia ;
- EC/Silva Med/CIHEAM Workshop on Mutual Assistance between Border Countries against Forest Fires, Zaragoza, Spain ;

2004.

- 2nd International Symposium on Fire Economics, Planning and Policy, Cordoba, Spain ;
- FAO/Silva Mediterranea/CIHEAM Advanced Seminar on International Cooperation Programmes for Forest Fire Control in the Mediterranean Basin, Zaragoza, Spain ;
- Meeting of the EC Working Group “Forest Fire Prevention”, Zaragoza, Spain and Ispra, Italy ;
- Meeting of the EC Working Group “Forest Fire Prevention”, Brussels, Belgium;

2005.

- Meeting of the International Liaison Committee (ILC) for the International Wildland Fire Conference (IWFC), Madrid, Spain ;

2006.

- Meeting of the ILC for the IWFC, Madrid, Spain ;

2007.

- 4th International Conference on Wildland Fire, Sevilla, Spain ;

2008.

- FAO Workshop on Forest Fires in the Mediterranean Region, Sabaudia, Italy ;
- European Forest Week/*Silva Mediterranea* Parallel Partner Event , FAO, Rome ;

B. Baseline and Rational

Along all these events a fire management doctrine has been established, summarized in the “**2007 Sevilla Conference**” conclusions of the Regional Session, devoted to the Mediterranean Basin. The key recommendations of the Conference to design a **Work Plan for the FFWG** are as follows:

- Protection of the environment in Europe, the Mediterranean Basin and the Caucasus cannot be effective without a **Regional Strategy for Fire Management**, designed according to the distribution and intensity of the danger and developed in cooperation with the public and private stakeholders of the forest sector ;
- Priority is to be given to the **prevention of fires** caused as a consequence of the socioeconomic changes in rural areas, and the **promotion of the participation of the local population** ;

- Consideration of maintenance, improvement and enlargement of the **European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) in the Regional Strategy** ;
- Promotion of **bilateral and multilateral agreements between countries** for joint actions on border areas and cooperation in suppression activities ;
- Participation of agencies and groups in the **FAO Fire Management Actions Alliance** in support of the **adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines for Fire Management** ;
- **A publication of a report in 2008, by IUCN, WWF and FAO on “Adapting to Global Change: Mediterranean Forests”**, as a follow-up to a conference organized on the issue in Greece in April 2008 by WWF and IUCN.

The role of the *Silva Mediterranea* FFWG is mostly that of an animator, facilitating information exchanges on experiences, both successes and failures. Its real tools are the focal points whose activities have to be oriented to raise the awareness of the relevant people, actors and services concerned on the need to look at the national and local problems in the frame of a common environment that is the Mediterranean Basin.

C. Objectives in the next 4 years (2009 – 2012)

Objective1: Updating the FFWG network

Activity 1: To request from the different national services with responsibilities on fire management the designation of a focal point;

Activity 2: To integrate, after its official creation (april 2010), future focal points of the regional Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires as focal point of *Silva Mediterranea* Working Group on “Forest Fires in the Mediterranean region”;

Objective 2: Promoting the incorporation of all Mediterranean countries to EFFIS

Activity 1: To send an invitation to the countries not yet incorporated to the EFFIS;

Activity 2: To coordinate with EFFIS the invited countries “reactions”;

Activity 3: To promote integration of countries member of the future regional Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires as active members of EFFIS;

Objective3: Promoting initiatives of prevention at local level

Activity 1: To spread technical documents of local experiences;

Activity 2: To identify and assess existing initiatives around the Mediterranean Basin;

Activity 3: To promote projects funding by country donors, in particular, to finance activities of the future Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires;

Activity 4: To facilitate collaborations (exchanges of experiences, translation of guidelines, workshops and training courses, exchange visits...) of this future Near East network with other countries of *Silva Mediterranea* Working Group on “Forest Fires in the Mediterranean region”;

Objective 4: Promoting bilateral agreements between countries for joint actions on border areas and cooperation in suppression activities

Activity 1: To inventory existing agreements around the Mediterranean Basin;

Activity 2: To spread information on agreements by sending the template approved at the 2003 “Sydney Conference”;

Activity 3: To make available these information’s on agreements through *Silva Mediterranea* and other FAO relevant websites on Forest Fires;

Objective 5: Promoting the participation in the FAO Fire Management Actions Alliance of all Mediterranean countries.

Activity 1: To convene a meeting of promotion of FAO Management Actions Alliance by inviting all Mediterranean countries;

Activity 2: To spread information of the Voluntary Guidelines.

Activity 3: To promote the participation of all future members of the new regional Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires in the FAO Fire Management Actions Alliance;

D. Implementation

The relevant activity to the Objective 1 will enable to request concerned countries on their support to the overall Work Plan. **This request would be made by the FFWG Coordinator, jointly with the *Silva Mediterranea* Secretariat and the FAO Unit in charge of Fire Management issues.** The relevant activities of Objective 5 could be managed as a side event on the 2009 COFO at Rome or during Regional Forestry Commissions (April 2010). During these meetings a steering team can be created to develop and detail further the present Work Plan and, also, to support the future new Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires through a Technical Cooperation project preparation during 2010.

E. Stakeholder involvement

- **Stakeholder profile:** Forestry Directorates of the Mediterranean countries, Forest owners associations and NGOs active in forest protection, management and restoration in Mediterranean region;
- **Involvement of organizations:** They have to designate a focal point representing every country and facilitating the spread of information in the country and at the Mediterranean level;
- **Involvement of other networks:** Future focal points designated by Near East countries as representative in the new Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires should be automatically the *Silva Mediterranea* focal point for the Working Group on “Forest Fires in the Mediterranean region”;

F. Sustainability, replicability, constraints, limitations and risks

The development of this Work Plan depends on the establishment of a complete and active network of focal points. The development of this work plan depends also on the establishment and the financing of activities of the future Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires.

If the concerned organizations, mainly the Forestry Directorates of every country, do not cooperate in the designation of focal points, the *Silva Mediterranea* Work Plan on “Forest Fires in the Mediterranean region” as well as the future Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires would have a limited scope to address prevention of forest fires in Mediterranean .

G. Budget

The total budget of this Work Plan would be the cumulative National Projects budgets, allowed by individual countries to implement the prescribed items, and financial resources (FAO’s TCP and/or other donors) mobilized to support regional activities of the future Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires and its involvement in activities of *Silva Mediterranea* Working Group on “Forest Fires in the Mediterranean region”. The steering team, mentioned in Item D, can be charged of organizing a workshop in 2010 where the interested Near East countries could discuss this project proposal to support regional activities of their future Near East network on Forest and Wild land fires including their countries participation to *Silva Mediterranea FFWG*.