

Training School on “Cypress barriers against the start and the progression of forest fires”

Presentation

The two main objectives of the P.O. MED are to make the whole MED area a territory to meet international competition in order to ensure growth and employment for the next generation; and to support territorial cohesion and actively intervene on behalf of environmental protection, within the framework of sustainable development.

This general orientation is realized in the MED programme through four main axes, coherently with the main priorities of the ERDF regulation:

- innovation: creation and development of scientific and technological networks and enhancement of the regional R&TD and of the innovation capacities, where these make a direct contribution to the balanced economic development of transnational areas;
- environment: studies and activities on water management, energy efficiency, risk prevention and environmental protection, taking into account a clear transnational dimension;
- accessibility: activities to improve access and quality of transport and telecommunications services;
- sustainable urban development: strengthen the polycentric development effectiveness at a transnational, national and regional level, with a clear transnational impact.

The CypFire project (2G-MED09-070), that is “Fire breaks constituted by cancer resistant clones of horizontal cypress: a practicable, ecological and economic solution against fire risks in the Mediterranean countries” was accepted by the Operational Programme MED and financed within the programme Axe 2 (Protection of the environment and promotion of a sustainable territorial development), Objective 2.4 (prevention and fight against natural risks).

The P.O.MED CypFire will be described in detail at the end of this Training School.

The project CypFire provides two Training Schools: one has been held in Florence in May 2011 and the second one will be held in Portugal, Algarve, in May 2012.

First of all, it is important to give a clear definition of the terms “Training School”, “Training Course” and “Refresher Course”:

- A Refresher Course is an updating course, organized to give participants information on the last findings;
- A Training Course is organized for people who are interested in a specific subject and want to learn it. They do not play an active role during the course;
- A Training School is organized for people who are already experts in the chosen field, so they can play an active role in the discussion of the several aspects and problems of that field.

Given the definition of Training School, it is important to explain the participant selection criteria. The candidates has been selected, within the European

contest, based on their European Curriculum Vitae format (europass). Each CV provided relevant personal information, work experiences, education and training information, personal skills and competences for each candidate. Sixteen people presented their data. An evaluation commission chose 10 participants among the 16 candidates. One associate candidate has been admitted free of charge at the CypFire training school.

Each one of the eleven selected participants had to take a preliminary evaluation test of 25 questions on the cypress-fire system. After having tested their knowledge on the subject, the Training School held in Florence (CNR Research Campus) from 23 to 27 May 2011 started to focus on theoretical lessons, open discussions and proposals. Furthermore, it has organized some visits to experimental fields, to see naturalised cypress populations, historical and ornamental plantations, as well as other visits to some nurseries in Pistoia, which produce grafted cypresses on large scale.

The Training School teachers are all well-known experts in the field. Most of them also published articles, books and brochures on the problem. The teachers are supposed to give an overall presentation on the different functions and uses of cypress in the Mediterranean region, but they are mainly expected to find solutions to the problems and the questions raised by the participants.

It is my pleasure now to inform all the participants and the teachers, that the CypFire CdP (Comité de Pilotage) decided to issue an educational and informative version of the reports that will be presented during the Training School. The aim of this publication is to provide the participants with a practical and easy "Manual" for the next Training Schools. The "Manual" will be published in a creative way, it will be innovative and free:

1. the reports included will deal with the several aspects of the Cypress-forest fire, sometimes without an apparent logical sequence or order;
2. the reports will be presented either as a relationship of cause and effect or as an illustrative sequence of slides and figures. They are supposed to give the readers a common foundation of knowledge to think about the issue and to actively participate to the discussion. The participants will compare their ideas on the future adoption and application of some described practices, at local, regional and European level

Given that the two official languages of the P.O.MED are French and English, then the reports will be published either in French or in English.

To return to the Florence Training School, at the end of the course, each participant had to take again the evaluation test done at the beginning, to examine how much he/her improved his/her knowledge and competence on the cypress-fires system. The ten official candidates and the associated participant in the first test gave 171 correct answers on 275 total questions. However, in the second evaluation test, the correct answers were 234 on 275. This positive result clearly shows that the knowledge improvement has been statistically significant and that the Training School has been useful for increasing the competence of the participants on the subject. Obviously the teachers played a really important role in this job.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the participants, the teachers and the IPP's staff, who did a admirable job guaranteeing the success of the first Training School CypFire and who will be responsible for the prompt publication of the "Manual".

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