

Blue Forest: Empowering Young Forest Entrepreneurs around the Mediterranean

The Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea*, the Catholic University of Leuven, the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agromomic Studies (CIHEAM) and the Mediterranean Regional Office of the European Forest Institute are developing a new project idea, “Blue Forest: Empowering Young Forest Entrepreneurs around the Mediterranean”.

Forest and rangelands in the Mediterranean region are very relevant green infrastructure that can make a greater contribution to the bio-economy and human wellbeing. Mediterranean wooded lands can offer to the youth of the region an opportunity to play an active and constructive role by developing jobs based on the goods and services provided by wooded lands.

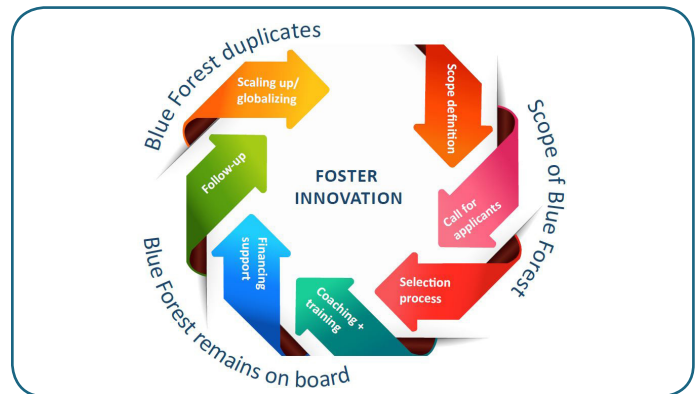
In this framework was born the idea of the Blue Forest initiative which has the following goals:

- to serve as an incubator of forest-based projects for young entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean region;
- to encompass the necessary steps to bring innovative ideas to the market;
- to boost economic activity and job creation specifically for the youth, and economic development in rural areas around the Mediterranean;
- to connect and integrate key dynamic and large networks, bringing together leading international organizations from around the Mediterranean.

Blue Forest is open to innovative businesses activities (social or traditional one); financing sources (public and/or private); stakeholders and actors (private company or cooperative).

In a context of economic paradigm shift from a fossil linear system towards a circular bio-economy:

- Blue Forest is focusing on the Mediterranean forest and wooded land in rural but also urban areas



- Blue Forest addresses identified deadlocks and challenging paradoxes such as:
 - The general public having the perception of an endangered ecosystem under threats while in contrast Mediterranean forest area expansion is a reality;
 - Pronounced potential and possible high value of forest-related goods and services which are currently not realized and not valorized;
 - Lack or absence of forest and land management (aging population, social desert, etc.) inducing real threats like e.g. erosion, droughts, floods, mega-fires, etc.;
 - Societal challenges like urbanization, tertiarization and digitalization which carry high potential to open for new forest-related business concepts;
- Blue Forest explicitly links innovation plus entrepreneurship to solve jointly identified problems by introducing cultural innovation and social collaboration in a historical public-oriented sector;

For more information on the Blue Forest, you can contact the secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea*: Silva-Mediterranea@fao.org

Meeting of the bureau of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-Silva Mediterranea

A meeting of the bureau of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-Silva Mediterranea was held in Madrid, Spain, from 17 to 18 July 2017 at the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment (Ministerio de Agricultura y Pesca, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente - MAPAMA). Participants included members of the bureau of the Committee Silva Mediterranea; the Secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea*; colleagues from MAPAMA and the International Association for Mediterranean Forests (AIFM).



Meeting of *Silva Mediterranea* bureau - 2017
Madrid, Spain@C. Marchetta

The objectives of this meeting were:

- To define a roadmap to implement the decisions taken by the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* at its 22nd session in March 2017.
- To outline the 6th Mediterranean Forest Week and its articulation with the 23rd session of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea*.

The main outcomes of the meeting were the following decisions:

1. Define new topics of interest for which action plans can be offered to state members of *Silva Mediterranea*, such as restoration, bio-economy, land abandoned, migration, or online communities of practice.
2. Revitalize inactive members of the *Silva Mediterranea* by attracting them on new topics of interest

to them. Give special attention to the European Union by identifying the most relevant units of the Commission that could play a role in *Silva Mediterranea*.

