

FINAL REPORT

Toulouse,
France,
12-16
September
2000

EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds

Twenty-second session



Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

**WORKING PARTY ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF MOUNTAIN WATERSHEDS**

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

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**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2000**

INTRODUCTION

1. The twenty-second session of the European Forestry Commission's Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds was held in Toulouse, from 12 to 14 September 2000, at the kind invitation of the Government of France. The session took place at the "Centre pour l'UNESCO". It was followed on 15 and 16 September by a study tour, organised by the Host Government, illustrating integrated land use management in mountain areas, the theme of the session, in the Pyrenees mountains. (see *Annex D*).
2. The session was attended by 24 delegates and observers from 10 EFC member countries (see *Annex C*): Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and from one non-member country: Japan. One representative of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations, one representative of the European Observatory on Mountain Forest, and one representative from the United Nations University participated.
3. Mr E. Beheim (Norway) chaired the session with the assistance of the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr J. Krecek (Czech Republic) and Mr P. Greminger (Switzerland). Mr E.H. Sène, Director, Forest Resources Division, Mr D. McGuire, FORC, and Ms Liliana Tomagian, FORC, serviced the meeting with the invaluable support of Mr Antoine Hurand (France), who was instrumental in helping to organize the session.
4. Mr Beheim welcomed all participants and observers to the twenty-second session. He stressed the long history covering close to 50 years of cooperation in the framework of the Working Party, noting that the first session of the group had been held in France in 1952. He also stressed the important role and function of the Working Party as a forum for exchange of experience that brings together people from many different backgrounds, with the potential for even greater synergies. He also noted that the Working Party had been requested by its parent body, the European Forestry Commission, to evaluate and monitor its results and efficiency and to review its mandate. In this context, Mr Beheim mentioned that the theme of the current session was quite appropriate.
5. Mr Sène welcomed participants on behalf of both the Director-General of FAO and of the Assistant Director-General and Head of the Forestry Department, and thanked the Government of France for preparing and hosting this session. He noted the importance of the Working Party and recalled the priorities that were determined during the 21st session in Marienbad. He also stressed the importance of the IUFRO/FAO Symposium and its linkage with the Working Party. Looking to the future, Mr Sène spoke of the growing importance of partnership with other organizations working in watershed management and sustainable mountain development. The upcoming period will be important for the Working Party, both in the context of the lead up to the International Year of Mountains in 2002 and given that the next session will be held on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the group. He expressed appreciation for the intersessional work carried out by the Executive Committee and the Secretariat since the last meeting in Marienbad and noted the extra effort that will be required to raise the level of the Working Party and the need for greater commitment to its work by member countries.
6. Mr C. Barthod, Assistant Director of Forests in the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, welcomed participants to France. He apologized for the absence of Mr P.E. Rosenberg, the Director of Rural Areas and Forests, who was prevented from attending personally due to need to tend to the aftermath of the severe storm that hit France in late 1999. He stressed the need to recall and remain faithful to the original mandate of the Working Party which relates to the importance of water and forests, while not losing site of current needs and issues. He also noted the importance that the Working Party be aware in particular of the needs and situations of practitioners working in the field and of developing

better exchange mechanisms in intersessional periods. The linkages to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and especially to Resolution S4, are important concerns. Mr Barthod also noted that the European Observatory on Mountain Forests, which France has strongly supported since its inception, was established not to be overlapping and competitive with existing institutions, but rather to fill a particular niche which should be complementary to the role of the Working Party. Finally, he declared open the twenty-second session of the European Forestry Commission's Working Party on Mountain Watersheds.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA (Item 2)

7. The Working Party adopted the proposed agenda, which is shown in *Annex A*.

FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPORTS OF 21ST SESSION OF WORKING PARTY AND 29TH SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION (Item 3)

8. Mr McGuire, Secretary of the Working Party, introduced this subject and presented the conclusions and recommendations that were decided at the last session of the Working Party and the recent session of the European Forestry Commission. The most important decision was that of the EFC which determined that, after consideration of whether to abolish the Working Party, it should be maintained. This was based on the understanding that the mandate of the Working Party be reviewed and revised by the Commission, based on proposals by the Executive Committee. The main justification for the Commission's decision were covered. It was also noted that after the review of the mandate of the Working Party, the Commission would continue to evaluate its results and monitor its efficiency, taking into account available resources. Efforts taken since the 21st session to cut costs by refocusing and streamlining its work were discussed, highlighting the changes that had been made in preparing the 22nd session. The presentation stressed the need for the Working Party to continue to pursue these efforts since it would be held accountable to the Commission in the future.

