

#### AT A GLANCE

**Title:** Forest and Land Management Options to Prevent Unwanted Forest Fires

**Instrument:** Support Action, FP7

**Total Cost:** EUR 1 093 895

**EC Contribution:** EUR 920 000

**Duration:** 24 months

**Start Date:** 1 February 2010

**Consortium:** eight members, six from four different European countries, plus two international organisations.

**Project Coordinator:** GMV Aerospace and Defence, Spain

**Project Web Site:** [www.firesmart.eu](http://www.firesmart.eu)

**Key Words:** fire prevention, sustainable forest management, silvicultural chain.



#### THE CHALLENGE

Nowadays, fires are among the most important threats to European forests, and still their incidence is expected to worsen as a result of climate change. Particularly in Southern regions, warmer and drier conditions are likely to increase fire frequency, the extension of burned areas and the length of the fire season. This fact has raised the need for reinforcing what is considered the cornerstone of fire-fighting: fire prevention. Forest fire prevention is approached by the EU countries according to different methodological considerations, priorities and organizational and legal frameworks. Yet, the knowledge base for fire prevention practices has not been tackled systematically; it is atomized in local procedures and it often lacks accessibility. The comprehensive analysis of current prevention approaches (theories and practices) and the identification of obstacles and constraints to an effective prevention are key challenges to a sustainable forest management.

#### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The ultimate objective of this project is to contribute to the prevention of unwanted forest fires by identifying possible obstacles that reduce the effectiveness of prevention measures and by deriving recommendations to integrate fire prevention in regular forest management. FireSmart will assess workable options to overcome the above-mentioned obstacles and will establish links between stakeholders (particularly among those involved in the silvicultural chain). FireSmart aims at bridging the gap in the knowledge of forest fire prevention policies by collecting this information and providing an interactive tool that will allow the exchange of information among partner organizations dealing with forest fires.



## METHODOLOGY

FireSmart will retrieve data and documentation regarding the fire prevention approaches adopted at institutions of the different EU countries/regions. This information will be analysed to identify the major strengths and weaknesses of each fire prevention system, taking into account the different socio-economic, institutional and legal aspects.

Test areas in different countries will function as pilot cases and will ensure the availability of good quality documentation. Such test areas were selected because i) they represent fire-prone areas where fire prevention measures are being applied, and ii) they illustrate the integration of different land planning policies (forestry, agriculture, rural development ...).

Findings obtained during the project will be the base to elaborate a strategic roadmap specifying the path to follow in the future. This will address the technical developments required, the strategic operations to be performed by the different stakeholders (regional, national, European, international) and the way to maintain and further develop the links between fire prevention agents.

The present project pays a particular attention to the dissemination of all results derived. The dissemination strategy will be made up around a specific project web-site —providing data, analysis and reports at different levels of complexity in different languages— and around thematic workshops and face-to-face contacts, the latter at a local/regional level. Local meetings will offer additional occasions for sharing know-how, specific results and practical experiences. The main dissemination messages derived from the project reports will be transferred to printed material, to be handed out in diverse fora, and also made available through the project web-site.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

This FireSmart's dissemination strategy is expected to have a positive impact on several social groups. The availability of a comprehensive collection of project reports and publications, along with the detailed analysis of this information and its derived conclusions, will improve the possibilities of the scientific community to address knowledge gaps, develop new proposals, and improve strategies. Forest managers will get condensed results from different projects and they will be able to compare their management approaches with the ones adopted in other regions. Farmers and forest owners are expected to obtain helpful information on the development of prevention strategies to be used in order to improve local forest management and minimize risks. The general public will benefit from FireSmart's specific actions to bring forest research and forest management issues closer to them.

Finally, the resulting strategic roadmap will contribute to the definition of a European policy on fire prevention, where synergies with other land planning policies related to forest fires (i.e. agriculture, urban, risk management, civil protection, land use) are identified and developed.

### PROJECT PARTNERS

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