3. Take opportunity of the FAO regional forestry commissions (EFC 39 in October 2017, NEFRC 23 in December 2017, etc.) to offer to state members to take part actively in new activities of interest to them. Provide strong talking points and appropriate communication tools to the Chair for the Warsaw meeting.
4. Establish a priority and timetable for the implementation of those decisions among the 38 taken on the basis of the 2013 evaluation of *Silva Mediterranea* that have not been implemented yet. Monitor progress in the implementation of these decisions at the extraordinary meeting of *Silva Mediterranea* in July 2018 during COFO 24.
5. Establish a joint organizing committee (JOC) for the 6th Mediterranean Forest Week (MFW) and the 23rd session of *Silva Mediterranea* to be held in Lebanon in 2019. 6th MFW is scheduled on 1-5 April 2019 on a topic related to the implementation of the Paris Agreement in the Mediterranean. First JOC meeting is planned in Lebanon on 15th-16th December 2017.
6. Communicate on *Silva Mediterranea* in a different way to attract country. Establishing a communication strategy for *Silva Mediterranea* should be considered. A leaflet should be shared by October 2017 to provide a communication support to promote *Silva Mediterranea* at the country level.



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This meeting was also the occasion for the Secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea* to gather with his new Chair, José Manuel Jaquotot Sáenz de Miera, who was recently elected during the 5th MFW in Agadir, Morocco.

More information on this meeting can be found in the report, Meeting of the bureau of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea* available on our website.

The second edition of the State of Mediterranean Forests to be published in 2018

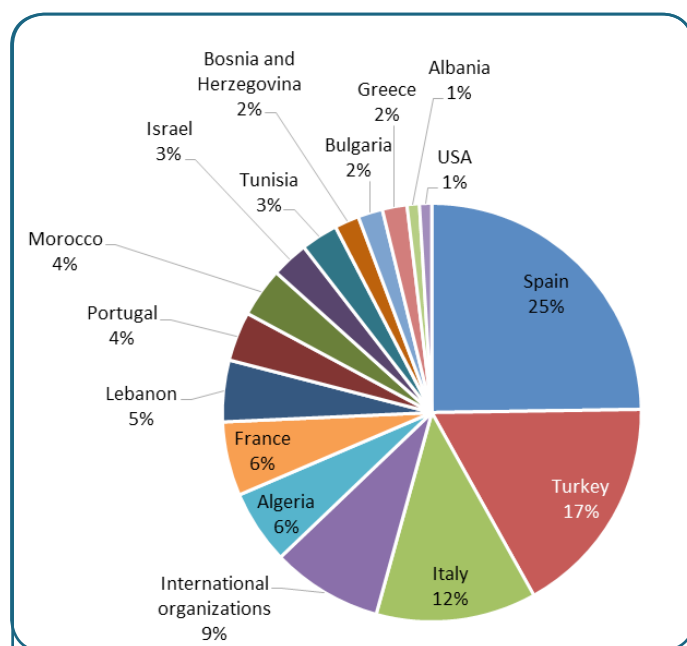
The regional report “State of Mediterranean Forests” (SoMF) edited by FAO and Plan Bleu represents a key publication for the Mediterranean region. The first edition, published in 2013 and launched during the third Mediterranean Forest Week (Tlemcen, Algeria, 2013), gave an overview on the status of Mediterranean forest resources using available data.

The report showed a region highly populated and with forest resources under pressure due to anthropogenic factors and climate change. Mediterranean forests are biodiversity hotspots highly integrated into Mediterranean landscapes. Through millennia, Mediterranean civilizations have been using multiple social, economic and environmental goods and services provided by these ecosystems. As a consequence the present landscapes are the result of a long-term interaction between populations and forest ecosystems. These multiples goods and services provided by forest ecosystems contribute directly to food security of rural population in the Mediterranean. As per demand of FAO *Silva Mediterranea* member

countries, the report will be produced regularly every five years and the second edition will be therefore expected to be launched in 2018. This new edition will be focused on how Mediterranean forests contribute to reach the goals of international commitments on forests, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Rio Conventions.

The report will address i) the importance of Mediterranean forests and current threats that need to be taken into account for a sustainable forest management; ii) Mediterranean forest-based solutions that can contribute to maintain healthy ecosystems which are powerful allies helping us mitigate and adapt to the effect of a changing climate and iii) how to enable the environment to scale up those solutions.

As done for the first edition of the SoMF, several Mediterranean partners from various institutions are involved as voluntary authors and/or reviewers. Under the coordination of FAO and Plan Bleu, the content of the report is in progress and so far the drafts of eight of 13 chapters have been reviewed by the publication coordinators (FAO and Plan Bleu). Two of them are already submitted for external review by a selected referee and the rest is going to be finalized by end of September 2017.



