Networking for the European Forest Risk Facility initiative

Report with recommendations and experiences on facilitating cooperation and risk management and recommendations for enhancing network in risk management (referred to regional nodes)

Deliverable nº 10 and 11

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Contents

1- Background and History: European Forest Risk Facility

The European Forest Risk Facility started its development and vision back in the year 2012 with the so called FRISK-Go[1] project. A comprehensive process of consulting with the Pan-European Forest Risk community on the feasibility of such an initiative, needs and gaps was conducted. The core messages of the risk community from across Europe can be summarized in a few lines that provide guidance for the following projects, like the NetRiskWork project here or the German funded SURE[2] project, supporting the establishment of the European Forest Risk Facility.

- Do not duplicate activities, tools or products that other organizations are providing already
- Focus on empowering the forest risk networks, i.e. focus on the people, build capacity, collect-connect-exchange. Network is needed, as individual expertise on large scale disturbance is isolated in space and time across Europe.
- Have a small, slim, coordinating and facilitating Risk Facility *Secretariat* and a wide network of network nodes, focal points and experts across the European forest landscape
- Provide regular networking opportunities. Not meeting "by chance"
- Flexibility and independence is key. Formal structure and organization is important to create a sustainable networking environment and also to raise enough funding. But a Risk Facility network should stay as independent and flexible as possible.
- Capacitate the networks. A minimum financial support through the Forest Risk Facility Secretariat is a prerequisite for operational cooperation
- Acknowledge adequate response, but strengthen prevention, preparedness, recovery and mitigation, and ultimately, increase the resilience of the forest landscape and the forest sector.

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[1] http://www.friskgo.org/
[2] https://sure.efi.int/

2- Recommendations and experiences on facilitating cooperation for risk management through enhanced networking

2.1-Enabling Networking Environment

Personal success or general success of a network can never be archived alone but is dependent of the success of others. Especially in hard times we need the help of others. And others have skills that we don´t have. Others are lacking skills that we have.

On the road towards a European Forest Risk Facility it is evident that the magnitude and complexity as well as the uncertainty of risks, hazards and disturbances requires a wide network of expertise and cooperation. No single agency, organisation or expert could potentially have a global knowledge on all risks and all risk management measures.

The *Collect-Connect-Exchange* approach, that was chosen to establish and develop the European Forest Risk Facility therefore is based on trustful networking and exchange across disciplines. A shared and commonly agreed objective, i.e. *increase resilience, reduce risk and mitigate disturbance effects* is providing strategic direction.

Now, what makes networks work? And why are some networks successful and others not?

To answer that question, it will help to find a definition of network or networking and to analyzes what the ingredients for success could be.

A working definition of networks could read like the following:

"Networks are voluntary connections between autonomous peers."

Breaking this definition down; first, autonomy. Organizations are 'autonomous' when they have final say over their own future. People are 'autonomous' when they have final say over their lives. We might be autonomous at home but not at work, for instance. Just as we are free to decide who we vote for in an election but not to decide whether to merge my organization with another one. That latter type of decision is checked by an organizational reporting structure, so we are not acting autonomously when we make it. Similarly, a division of an organisation isn't autonomous because final say on important matters sits outside, in the parent organisation.

What does this have to do with networks? First a word about relationships that are voluntary. As an employee, the connection I have with my organization is not voluntary – it's part of an institutional hierarchy just like the division that reports to its parent. These relationships are power relationships – institutional power relationships, to be specific. They're not voluntary, and they're usually backed up by the force of law through things like employment contracts and corporate bylaws.

Networks are an **alternative organizational structure** to hierarchies. We join them voluntarily and they connect us, not to a reporting structure, but to peers. Networks are the connections that allow peers to work together. They do this by helping peers voluntarily shed a little bit of their autonomy – just enough to be able to get work done with others.

In true partnerships, the relationship between partners is definitely not a reporting relationship where one controls the other. It's much more complicated and nuanced than that. The same is true for partnerships between two or more independent organisations. It's also important to note that if a third party were to force the collaboration, the connection between 'partners' wouldn't be voluntary and they wouldn't really be acting autonomously. In networks, there is **no external controlling force**.

It takes a lot of work to make such partnerships work. The NetRisWork project, supporting the establishment of the European Forest Risk Facility and its network nodes could collect lessons and experiences in this regard.