PROGRESS IN WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT (Item 4)

Presentation of National Reports

9. National reports were presented by delegations from the following countries: Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Major issues raised during discussion of the national reports included: the role of the public in decision making and the need for awareness raising; the notion of negotiated risk and the difficulty of determining acceptable or appropriate levels of security against natural disasters; who has responsibility for covering damages and losses after natural disasters; land management difficulties in a context of restitution of private land; continued fragmentation of the forest cover; new policy and legislation, and privatisation of forest lands.

10. Several countries reported on very severe natural disasters that had occurred since the previous session of the Working Party. These included the avalanches that affected Alpine countries during the winter of 1998/1999, storm damage to large areas of forests in late 1999 and flooding events that have taken place in recent months. Many countries raised the issue that recent events were extreme events, and in some cases well over 100 year events. The extreme hardship faced by certain affected communities, some of which have been subject to more than one disaster in the same year, was discussed. The situation reported by Germany on the recent floods in Bavaria, highlighted the very real dilemma in certain communities of neither the State nor private insurers covering the cost of flood

damage. Austria also referred to that country's long history in dealing with torrent and avalanche control and the particularly severe disasters of 1999. A number of technical measures and planning tools, including the use of hazard maps, were discussed. The need for greater public awareness on disaster prevention and management, and on the limits of action, were also a topic of discussion.

11. Norway noted the present efforts underway to review and revise outdated legislation affecting water resources, that aim to simplify laws and do away with cumbersome bureaucracy. These efforts strive to achieve a balance between development or recreational concerns on the one hand and environmental concerns on the other. Strengthening public participation and implementing more severe sanctions on offenders are important components of this process. Austria, Switzerland, Germany, the UK, and the Czech Republic also dealt with the issue of greater public participation in land use planning and management decisions. France discussed the somewhat different situation it faces of still maintaining a strong central decision making approach, while striving to make land use decisions that are also based on regional considerations and which include local input. New legislation and policy developments in France have contributed to greater support to forest investment, enhanced national planning for rural development and new contractual agreements between the State and regional authorities.

12. Efforts to revise or develop new forestry policy and legislation over recent years were mentioned as important activities by a number of delegations. Switzerland noted new forestry legislation passed in 1993 which focused on protection from natural disasters. Poland adopted a new national policy on forests in 1997. In general, new forestry policy and legislation tended to give much fuller recognition to the multifunctional role played by forests, as compared to the more production-related focus of the past.

13. The Czech Republic mentioned devolution and increased privatization of forest lands as an important process occurring in that country today, noting however, that in mountainous regions, state owned forests are still dominant. Air pollution damage has negatively affected land use planning in mountain watersheds. The difficulties in controlling forest management as a result of increased land fragmentation was also mentioned. Decentralization and increased public participation are other important factors affecting land use.

Presentations from observers (Item 4, cont.)

14. Observers were invited to make their declarations and four people took the floor to report on various aspects of watershed management and mountain development in their organisations or countries. These included Mr H. Marui of Japan who spoke on current trends in disaster mitigation in Japan. Mr L. Janský of the United Nations University described recent initiatives taken by that organization to develop a more focused and stronger programme supporting research in mountain areas throughout the world. F. Gentile from Italy made a technical presentation on the use of vegetation in slope stabilization and erosion control in Italy. J. Robredo of Spain gave a presentation on research carried out on soil texture as related to steepness of slope and vegetative cover.