Involvement of Mediterranean countries in the preparation of the State of Mediterranean Forests 2018

With the support of 13 chapter coordinators from five Mediterranean countries and international organizations (FAO, CIHEAM, Plan Bleu), up to now more than 100 experts from 15 countries were involved in the writing of the content of the report, more than half from Spain, Turkey and Italy.

The preparation of the State of Mediterranean Forests 2018 is respecting the tradition of having a collaborative process that involves all the Mediterranean partners that are keen to contribute with their expertise, maintaining a geographical balance and a high level of representativeness of the topics of the region.

Follow-up of the Agadir Commitment

As reported in the previous Newsletter of *Silva Mediterranea*, one of the main outcomes of the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week (MFW) held in Agadir, Morocco, on 20-24 March 2017 was the adoption by nine member states of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* of the Agadir Commitment towards a Mediterranean regional initiative on forest and landscape restoration. This commitment aims at supporting Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR), Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and biodiversity conservation efforts in the Mediterranean region. Among its action lines, the Agadir Commitment plans “to reinforce cooperation on FLR and LDN” and “to cooperate among interested partners to develop a consensual and diversified strategy for the financing of FLR efforts.” As a first step towards these efforts, actions have been undertaken to disseminate the Agadir Commitment, with the support of the Chair of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* and of the High-Commission for Waters and Forests and the Fight against Desertification (HCEFLCD) of Morocco that hosted the 5th MFW.



Mr. Abderrahim Houmy - HCEFLCD Morocco - 2017
5th MFW Agadir, Morocco@MFCN



Representatives of the Mediterranean countries - 2017
5th MFW Agadir, Morocco@MFCN

The FAO web story relating the adoption of the Agadir Commitment, together with a link to the text of the Commitment, has been relayed in different web sites including the InfoFLR of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the web site of the International Model Forest Network, the web site of the UNCCD, or the web site of AIFM. The Agadir Commitment was also presented at the third Advisory Group meeting of the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism (FLRM) of FAO on 12 July 2017 in Rome, Italy. Members of the FLRM Advisory Group took notice of the ongoing dynamics on FLR in the Mediterranean region and encouraged to move it forward under the umbrella of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea*.

The Sixth Mediterranean Forestry Week

The countdown has begun until the start of the Sixth Mediterranean Forest Week (MFW) to be held in Lebanon from 1 to 5 April 2019 on the tentative topic of “implementing the Paris Agreement in the Mediterranean”.

The first meeting to discuss the 6th MFW was held in Madrid, Spain from 17-18 July 2017 during the bureau of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea*. On this occasion, a debrief of the past edition showed the positive results obtained during the Fifth Mediterranean Forest Week, which involved new organizations and gave space for fresh discussions, gathering 270 participants from over 25 countries. The event structured with ten sessions (including a high-level segment) and seven side events ended up with the important achievement of the “Agadir Commitment”.

The next steps for the organization of the 6th MFW were

decided. A joint organizing committee for the Week and the 23rd session of *Silva Mediterranea* will be established in order to increase the visibility of both events. The first joint committee meeting is planned in Beirut, Lebanon on 15-16 December 2017 during the 23rd session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission.

A very preliminary tentative structure of the 6th MFW sessions was drafted: with 4 sessions devoted to the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* and 5 technical sessions for the Mediterranean Forest Week. The opening ceremony on Day 1 will be common to both the MFW and the session of the Committee. The field trip on Day 3 will be organized with the main objective to visit *Cedrus libani* forests. High-level sessions (and gala dinner) will be on Day 4. The 6th MFW would end on Day 4 during the gala dinner. Day 5 would only host a meeting of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* where internal matters will be discussed.

The languages of the Week will be French and English, and Arabic if it is possible in terms of budget.

