

Mediterranean Forests

Malaga, 2 June 2023



A knowledge baseline on Mediterranean forests supported by innovation

English will be the language of the event

Friday, 2 June, 2023

From 9.00 to 17.00 hrs

Malaga, Spain

[REGISTRATION HERE](#) – DEADLINE 25 MARCH 2023

ABOUT MEDITERRANEAN FORESTS

The Mediterranean region is home of 75 million hectares of forest and wooded lands known for their physical and biological heterogeneity. Despite indications on an increase in forest area extent in the region, 91% of Mediterranean forests are reported as degraded and fragmented.

In addition to human uses, the increasing environmental and climate related pressures on Mediterranean forests are affecting their structure and function and their capacity to provide vital ecosystem services, such as the wood and non-wood resources, biodiversity shelter, genetic pool conservation, capacity to sequester and store carbon, purify water and air, prevention of soil erosion, etc.

Transforming the way Mediterranean forests are understood and managed is vital to ensure their health and functions, make them resilient to the current scenario, and provide co-benefits for local socio-economies. Though several international and regional policy instruments are in place to address forest related topics, there is still a need to bring together existing knowledge and identify the information gaps to conform a holistic and efficient approach to forest monitoring, assessment, management, conservation, and restoration priorities at a Mediterranean (basin) scale .

THE WHY AND WHAT IN MALAGA

This event, co-organised by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Topic Centre on Spatial Analysis and Synthesis of the University of Malaga (ETC-UMA) in the frame of the ERDF funded project EnBiC2-Lab for an Environmental and Biodiversity Climate Change Lab through the integration of databases and services related to water, soil, air, fauna and flora, aims to bring together a community of EU and Mediterranean key players to address the status of regional political and research agendas in support of forests. How new technologies and innovative methodologies can support multiple scale forest inventories in developing a robust baseline on regional forest ecosystem as a basis for improved forest sustainable management and informed action prioritisation will be tackled during this event.

The first session will focus on key forest data and indicators used and/or needed by regional and national institutions to better inform policy measures related to an effective management, including the potential adoption of protection and restoration measures. This will be followed by a targeted session to show the results of collaborative work across countries led by ETC-UMA with the support of Mediterranean institutions on mapping forest typologies in the Mediterranean basin using new technologies and open data. This session will inform about the resulting Mediterranean wide map and online harmonised database and how it can support a better informed decision making to forest management in the region, including the prioritisation actions for restoration and conservation. The contribution and potential synergies of this Mediterranean forest analysis towards national forest inventories, local sites and monitoring programmes will be discussed among representatives from public authorities and information users. An interactive session showcasing the available / accessible technologies that are at the service of National Forest Inventories at this stage with the results achieved by this knowledge baseline and tools created and presented in the prior session.

Finally, the event will look at ongoing financing and partnership opportunities to further support the use of new technologies, open data and informed decisions towards a better status of Mediterranean forests.

KEY TOPICS

Latest available data on Mediterranean forests and their typology, and how new technologies, citizen science data and national inventories can be combined to produce the knowledge needed to prioritize key areas for conservation and restoration.

- The Mediterranean Forest Policy stage: data needs versus availability
- The use of technology and innovative methods for better forest cartography: satellites, AI, Big data, modelling, meta-analysis, automating, etc.
- Solutions in practice: advanced data collection and use supporting forest management, conservation and restoration
- Addressing the challenges: new skills for modern forest managers and partnerships in the Mediterranean

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

The event will include local, subnational, national and Mediterranean forest actors as well as researchers and representatives from biodiversity, climate, and sectoral agencies. All organisations interested in forest conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of forest resources in the Mediterranean region are welcome to join.

You can [register here](#).

LOGISTICS

The final venue in Malaga will be announced closer to the date together with other arrangements to facilitate participation.

For more information, please contact [Virginia García](#).

DRAFT AGENDA – 2 JUNE 2023 (speakers tbc)

8.30 – 9.00 Registration

9.00 – 9.30 Welcome and Introduction

- University of Malaga
- LifeWatch Eric programme
- European Topic Centre on Spatial Analysis and Synthesis (ETC-UMA)

9.30 – 11.00 SESSION I: Visions for Mediterranean forests: the policy scenario

This session informs about the vision and political mechanisms to ensure healthy and resilient Mediterranean forest ecosystems in the next decade. Political instruments and governance tools at hand will be highlighted along the data gaps to strengthen a fully Mediterranean-wide political agenda for forests. Cross cutting success factors, barriers, and key actions for healthy and resilient Mediterranean forests will be reviewed from a policy perspective.

- European Environment Agency (EEA)
- FAO Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism
- Spanish Ministry on ecological transition
- Andalusian environmental government

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 – 13.00 SESSION II: New approaches to map forests - advantages, limitations and complementarities

This session showcases the latest developments in knowledge, tools, and information systems at different scales in the Mediterranean for forest monitoring, a forest typology map and the online data platform by ETC-UMA in collaboration with the project. These regional results building on Earth Observation and technological tools on the extent and distribution of major forest types in the Mediterranean will be debated with relevant users.

Setting the stage for a forest typology map: ETC-UMA

Roundtable followed by Q/A on traditional and innovative methodologies for forest mapping in Mediterranean countries.

- **University Sapienza Roma (Italy)**
- **Ministry of Environment (Tunisia)**
- **Moroccan Ministry of Waters and Forests (Morocco)**
- **Balamand University / Ministry of Environment (Lebanon)**

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch break

14.00- 15.30 Session III: Technologies at the service of National Forest Inventories

The session will focus on collaborative actions developed to build capacities on the use of new technologies and open-source data for improving and validating the knowledge on forests at different scales in the Mediterranean region. The session will show the role that collaborative work and the transfer of skills and experience among relevant institutions and individuals can play to keep a Mediterranean major forest type map up to date.

A taste on Mediterranean forest data visualization: ETC-UMA

- Sharing experiences and lessons learned by Mediterranean institutions and young researchers that actively contributed to the validation of a new Mediterranean Forest typology map:
 - Automatic detection of green areas using AI and OSM – Experiences from Alboran Project
 - Hackathon for Forest Mapping - Citizen Engagement within the EnBic2Lab project
 - Copernicus products for forest monitoring
 - Tools for exploring spatial data – Experiences from Indalo Project

15.30 - 16.30 Session IV: The way forward for Mediterranean forest protection - a conversation between managers and scientists

The session will look at ensuring regular forest mapping actions at various scales, supporting national forest inventories and integrating them into Mediterranean wide monitoring and assessment approaches to inform forest action...from conservation and restoration to their sustainable use in a climate changing environment. The session will highlight regional work to inform Mediterranean wide actions on forest in the next years.

- **European Environment Agency:** Core indicators for monitoring forest restoration success
- **EFI Med:** Mediterranean Forest biodiversity in the context of climate change
- **FAO:** Ways to support the efforts of National Forest Inventories
- **Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenges (Spain)**
- **ETC-UMA:** How to ensure a regular and regional Mediterranean forest type mapping

17.00 – 17.30 Key recommendations and conclusions