Theme: Integrated Land Use Planning in Mountain Areas: Protection Forests and Prevention through the Identification of Risk in Selected Alpine Countries (Item 5)

15. Mr F. Berger (CEMAGREF, Grenoble) presented the main theme of the 22nd session: Integrated Land Use Planning in Mountain Areas: Protection Forests and Prevention through the Identification of Risk in Selected Alpine Countries. The presentation was based on a paper that had been prepared for the session that dealt with the current understanding of forest/natural hazard interactions, policies related to protection forests, and zoning in

different countries. Different approaches to classification of forests in Alpine countries were described, as well as zoning principles and financial, legislative and policy tools. The need for a constructive dialogue between researchers and practitioners was stressed for effective management of protection forests to occur. The concept of natural risk prevention plans, recently developed and currently in use in France, was also described. The presentation made several recommendations on how to achieve practical implementation, including the use of tools such as methodology guides, appropriate legislation, sound choice of silvicultural methods and adequate financial and fiscal measures for management. The importance of a multi-stakeholder approach was stressed, whereby technical experts, policy makers, land use planners and local inhabitants voluntarily participate with clearly defined roles in order to achieve genuine co-management of risk.

16. A number of discussion points were raised following the presentation. These included drawing attention to the existing framework of European legislation, including rural development regulations, that are relevant to the protection of mountain forests, and the availability of financial assistance from the EU. Experiences were mentioned from other countries using different approaches that also involve greater local involvement and bottom-up planning methods. The issue of who has responsibility for protection of infrastructure and safety was also discussed and experiences compared among several countries. A number of questions were raised following the presentation, including the extent to which there is on-going coordination with other sectors, such as agriculture, land use planning, etc.

17. A more general discussion followed on "Exploring opportunities for exchange of information and experiences and enhancement of the planning process – possible follow-up activities". One delegate noted the need for fuller participation in the Working Party by all member countries of the European Forestry Commission, especially as the issues vary significantly among them. The need was expressed for closer linkages with similar on-going processes and mechanisms and greater participation of NGOs working on related issues. Some participants stated that the Working Party needs to clearly define the steps it should take in the future to contribute positively to this debate. An offer was made by the observer representative of the United Nations University to cooperate closely with FAO in producing a joint publication on this topic. The idea was welcome by FAO to pursue this idea together in the near future.

Outcome of FAO/IUFRO Symposium/ the relevance of research in integrated land use planning in mountain areas (Item 6)

18. A. Gottle, Chairman of the FAO/IUFRO Symposium that took place on 11 September, gave a summary report on the outcome of that session with an overview of the papers that had been presented and the discussion that ensued. In all, five technical papers were presented at the Symposium on the topics of "Determination of Flood-plain and Implementation of High Water Action Plan in Land-use Planning in Germany" (A. Gottle, Germany), "Disaster Preventive Function of Bamboo Stand and its Effect on the Landscape" (H. Hiura, Japan), "Functionally Integrated Forest Management with Focus on Soil and Water Conservation in Western Carpathians" (L. Jansky, Slovakia), "Research about Soil Erosion in a Small Mediterranean Catchment", (Francesco Gentile and Salvatore Puglisi, Italy), and a final presentation on "The Distribution of Debris Flows in Upper Italy" (L. Marchi, Italy).

19. Two workshops that were held following the presentations of the technical papers provided good opportunities for the Symposium to make a relevant and useful contribution to the main theme of the 22nd session of the Working Party. One workshop developed a list of several overarching principles of landscape management and the other focused on defining the main elements of land use planning in an operational and practical sense. These were reported on by Mr Gottle, following his summary presentation of the technical papers. This input was much appreciated and contributed to the discussion that followed.

20. Following the presentation on the outcome of the IUFRO Symposium a discussion took place. That included short interventions from the perspectives of both researchers and administrators. Several interesting questions and issues were raised, such as: when is research needed to solve a particular problem? Research at what cost? It was suggested that further research may be needed to better understand what we need protection from, in terms of hazard or disaster management. The idea of preparing a case study on the relevance of research in integrated land use planning in mountain areas was suggested as an activity that could be carried out in preparation of the next session of the Working Party to more fully explore the issue, as well as looking into the possibility of inviting a land use planning expert to the next session.

Role of the Working Party in the Implementation of Resolution S4 (Item 7)

21. Mr P. Zingari, Director of the European Observatory on Mountain Forests, presented the current status of the implementation of Resolution S4 of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, looking at both achievements and existing gaps. He described the process now underway and recent outputs in this context which include a white book on European mountain forests, a workshop on the multi-functionality of mountain forests held in Austria in May 2000 and the establishment of a new working group on mountain forests, people and communities which evolved from a workshop on mountain forests held at the World Mountain Forum in Chambéry, France in June 2000. Constraints to S4 implementation include a lack of firm commitment on the part of many countries in Europe, inadequate human and financial resources, and the difficulty of not yet being able to clearly define mountains. A number of conclusions were drawn related to the need for greater communication, participation and awareness raising and a minimum level of human resources and financial commitment devoted to this endeavor. Several proposals were made regarding the need for a thorough stock taking of existing related initiatives and a harmonized framework for action in 2002 and beyond. In the discussion that followed, proposals were made for the Working Party to ensure that its members are fully aware of other ongoing processes related to S4 implementation and in turn to inform these processes and mechanisms about its own work in order to maximize efficiency and progress in this regard.

Presentation by Representative of French Ministry of Environment

22. Mr Loïc Beroud of the Ministry of Environment made a presentation on the different components of the French Government's programme on risk prevention which is used in the formulation of Natural Hazard Prevention Plans. He first covered the specificities of mountain regions and their susceptibility to natural risks, explaining also the institutional setting in France to deal with risk prevention. He then described the different components of the risk prevention programme which includes ensuring an adequate knowledge of hazards; surveillance and warning systems; informing the public on hazards; consideration of risks in regional planning; reduction of natural risks; and using past experience for effective risk reduction. The aim is to cover 5,000 communes with Natural Hazard Prevention Plans by the year 2005. To date, approximately 2,000 plans have already been established.

23. A brief discussion followed Mr Beroud's presentation, during which clarification was provided on who has institutional responsibility during crisis periods, the possibility of expropriation of property related to risk management and how risk zoning is carried out in France. Mr Beroud noted the intention to develop criteria and indicators to enable evaluation of the effectiveness of the design and implementation of the plans, given the importance of this. Technical guidelines on preparing specific plans for avalanches, floods, landslides and other types of disaster are in some cases already available or soon to be prepared. Mr Beroud expressed the interest of the Ministry of Environment in the outcome of the 22nd

Working Party session in terms of the relevance and usefulness to its own work, and noted the need to develop and ensure better coordination and cooperation.

Progress in the preparations for the International Year of Mountains – 2002 (Item 8)

24. D. McGuire presented background information and the current status of preparations for the International Year of Mountains (IYM) to be observed in 2002. He described FAO's role as lead agency for preparing the Year and the objectives, institutional set-up and operational considerations for observing the IYM. The importance of national level activities in the observance was emphasized and the establishment of national IYM committees to facilitate this was mentioned. Following this presentation, Mr P. Zingari spoke briefly on efforts currently being led by the European Observatory on Mountain Forests, in close collaboration with others, to prepare specific activities related to mountain forests in 2002. These include the establishment of a Working Group on Forests, People and Communities as an outcome of a workshop held at the World Mountain Forum meeting in Chambéry, France in June 2000. Discussion followed during which the representative of the United Nations University (UNU) gave a brief overview of how that organization would be observing the IYM and described the Global Mountain Partnership Programme that has been recently developed. He reiterated the willingness of UNU to assist in IYM observance, particularly with respect to publishing information and reports, capacity building and networking. Regarding the activities of the Working Party during 2002, it was noted that the 23rd session would be held during the IYM and that the group would simultaneously be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary at that time. During the discussion a possible Working Party contribution to the IYM observance was proposed. This would be the presentation of an historical retrospective on the last 50 years of Working Party activities which could be carried out during the inter-sessional period.

Adoption of the revised Mandate of the Working Party (Item 9)

25. D. McGuire presented the Vision and revised Mandate of the Working Party that was the result of inter-sessional work undertaken by the Executive Committee since the 22nd session (see *Annex B*). This work was done at the request of the European Forestry Commission (EFC), following its 29th session in 1998 and will be presented for consideration at the EFC's next session in October 2000 in Rome. The proposed Vision and Mandate were approved by delegates to the current Working Party session with no amendments.

Programme of the Working Party – defining inter-sessional activities (Item 10)

26. The Chairman, E. Beheim, requested input from delegates on possible inter-sessional activities that could be undertaken by the Working Party prior to holding the 23rd session. Discussion that followed included proposals to pursue some of the issues discussed during the 22nd session, such as developing case studies at country level that could build on the knowledge and information generated on the session's theme of integrated land use planning in mountain areas. Countries were also encouraged to develop ideas for exchange that could be pursued on an individual basis and within current financial limits. Several specific proposals were forwarded, including:

- establishment of a permanent internet site to serve as a discussion and exchange forum for the Working Party. The site could also provide access to working papers, reports and other documentation of the group, including unpublished material. Further discussion and debate could continue through this site, including follow-up to the theme of the 22nd session and to help resolve any philosophical debates that members may care to discuss. FAO offered to host this site on its Forestry Department site, which already contains a section devoted to the Working Party. This would require regular updating of

information and material (suggested monthly) and could likely be done within existing budgetary constraints.

- holding an electronic conference on a specific theme, possibly related to follow-up to the theme of the 22nd session and/or in preparation of the 23rd session. This should be focused in terms of content and pragmatic with respect to length and cost. It was suggested that the European Mountain Forum be considered as a possible partner in providing the technical support to hold such an electronic conference.
- developing an historical retrospective on the last 50 years of Working Party activities and their consequences related to prevention work that would culminate in a document to be presented at the 23rd session in 2002. It could serve not only as an interesting view looking back at the early work of the group, but could possibly assist the group in determining its current role and orientation in the present day context. This work could also be considered a contribution toward the International Year of Mountains – 2002.

27. Several delegates stressed the need to be very focused, limited and pragmatic with respect to any inter-sessional activities to be carried out, while recognizing the importance of undertaking such work in order to enhance the effectiveness and potential impact of the Working Party.

Election of Officers of the Working Party (Item 11)

28. The twenty-second session of the Working Party elected Mr Josef Krecek (Czech Republic) as Chairman; Mr Peter Greminger (Switzerland) as first Vice-Chairman and Mr Antoine Hurand (France) second Vice-Chairman.

Date and Place of the Twenty-third Session (Item 12)

29. Following the offer of Switzerland initially made at the 21st session in Marienbad, to host the twenty-third session in 2002, Mr Peter Greminger confirmed that the offer is still valid. The Working party noted and accepted the offer and requested FAO to engage in appropriate negotiations with Switzerland concerning the formalities to be undertaken. Mr Greminger tentatively proposed holding the 23rd session the week of 18 September 2002, subject to further discussions among the Executive Committee. Several ideas were proposed on possible ways to structure the next meeting, taking into consideration the importance of full integration of the study tour in the session.

Other Matters (Item 13)

30. Mr. A. Hurand (France) gave a brief introduction on the sites to be visited during the Study Tour to the Pyrenees for the benefit of all participants.

Adoption of the Report (Item 14)

31. Following requests for minor revisions or corrections, the Report of the 22nd session was adopted.

Closing of the 22nd session of the Working Party (Item 15)

32. Mr. Beheim, Chair of the 22nd session, took the floor to make closing remarks, in which he thanked the French hosts for their kind and efficient support in making the meeting a success. He expressed regret that a greater number of countries was not represented at the meeting, but was hopeful that the 23rd session would be better attended. He also thanked the Executive Committee and the FAO Secretariat for their cooperation over the past two years and in contributing to the success of this meeting. He also welcomed the incoming

chair, Josef Krecek of the Czech Republic. Finally he expressed thanks to the fine job done by the interpreters and thanked delegates for their active participation.

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Report on Follow-up to Recommendations of the Reports of the 21st Session of the Working Party and the 29th Session of the European Forestry Commission
4. Progress in Watershed Management and Sustainable Mountain Development (with particular focus on this session's theme)
 - a. Presentation of National Reports
 - b. Discussions
5. Theme: Integrated Land Use Planning in Mountain Areas
Specific sub-themes will include:
 - i. Analyzing and comparing different approaches across Europe
 - ii. Striking a balance between participatory and multi-stakeholder approaches and centralized top-down planning
 - iii. Exploring opportunities for exchange of information and experiences and enhancement of the planning process
6. The relevance of research in integrated land use planning in mountain areas, including the outcome of the FAO/IUFRO Symposium¹
7. Follow-up to Resolution 4 of the Strasbourg Conference on Forest Protection in Europe: "Adapting the management of mountain forests to new environmental conditions": current status of country-level implementation and re-definition of the role of the Working Party in S4 implementation
8. Progress in preparations for the International Year of Mountains – 2002 (IYM) and discussion of Working Party activities in the IYM context
9. Discussion and adoption of revised mandate of the Working Party
10. Programme of the Working Party – defining inter-sessional activities
11. Election of officers of the Working Party
12. Date and place of the 23rd session
13. Other matters
14. Adoption of the report
15. Closing of the session

¹ The FAO/IUFRO Symposium will be held on Monday 11 September 2000 at the same venue in Toulouse.

Proposed Vision of the Working Party:

A high quality of life in the mountainous areas of Europe which takes into account environmental, economic and social considerations for present and future generations living both in mountainous and lowland areas.

Proposed Mandate of the Working Party:

- 1. to share and promote technical and scientific knowledge and practical experience in the areas of watershed management and sustainable mountain development*
- 2. to assess the state of art in watershed management in order to improve it*
- 3. to enhance communication and exchange on watershed management and sustainable mountain development*
- 4. to actively contribute to policy and decision making processes at a high level*
- 5. to contribute to public awareness of the importance of and to promote responsibility at all levels in the practice of integrated watershed management and sustainable mountain development*

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LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

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 Presidente

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Vice-Chairmen
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 Peter Greminger (Switzerland)

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PROGRAMME OF STUDY TOUR

Commune of Cauterets (Hautes-Pyrénées) - 15 September - 10h30 to 15h30.

General introduction to the commune and the way in which the management and development of this tourist resort have taken natural risks into account for the last century.

Visit of the site of La Raillère which is vulnerable to rockfall from the national forest of Péguère in the Pyrenees National Park; consolidation works in the rockfall zone and prevention measures.

Lunch at La Raillère.

Visit of the recently urbanized site of Lisey; passive protection works against torrent flooding to reinforce active torrent correction in the watershed.

Resort of La Mongie (Hautes-Pyrénées) - 15 September - 16h30 to 19h00

Avalanche management in the ski resort of La Mongie and on its access road: avalanche barriers and preventive activation.

Visit of the national forest: reforestation for avalanche protection and works; management of the protection stands.

Dinner and overnight stay at La Mongie.

Commune of Bagnères de Luchon (Haute-Garonne) - 16 September - 10h00 to 17h00

Visit of the upper watershed of La Pique.

Sustainable multi-functional forest management (timber, protection of water resources, natural risks, tourism, conservation of outstanding species in a Natura 2000 site); restoration of mountain lands and protection against torrent flooding (active correction, control of sediment transport); protection of bears, pastoralism and forest.

Lunch.

Visit of the urbanized area of l'One. Protection strategies against torrent flooding and related consideration in municipal risk prevention planning.

Meeting with the local council of the tourist centre and spa of Bagnères de Luchon; the role of the different parties in the management of natural risks and watershed management.