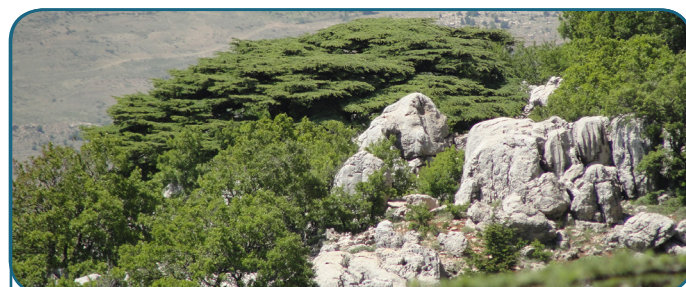
The secretariat of the 6th MFW will provide in September 2017 to the organizing authority in Lebanon the list of material and human resources needed for the Week. The organizing committee in Lebanon will then collect quotations locally to address these needs, so that a precise budget can be elaborated and discussed during the first meeting of the Joint Organizing Committee of the 6th MFW and 23rd session of *Silva Mediterranea*.

The next actions to be taken into consideration for the 6th MFW are the following:

- Find a better balance between the MFW and 23rd session of the *Silva Mediterranea* Committee;



Cedrus libani - 2016
Shouf biosphere reserve, Lebanon@C. Marchetta



Cedrus libani - 2016
Shouf biosphere reserve, Lebanon@C. Marchetta

- Identify two focal points: one in Lebanon and one at FAO;
- On the basis of the list of needed material and human resources provided by the secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea*, Lebanon will collect quotations to establish a budget proposal for the organization of the Week according to the real costs in the place chosen;
- The *Silva Mediterranea* Secretariat will identify possible member organizations that could be interested to the new theme of the 6th MFW and will get in touch with them;
- Sign the hosting agreement between FAO and Lebanon as soon as possible.

For more information on the Sixth Mediterranean Forest Week see the report Meeting of the bureau of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea* or contact the secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea*.

Did you know? The GlobAllomeTree platform

Carbon stocks in forests are an important compartment of the carbon cycle at the global level, and countries, including Mediterranean countries, have shown interest in precisely estimating the amount of carbon stored in their forest to achieve their commitments to the Rio Conventions, in particular the UNFCCC. Forest carbon stocks at the national level can be estimated using forest area and emission factors, or using remote sensing techniques. These techniques are calibrated on field measurements that depend in the end on allometric equations. Allome-

tric equations are mathematical models that predict the biomass or the volume of a tree from its dendrometric characteristics, and are therefore the cornerstone of all forest carbon stock estimates at the national level.

[GlobAllomeTree](#) is the first international web platform to share and provide access to tree allometric equations. It was established in 2013 by FAO, Cirad, and University of Tuscia. GlobAllomeTree gives open access to a database of more than 13,000 allometric equations from over 85 countries and for almost 2,000 different tree species. GlobAllomeTree also provides raw data on tree biomass and volume, wood densities, biomass expansion factors, and a software to analyze equations. But GlobAllomeTree is more than an interactive database portal. It is also a community forum where registered users can share any

question related to the estimation of forest carbon stocks, and where training material and links to relevant scientific literature are provided. The GlobAllomeTree community currently include more than 4,300 users from over 130 countries.

As regards the Mediterranean region, the GlobAllomeTree platform currently contains 179 allometric equations for 23 different tree species of Mediterranean forests in 8 Mediterranean countries. Enriching and using the GlobAllomeTree platform in a collaborative way at the regional level could be a key step to get more precise and specific estimates of the carbon stocks of the Mediterranean forests.

NEWS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

29th session of the European Forestry Commission of FAO and 4th European Forest Week

Progress in the activities of *Silva Mediterranea*, item 4(e) of the provisional agenda

11 October 2017 - Warsaw, Poland

www.fao.org/forestry/efc/en/

Meeting of the MEDFORVAL project

23-25 October 2017 - Shouf biosphere reserve, Lebanon

<https://aifm.org/fr/actualites-agenda/rencontre-annuelle-2017-de-medforval>

International actions on forest and climate, including a focus on Mediterranean forests

Tentative side-event

16 November 2017 - French Pavilion at UNFCCC COP 23, Bonn, Germany

Third meeting of the WOODIV project

27 November - 1 December 2017

www.cesab.org/index.php/fr/projets-en-cours/projets-2014/123-woodiv

23rd session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission of FAO. Progress in in the activities of *Silva Mediterranea*

11-15 December - Beirut, Lebanon

www.fao.org/forestry/65542

First meeting of the Joint Organizing Committee of the 6th Mediterranean Forest Week and 23rd session of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea*

15-16 December (tbc) - Beirut, Lebanon

For more information related to the newsletter of *Silva Mediterranea* please contact Nicolas Picard (Nicolas.Picard@fao.org) or Caterina Marchetta (Caterina.Marchetta@fao.org) at the Secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea*