

## Mediterranean forest and landscape restoration: towards an agenda?

Forests and other wooded lands are part of Mediterranean landscapes. They provide fuelwood, water, food, tourism services and many other goods and services, and are a source of income. The sectors of several of the goods and services provided by Mediterranean forest ecosystems play a key role in the improvement of population livelihoods. Global changes such as societal changes, changes in the ways of life and climate change that are currently occurring in the Mediterranean region have a negative impact of the forest ecosystems and result in forest degradation, biodiversity loss, increased risk of wildfires, water shortage and desertification.

At the global scale, countries have taken commitments to fight against forest ecosystem degradation, such as the [Bonn Challenge](#), the [Aichi Target 15](#) of the CBD, the [UNCCD target on land degradation neutrality](#), the [Paris Agreement on climate](#), or the [Sustainable Development Goal 15](#).

Forest and landscape restoration is an intersectoral approach aiming at promoting productive and multifunctional landscapes with an optimal and negotiated balance between economic, social and environmental benefits provided by forests. This vision of forest and landscape restoration, now widely recognized at the international level, is at the crossroad of the three Rio conventions and will also contribute to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).



Chr a National Park - 2015  
Chr a, Algeria @C. Marchetta

Following the example of several commitments taken on a global or regional level through various current initiatives (Bonn Challenge, the 20x20 Initiative in Latin America, the AFR100 "African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative" in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Ankara initiative to



Becharr  Cedar Forest - 2015  
North Lebanon, Lebanon @C. Marchetta

help to achieve land degradation neutrality using UNCCD tools), the Mediterranean region could follow the same path towards a regional Mediterranean initiative on forest and landscape restoration.

Different projects on restoration in different Mediterranean countries have already paved the way to this target. The working group of *Silva Mediterranea* on "[Desertification and Restoration of Forest Ecosystems of Mediterranean Drylands](#)" led by Turkey is already promoting activities at regional level to promote forest and landscape restoration. After its workshop organized on October 16, 2015 in Ankara during the [UNCCD COP 12](#) (see [Newsletter 22](#)), the working group has underlined the importance of forest and landscape restoration in its work plan during the meeting of the Executive Committee of *Silva Mediterranea* held on April 8, 2016. The Fifth Mediterranean Forest Week (V MFW) that will be held between March 20 and 24 2017 in Morocco will also focus on the restoration of forests and Mediterranean landscapes. All these activities are also strongly supported by the [Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism](#) of FAO that will organize, together with [WRI](#), [IUCN](#), [BMU](#) and existing FLR regional initiatives, a side event on "[Forest and Landscape Restoration regional initiatives: toward the regionalisation of the Bonn Challenge](#)" during the [23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Committee on Forestry](#) (COFO 23) on 20 July 2016. Therefore, the momentum seems appropriate to consolidate national activities on forest and landscape restoration into a regional commitment at the Mediterranean level. An agenda, based on the main international meetings on forest and landscape restoration (side-event during COFO 23, side-event during UNFCCC COP 22, Fifth Mediterranean Forest Week), could be set up to move closer to this Mediterranean regional initiative.

## The Sixth Meeting of the Enlarged Executive Committee of Silva Mediterranea



6<sup>th</sup> Meeting EEC Silva Mediterranea - 2016  
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The Sixth Meeting of the Enlarged Executive Committee of *Silva Mediterranea* took place at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy on Friday April 8, 2016. Following the decisions of the 2013 Evaluation of *Silva Mediterranea*, the meeting aimed at initiating the definition of a specific strategy for *Silva Mediterranea* and at ensuring consistency between the activities of the working groups of *Silva Mediterranea* and this strategy. This meeting also intended to establish synergies between the working groups and reinforce the mobilization of FAO Officers for the benefit of the activities of the groups.

About 20 people attended the Enlarged Executive Committee of *Silva Mediterranea*: the Secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea* and the coordinators of the working groups.

The coordinator of each working group presented results of their activities developed during these past years and the work plan for the period 2016 - 2017. In their presentations, they also identified their priorities and link with the [Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests \(SFMF\)](#), the foundation to elaborate the first draft of the strategy for *Silva Mediterranea*.

Following the recommendations of the 2013 evaluation of *Silva Mediterranea*, *Silva Mediterranea's* strategy will identify topics where the working groups can have a specific added value, avoiding to overlap on topics that are already addressed more efficiently by other institutions or partners.

The different working groups of *Silva Mediterranea* were requested by the Committee to fill an analysis grid for examining the past and future coverages of challenges. Using a score from 0 (not relevant) to 3 (very relevant) the results of this survey will also create the basis for elaborating the strategy.

The Executive Committee underlined that building a strategy for *Silva Mediterranea* is essential to clarify *Silva Mediterranea's* geographical scope. Balkan countries like Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia (FYROM) are currently not part of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* even though they have Mediterranean forests and often already collaborate with some of the working groups.

Moreover, the purpose and goals of the different working groups should be better communicated to the partners of *Silva Mediterranea* and must be included in the strategy. The working plans of the working groups and the strategy of *Silva Mediterranea* should be also accompanied by a monitoring tool. This monitoring tool has to be continuously filled by the *Silva Mediterranea* Secretariat with information and feedback provided by the working group coordinators.



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This exercise should reinforce the collaboration between the working groups. Regular meetings (e.g. once a year) of the Executive Committee would be needed to assess the progress in the action plans of the working groups.

Finally, The Executive Committee underlined that the strategy of *Silva Mediterranea* should also include a communication strategy. More coherence across the different working groups regarding communication could be achieved by:

- Homogenizing the content and template of the web pages of the different working groups on the [Silva Mediterranea website](#);
- Clarify in the web pages the teams that are coordinating the different working groups;

- Starting a *Silva Mediterranea* publication series for policy briefs/opinion papers. The first issue of this series could be the policy brief on urban and peri-urban forestry in the Mediterranean region to be prepared by WG7.

A draft strategy of *Silva Mediterranea* will be presented on July 22, 2016, at the Extraordinary Session of the Committee during the Committee on Forestry (COFO) to be held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. While the final strategy is expected to be presented on March 22, 2017 during the V MFW at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee. The main recommendations of the Executive Committee meeting were:

- All the working groups of *Silva Mediterranea* should identify a network of national focal points in the member states of *Silva Mediterranea*. These focal points should combine people from administrations and from research or from technical institutions. This network has to be updated annually;
- Get guidance from the Committee on the geographical scope of *Silva Mediterranea*, so that the working plans of the working groups can be adjusted to the geographical coverage of *Silva Mediterranea*. Additional Mediterranean countries could be more involved in *Silva Mediterranea*, at least as observers;
- Include a description of the different working groups (objectives, action plan) in the strategy of *Silva Mediterranea* e.g. as sheets in a folder;
- The strategy of *Silva Mediterranea* should be accompanied by a monitoring tool led by the Secretariat or an interface group.



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## Second edition of the State of Mediterranean Forests: First meeting of the contributors



1<sup>st</sup> Meeting contributors SoMF - 2016  
 Rome, Italy @C. Marchetta

Following the success of the first edition of the State of Mediterranean Forests (SoMF) launched in 2013 during the third Mediterranean Forest Week, a second edition of the SoMF is now being redacted.

On April 7, 2016, the "First meeting of the contributors to the second edition of the SoMF" aiming at gathering partners that wish to contribute, on a voluntary basis, to the second edition of the publication as chapter coordinators and/or authors was held at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.

In January 2016, as a preliminary step towards a second edition of the SoMF, a survey was addressed to all contributors of the SoMF 2013, all members of *Silva Mediterranea*, and all members of the [Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests](#) (CPMF) regarding:

- The main topics that could be addressed in the second edition of the SoMF;
- The main changes and additions that could be made to the topics addressed in 2013.

It was agreed, that the second edition of the SoMF should not be simply an updated version of the 2013 edition using updated data. It should be a different and complementary publication. In addition to the [Global Forest Resources Assessments](#) (FRA), [Plan Bleu](#) indicators and the [European Forest Fire Information System](#) (EFFIS), new data sources that provide a systematic regional coverage will be used, such as the FAO Global Drylands Assessment. This meeting enabled to outline the table of contents of the second edition of the SoMF, with the main parts and chapters. As a starting point, the following draft table of contents was proposed:

## I. The Mediterranean biome

- Limits of the ecoregion: bioclimatic approach, vegetation types, definition of forest
- Forest cover, changes in land use
- Biodiversity, invasive species, emblematic species (Algerian oak)
- Threatened species
- Forest genetic resources, seed stands
- Impact of climate change (shifts in species composition), vulnerability

## II. Forest management and related sectors

- Forest degradation (including causes and drivers), land degradation neutrality
- Reforestation, landscape restoration
- Forest and water
- Non-timber forest products
- Forest and food security
- Management of emblematic areas, protection, conservation
- Forest fires

## III. Forest and people

- History of the Mediterranean forests
- Urban and periurban forestry
- Rural rights, land tenure
- Forest policies
- Comparison of legislations, international agreements
- Governance, multi-actors approach
- Ecosystem services (including soil protection and cultural services), disservices
- Innovation in green economy, job creation
- Financing mechanisms
- Research on Mediterranean forests

ready been identified, but other experts for coordinating or co-authoring all the chapters must be found. The timeline for preparing and publishing the SoMF is the following:



1<sup>st</sup> Meeting contributors SoMF - 2016  
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- April - September: authors are contacted by coordinators, data is collected, outline of chapters is made
- September 2016: 2nd meeting of the contributors: reviewing of the chapter outlines, update of the table of contents, identification of the proofreading committee, identification of a major event where the new edition of the SoMF will be launched
- September - 5th Mediterranean Forest Week: chapters are written
- During the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week: presentation of the new edition of the SoMF and 3rd meeting of the contributors

The SoMF 2013 can be downloaded online in [English](#) and [French](#).

## The Fifth Mediterranean Forest Week (V MFW): first organizing committee meeting and future steps

The First meeting of the Organizing Committee (OC) of the Fifth Mediterranean Forest Week (V MFW) was held on March 30 and 31, 2016 in Rabat, Morocco. This first meeting aimed at debriefing on the previous edition of the Fourth Mediterranean Forest Week, establish its objective (thematic) and set up the organizing committee. The structure of the Week (sessions), budget, tasks between the partners and all other aspects related to the organization of the V MFW were also discussed during this first meeting.



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FAO and Plan Bleu will prepare the terms of reference for each chapter. Some chapter coordinators have al-

The V MFW will be organized on the same terms as the previous editions. It is mainly coordinated by the High [Commission for Water, Forests and the Fight against Desertification](#) (HCEFLCD), with the support of FAO (Secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea*) and with a strong involvement of the [Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests](#) (CPMF) partners.

During this meeting, the OC discussed on how to improve the Mediterranean Forest Week by:

- Including more Mediterranean countries;
- Getting more attention from the EU's general direction of environment;
- Producing final outputs that synthesizes the V MFW, to be advertised in other future events;
- Involving more research and academia;
- Having a more balanced representation between north and south in the organizing committee.

The theme of the V MFW will be, **"The restoration of forests and Mediterranean landscapes"**. The V MFW will aim at promoting on a Mediterranean scale the topic of restoration, at federating around forests various ongoing initiatives related to the Rio conventions, and at identifying those initiatives through an agenda of ambitious actions on the field and by mobilizing collectively technical and financial partners of countries around the Mediterranean.

The specific objectives of the V MFW are related to the theme of restoration as synergy between the three Rio conventions and as a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the Goal 15. Four specific objectives are targeted:

1. The V MFW will contribute to the restoration of productive territories to contribute to the achievement of the goal 15;
2. The V MFW will contribute to the preservation of biodiversity to contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets 15 of the CBD;
3. The V MFW will contribute to the implementation of the agreements of Paris and Marrakech related to adaptation in the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC);
4. The V MFW will contribute to the neutrality of land degradation to contribute to the achievement of the objective of the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification](#) (UNCCD) of zero net rate of land degradation.

The V MFW will support the creation of a regional initiative on the Restoration of Forests and Landscapes in the Mediterranean area by following the example of current commitments taken on a global or regional level through various current initiatives and by confirming the political declaration adopted by regional countries in Tlemcen regarding the implementation of priorities set in the SFMF.

This Mediterranean initiative could combine:

- a commitment by Mediterranean countries to a numeric objective of restoration of degraded soils in the Mediterranean area based on their national efforts already set in their respective national political agendas and/or in their precedent international commitments;
- a commitment by the main technical partners active in the Mediterranean area to act together and in a coordinated manner to support restoration efforts in countries in the region and the implementation of an alliance between financial partners (both bilateral and multilateral) ready to contribute to those efforts of restorations in degraded Mediterranean territories.

The date of the MFW was set for the week going from Monday, March 20, 2017 to Friday, March 24, 2017, the choice of this week is based on the special occurrence of the International Day of UN forests (21 March).

The venue of the V MFW will be chosen by the Moroccan authorities, after an examination of advantages and disadvantages of the locations proposed. At present, the options are Marrakech and Ouarzazate, although other sites like Rabat and Agadir could be the possible venues.

The official languages of the V MFW will be English, French and Arabic. Only the plenary sessions will be translated simultaneously.

Regarding the budget, European delegations should be contacted to promote the event and get possible support for the participation of countries. Private companies related to the forest/environment sector in Morocco should be identified to sponsor the V MFW.

A communication plan for the V MFW should be developed as soon as possible. In particular, the website with substantial and updated content should be soon online and the other material such as the leaflet, the booklet, etc. should be available. Post-Event Communication will

### MEDITERRANEAN NEWS

#### **First International Forum on Urban Forestry in Mediterranean cities: Innovation, monitoring, social participation and cooperation**

22- 23 June 2016

Valladolid, Spain (Museo de la Ciencia)

[www.quickurbanforest.eu/forobosquesurbanos](http://www.quickurbanforest.eu/forobosquesurbanos)

#### **Progress report on the activities of Silva Mediterranea will be presented during COFO**

20 July 2016 Rome, Italy (FAO Hq) 15:00

[www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofo/en/](http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofo/en/)

#### **Side event on “Marginal and peripheral forests as a key genetic resource to enhance the resilience of European forests to global change”**

20 July 2016 from 13:00 to 14:30

Rome, Italy (FAO Hq - Canada room)

[http://map-fgr.entecra.it/?page\\_id=66](http://map-fgr.entecra.it/?page_id=66)

*This side event is based on the results of the COST Action FP1202 as part of the activities of the working group 4 on forest genetic resources of Silva Mediterranea*

#### **Side event on “The resilience of Mediterranean forests to climate change”**

20 July 2016 from 16:30 to 18:30

Rome, Italy (FAO Hq - Philippines room)

[www.fao.org/forestry/82782/en/](http://www.fao.org/forestry/82782/en/)

*This meeting will build on the results of the regional project “Maximize the production of goods and services of Mediterranean forest ecosystems in the context of global changes” funded by FFEM to prepare a new regional project on the resilience of Mediterranean forests to climate change*

#### **Second meeting of the Organizing Committee of the Fifth Mediterranean Forest Week (V MFW)**

21 July 2016 from 09:00 to 17:00

Rome, Italy (FAO Hq - Espace Gabon)

[www.fao.org/forestry/silva-mediterranea/88944/en/](http://www.fao.org/forestry/silva-mediterranea/88944/en/)

#### **Extraordinary session Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions- Silva Mediterranea**

22 July 2016 from 09:00 to 13:00

Rome, Italy (FAO Hq - Mexico room)

[www.fao.org/forestry/silva-mediterranea/88944/en/](http://www.fao.org/forestry/silva-mediterranea/88944/en/)

also be essential to promote the results of the week during other important events related to forests, as for instance COP 22 UNFCCC that will be held from 7 to 18 November 2016 in Marrakech.

#### **Next steps**

A technical concept note on restoration in the Mediterranean, including a rationale on the V MFW organization, should be ready soon. A questionnaire must be also created and circulated among Mediterranean countries, on restoration commitments already made by countries: “What are the commitments of countries on the surfaces to restore? Are they ready to join a regional initiative in this direction?”

The second meeting of the organizing committee of the V MFW will be held on 21 July 2016 during the Committee on Forestry (COFO), by then the following material should be available:

- logo;
- website and draft leaflet;
- call for posters;
- totems;
- draft of the Mediterranean regional initiative on forest and landscape restoration.

By the end of 2016, these following steps should be taken:

- select the poster to be displayed during the V MFW;
- organize an event on restoration during COP 22 («Restoration Day»);
- mobilize the scientific community during COP 22 in preparation for V MFW;
- plan travel of participants;
- finalize the booklet.

A last meeting of the OC will be held in January 2017 in Morocco to finalize the last details before the meeting in March.

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