Clear communication is key – and we need to do a lot of it to maintain healthy relationships. In this project we had to realize that foresters and civil protection specialists are in most cases not natural communicators nor is there a specific training curriculum for it. Improving communication skills is therefore one relevant result of this project.

One of the key things we found about networks is that it's not just about the partners, but about the relationship between them. In network theory, this is illustrated by a line connecting the dots (or "nodes") in the network graph. That line is the connection, or relationship, between partners. The relationship is the "net" that supports "work" in the network. Investing in that relationship results in work. Not investing in this skill and "art" means loosing the ability to coordinate work eventually deteriorates.

In networks, authority is distributed and agreed to voluntarily. There is no centralized power with final say over what does and does not happen or with the power to enforce compliance by network members. Power makes relationships work within a hierarchy. "I do what you say, ultimately, because I report to you". In a network of peers there is no "reporting" to any partner. Still, networks can be extremely productive and influential. In the NetRiskWork project we collected the most important ingredients for productive networking:

Perspective and Vision

People don´t want to cooperate to build a wall, people want to cooperate to build a cathedral[3].

This quote is expressing the importance of vision and direction. It also reflects that a network needs an objective and mission that is greater than each single member. Further, it is of paramount importance that the network members and partners share and understand the motivation, the "*WHY*", the reason of its existence.

An aspect of social sciences is the need and desire of human beings to "belong". An in-depth analysis of this anthropological phenomenon was however not part of the NetRiskWork project.

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[3] https://startwithwhy.com/inspire-your-audience/how-great-teams-pull-together

Then, in terms of developing the trustful relationships in a network we could identify 3 development stages, all of them equally important, time consuming. The first two steps lead to trust. this is a long process and the result is fragile and needs attention by all network members to be maintained.

- We need to 1. <u>KNOW</u> each other

- We need to 2. <u>LIKE</u> each other

- We need to 3. <u>TRUST</u> each other

Trust and Respect

Cooperation and mutual aid work better than competition and rugged individualism. With trust, we do things for each other, look out for each other and sacrifice for each other.

Trust is like lubrication for a network. It reduces friction and creates conditions much more conducive to performance.

If there were no trust, then no one in an organization or network would take risks. Taking risks, and the assurance that also failure is a lesson, is important to try new ways, new thinking. Taking risks will bring an organization or network forward, which in return is creating growth and development.

Not taking risks would mean no advancement of the vision as a whole. That is an interesting concept: only when individuals can trust the culture of an organization will they take personal risks in order to advance that culture and network as a whole.

It's a matter of biology and anthropology more than natural hazard and risk management. If certain conditions are met and the people inside a network feel safe among each other, they will work together to <u>achieve things none of them could have ever achieved alone.</u>

Trust helps organizations connect in an analogous way. Organizations that trust each other can safely set aside formal agreements and rigid processes and replace them with lighter weight ways of working together. They make it easier for their employees to coordinate with partner employees. In short, organizations that trust one another lower their barriers and shed a little piece of their autonomy in order to work more effectively within the network.

> Strange as it might seem, nature is full of examples of networks of trusted autonomous actors, working collaboratively with one another. Bees, for example "work" with flowers. Bees get pollen from the collaboration and flowers get fertilized. Bees and flowers are independent, autonomous agents. No one forces them to work this way with each other, but they do so anyway out of mutual self-interest. To say that flowers "trust" bees sounds almost as far-fetched as saying that bees trust flowers, but if we look at it with a certain perspective, they actually do.
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> Vulnerability is a key aspect of trust. When the bee relies on a flower for its supply of pollen, it becomes vulnerable. Continuing to remain open to collaborating in the face of this vulnerability requires trust – even if doesn't look like the kind of trust that we humans normally understand. The same thing is true for a partnership between two organisations, when one supplies a critical component to the other's process, for example. In this sense, **trust is remaining open in the face of vulnerability.**

Mutual respect is the bilateral flow of respect that opens people to new connections in a network. Mutual respect is bilateral; it is a two-way flow of respect. It's not based on what one person has, but on who they are. Networks address people by name – not title. When we respect others as an equal, as a peer, we keep the door open to connecting with others in a way that maximizes the creative potential of our work together. When mutual respect is enshrined as a *core operating principle* of a network that connects people, all members and partners operate knowing that how they treat each other doesn't depend upon the circumstances of our birth or life experiences.

2.2- Lessons Learned

Mutual respect makes it easier for new connections to happen. Mutual respect keeps people open to finding talent and character where otherwise they might not. By fostering the potential to *connect*, mutual respect helps ensure opportunity for all.

There are many practices that the NetRiskWork project identified that can help strengthen mutual respect in a network. Professional facilitation techniques are an excellent starting place and can be very helpful in catalysing a culture of mutual respect in a network. It's also critically important that the network develop a kind of 'immune response' to quickly and visibly root out breaches in its accepted principles. This is particularly true when it comes to breaches in respect and trust.

The network members must safeguard trust to ensure that autonomy is not abused in a network. Participants in a network voluntarily shed a bit of their autonomy in order to collaborate with other independent actors. When they do this, their openness exposes them to potential abuse. This vulnerability is one of the things that makes networks efficient, resilient and flexible. Vulnerability is a hallmark of a living network; it's what connects autonomous peers in productive relationships.

For networks to thrive, this vulnerability must be honoured and protected at all costs. Trust is the way we do this and it's the important ingredient or "magic bullet" of living networks.

This is an important point:

- We cannot *tell* people to trust us or others.

- We cannot *instruct* people to come up with great ideas.

- we cannot *demand* that people cooperate in a respectful manner.

These are only results - the results of *feeling safe* and *trusted.*

Network members then naturally share ideas, share intelligence and stress. Every single skill and strength we have is amplified to perform better and advance the network's interest vastly more effectively.

Summary Points:

- Trust builds living networks that are highly resilient, flexible and efficient.
- Networks are voluntary connections between autonomous peers.
- Networks are the connections that allow peers to work together.
- In networks, there is no external controlling force.
- The relationship is the "net" that supports "work" in the network.
- Trust is the lubricant that supports relationships and makes a network work.
- "Trust" is remaining open in the face of vulnerability.
- When we enshrine mutual respect as a core principle of the network, we make it easier for new connections to happen.
- We must safeguard trust to ensure that autonomy is not abused in a network.

"A movement only exists when people are inspired to move,

to do something, to take up the cause as their own."

3- European Forest Risk Facility network nodes

The FRISK GO project elaborated already in 2014 the operational structure and set-up of a European Forest Risk Facility.

A European Forest Risk Facility will need to act at different operational levels with cohesive but locally adapted objectives and target audiences. That would require a slim and flexibly operating European Forest Risk Facility secretariat at pan-European level. Such a secretariat would be supported by regional nodes accompanied where relevant and supported by localized functions to ensure presence, rooting and credibility with the respective communities at regional and local levels. Based on an extended consultation process it was determined that there is no pre-fixed model preferred for regional nodes. Regional nodes should be allowed to develop and adapt to trans-national, national, subnational and local needs.[4]

During the NetRiskWork project a number of network nodes and focal points could be developed and established.

3.1- The European Forest Risk Facility Secretariat

An operational FRISK secretariat is currently hosted by the European Forest Institutes resilience programme, an already established, international host organization. The secretariat is currently staffed with two part time positions

Collaborating partners, who propose activities that are in line with the vision of the forest risk facility, should be in a position to apply for complementary support (in terms of funding and/or in terms of strategic support) from the secretariat. Third parties that are willing to finance specific/selected institutions for particular activities or second personnel in support of, or complementary to, the vision of a European Forest Risk Facility, are entitled to do so in accordance with the annual work plans defined by the network members.

3.2- Pau Costa Foundation – Wildfire network node

Pau Costa Foundation acting as topical node on all wildfire related issues, embedded in a wide network across Europe and areas of fire research, fire ecology, and operational management:

The European Wildfire Risk Node, the space of interaction for the different European networks on the wildfire risk

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[4] http://www.friskgo.org/

Setting up the European Wildfire Risk Node

The knowledge belonging to a network or community on wildfire management is often in the form of publications in regional languages, management tools, regional or national events, etc. In the past 10 years, many initiatives have identified the expertise and knowledge belonging to those communities and have tried to bring them into larger communities and networks with the purpose to share the knowledge among a larger number of users (FRISK-GO project[5], Net Risk Work project[6], Wales and England Wildfire Forum[7], FIRE-IN project[8], etc.).

The European networks have prevailed and have increased in members during the years, yet the interconnections between them are limited and lacking the exchange of transversal knowledge and expertise. For example, expert knowledge shared among the networks from the southern European region is hardly transferred to central or Northern European regions. Even at a finer scale, for example, despite similar types of forest fire events, the knowledge produced in Greek networks is not always available for Portuguese or Spanish networks and *visa versa*. Under these current challenges, a mechanism (node), was proposed to connect all the existing networks on fire risk at a European scale (fig. 1).
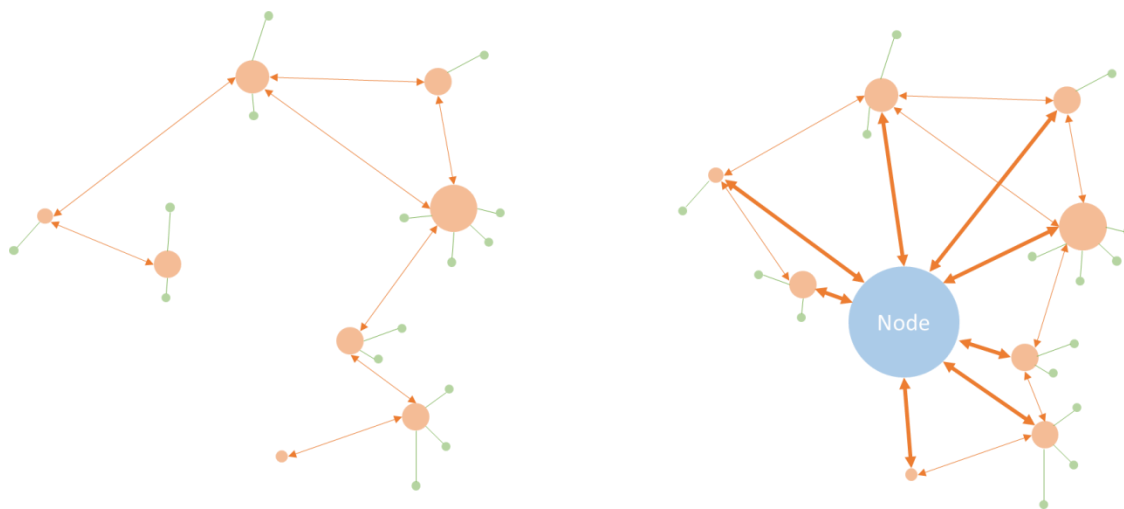
Figure 1. Example of connections among networks (orange circles) with and without a node (left and right schemes respectively). Each network is connected to one or more networks and other actors (e.g. small communities) outside the networks (green circles), however there are links missing between some of the networks (left). The node (blue circle) creates links with all existing networks, and provides services and function that help connecting all of them.

Previous and current initiatives of different temporal and spatial scales have been dedicated to create, strengthen and merge networks on the field of natural disasters and risk management. Two successful

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[5] Link: http://www.friskgo.org/

[6] Link: http://netriskwork.ctfc.cat

[7] Link: https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Wildfire.aspx

[8] Link: https://fire-in.eu/

initiatives that have been identified as potential precursors of the EWRN: the FRISK-GO project towards creating a European Forest Risk Facility[9] and the FRISK Regional Nodes and the KoNeKKTiW[10] node for connecting German forest owners.

During the Net Risk Work workshop in Freiburg (May 2017), the project partners run a workshop to extract the lessons learned on running networks and on networking in regional nodes. The outcomes of the workshops are available on Deliverable 5[11]. Some of these challenges are summarised in ***Lessons learned during the creation process*** section.

Scale of the node

After learning from existing initiatives and their lessons learnt, it was decided that the geographic scope of the wildfire node would be continental, rather that regional. This decision relayed upon a series of reasons that are detailed in the next lines. The experts on wildfire knowledge consulted they all agreed that the most needed and useful structure in the current moment and in the future is at a continental scale.

The ERWN is a continental scale initiative that aims at providing solutions to the several challenges that Europe is facing on wildfire risk: (1) There are many existing networks on fire risk representing different European realities (fig. 2). Some of these networks have been working and exchanging knowledge, however some others have had no exchanges. The existing networks shall be maintained and the node shall facilitate the active exchange of information between them. (2) Different regions in Europe have characteristic geographic and social features and therefore different fire regimes. Currently wildfire risk is expected to increase in Europe[12], many regions that have little experience on managing the fire risk will experience an increase on the fire events, frequency and intensity. Therefore, the creation of the ERWN is an anticipation measure, to provide guidance, existing knowledge and services to those regions. The establishment of a node can also contribute to identify and face climate challenges more cooperatively. (3) The ERWN shall complement and support regional and national actions, and provide the framework to share those experiences throughout the other networks.

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[9] Link: https://sure.efi.int/

[10] Link: https://www.waldwissen.net/wissen/fva_konekktiw/index_DE

[11] Deliverable 5: Minutes of the Risk Information Pre-Assessment Meeting. Link:
http://netriskwork.ctfc.cat/docs/Deliverable5_Minutes_Meeting_Freiburg_END.pdf

[12] IPCC, 2011. Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York. 582 p.
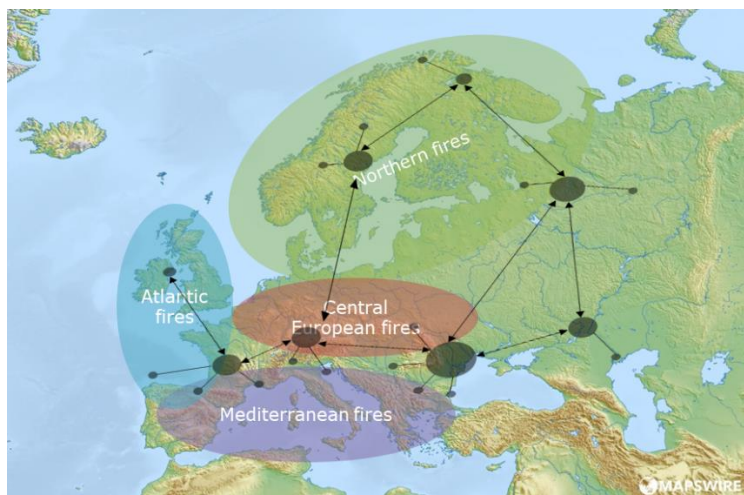
Figure 2. Generalised distribution of fire regimes and example of distribution of networks (circles) and connections (arrows).

Defining the objectives of the EWRN

The European Fire Risk Node has the purpose to become a network of networks; link the existing formal and informal networks and communities of practitioners that own the expert knowledge on wildfire risk across Europe. With this aim, the EWRN would 13services required to increase the functionalities and capabilities on the frame of wildfires.

A series of sub-objectives have been discussed with experts from the international wildfire community in different events (see section 1.2.1). The sub-objectives are dynamic and shall be updated to the current and future needs of the networks.

- □ Provide the tools and necessary means to share experiences, and lessons learnt, either physically or virtually, among the networks as an open pro-active platform.
- □ Definition of transversal standards of competences and capacities among the networks.
- □ Identification of expertise among the networks, definition of 'who is who' based on the defined competences and capacities.
- □ Compile and offer to the networks best practices, management tools, publications and other materials from wildfires and other related risks that can inform and help to carry out management practices in different European locations.
- □ Create opportunities through the Exchange of Experts Programme (EoE)[13].
- □ A global overview of the outputs of projects being produced within the different networks. The node should put the efforts in providing the framework so all outputs are understood in the correct context and are capable to adapt to different European realities.
- □ Centralise all the needs and requests of the wildfire risk networks and transfer them to pan European institutions, such as through the European Forest Risk Facility. This implies, gathering and characterising the needs and challenges faced individually and collectively by the networks that will help future political decisions on fire risk management in Europe.

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[13] Link: https://www.exchangeofexperts.eu/EN/Home/home_node.html

Current status and future steps of the Node

Definition of the core structure

The internal structure of the EWRN shall ensure to reach all the networks and provide all the functions and services defined while being flexible and adaptable enough to potential changes in time and space according to the network's own phase. The success of the EWRN management will rely on defining a simple and flexible structure integrated by representatives of the different networks.

Presentation of the Node to the community

The EWRN was presented in several events seeking for feedback from experts from the fire community, and also to reach out to participants from networks that may be interested in participating (fig. 3). List of events:

- Solsona, ES, Net Risk Work workshop (October, 2017)
- SURE Kick Off meeting, Austria (February, 2018)
- Cagliari, Italy, Net Risk Work workshop (April, 2018)
- Missoula, USA, Fire Continuum conference (May, 2018)
- Solsona, ES, SuFORun conference (June, 2018)

Figure 3: Presentation of the European Wildfire Risk Node at the workshop in Sardinia.

Run initial services for the networks

The EWRN will use the infrastructures that is available in the current networks and European Forest Risk Facility to provide functionalities to the existing networks associated with the node[9],[14],[15]:

- Directory of experts
- Repository of tools to use on fire risk management
- Outcomes from EU-funded projects on wildfire risk related topics
- Outcomes from other R+D projects done by regional networks
- Virtual communities of practice
- Links to official reports related to fire risk
- Directory of open events and meetings for the fire community
- News media
- Periodic newsletter with updates & news
- Meetings and webinars on specific topics
- Exchange of experts
- Synergies with other initiatives and platforms on related risks

In the frame of the Net Risk Work project the existing Lessons on Fire platform (see specifications[16]) has been updated. New functionalities have been added to the platform in order to better adapt to the current needs of the wildfire networks and the European Wildfire Risk Node (fig. 4). One example is the new connection between the contents of the Lessons on Fire and the brand new *Riskplatform*[17].

Figure 4: Screenshot of the Lessons on Fire Home. The platform now offers eight different functions, four of them (Fire Wiki,
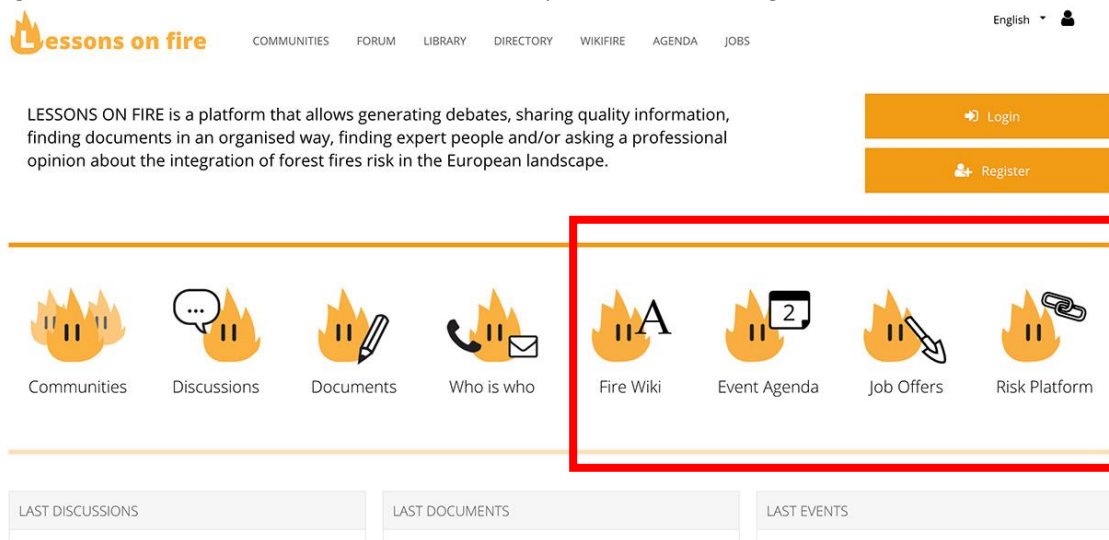
Event Agenda, Job Offers and connection to the Riskplatform) have been added in the frame of Net Risk Work.

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[14] Available at the Lessons on Fire Platform. Link: https://lessonsonfire.eu/
[15] Net Risk Work repository. Link: http://netriskwork.ctfc.cat/reports-tools-best-practices-risk-planning-management-fire-storms-floods-avalanches/
[16] Firefficient Deliverable 21 and 22: LESSONS ON FIRE: A Participatory and Knowledge-based platform. Link: https://lessonsonfire.eu/en/document/lessons-fire-participatory-and-knowledge-based-platform
[17] Link: https://www.riskplatform.org/

Integrating networks into the node

The following list of actors are invited to join the node:

Existing networks:

- Firefighting associations
- Project consortiums
- Scientist networks interested in real applied science

Indirect involvement in the node:

- Policy makers
- Politicians
- Journalists
- Educators

Other interested actors:

- Fire and rescue services
- Forestry services
- Civil protection services
- Private fire-fighting organisations
- Fire managers and practitioners
- Local and regional authorities
- Landscape managers
- Technicians and land planers
- Forest and land owners
- Forestry companies
- Volunteer associations

One sustainable way to promote the engagement of networks is through setting up an informative website that will allow interested participants to get information about the EWRN and provide the contacts to join the initiative (fig. 5).

European Wildfire Risk Node (EWRN)

Scope

Becoming a European Think Tank to serve as a reference for communities of practioners in the field of wildfire

Functionalities

Collecting and defining the main initial services. Do you have services or experiences from your network to share through the EWRN

Participation

Participation is open to members of all European wildfire communities.
-Existing networks
-Other insterest actors
-Indirect involvement in the node

Scope

EWRN has the purpose to become a network of networks. Linking the existing formal and informal networks and communities of practitioners that own the expert knowledge on wildfire risk.Its goal is to become a European Think Tank to serve as a reference in the field

Figure 5 : screenshot of the Wildfire Risk Node initiative website: https://firenode.lessonsonfire.eu/

Lessons learned during the creation process

The success of the EWRN will rely on the fundamental principles that have been described in the Book of Guidelines[18]: trust, mutual respected and willingness to cooperate.

These are some of the challenges and the mitigation measures extracted from the lessons learnt on previous European networking initiatives:

Engagement of networks is a key point. The EWRN shall be designed to be complementary to the existing networks and fill the existing gaps between them trying to avoid replacing any other existing entity or role. An effective communication will be done to explain the benefits for those networks joining the European Wildfire Risk Node. It should not be considered as another network to join, but rather as a space of interaction with all the other fire risk networks in Europe.

Language barriers between networks shall be overcome. Although the EWRN will operate in English, part of the knowledge managed by the node will be in the language used in the network, which is not necessarily English. The representative of each network will lead the adaptation of the contents between the language of the network and English. An English summary will be provided of all the contents provided by the networks, however these contents will be translated to English upon request and availability of funding.

Structural funding would be required for expansion of the initiative. The Net Risk Work project has been used to design, launch and present the node. However, in order to follow up the node initiative and engage the wildfire networks across Europe it will be necessary to get structural funding to support the node. The core management team will consider pursuing external funding to improve the functionalities of the node and promote activities between networks.

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[18] Plana, E., Font, M., Serra, M., Hörl, J., Hengst-Ehrhart, Y., Hartebrodt, C., Held, A., Clemenceau, A., Grioud, F., Tola, F., Capula, T., Cinus, S., Visani, C., Soi, F., Manca, G., Prat, N., Borràs, M., Vendrell, J., Ballart, H. and Vilalta, O. 2018. Forest risks under a climate change context: trends and risk management challenges of wildfires, floods, storms, avalanches and their interactions in EU landscapes. Networking for the European Forest Risk Facility Initiative (NET RISK WORK ECHO/SUB/2016/740171/PREV10 Project). CTFC Editions. 76pp

3.3- [KonnektiW](#) network in Germany and German speaking neighbouring countries, a Forest Risk Facility network node

Idea

One of the main inspirations for the KoNeKKTiW project (German for "Competence Network Climate Change, Crisis Management and Transformation of Forest Ecosystems") idea, as well as the creation of a German risk network has been the Swiss National Platform for Natural Hazards[19] (PLANAT). Its mission statement promotes a shift in natural hazard management from solely averting danger to creating a risk culture. Their approach aims at promoting knowledge and awareness embedded in the development of social structures to support and maintain this transformation. The importance of these rather social and societal components is also reflected by the IPCC SREX[20] report. It highlights that climate change adaption is not necessarily a question of missing knowledge but rather requires efforts , such as the targeted transfer of already existing knowledge or the development of supporting social structures and networks.

Overall aim

Grounded on these ideas, the KoNeKKTiW project comprises three pillars:

Knowledge: The project provides updated knowledge on a regular basis in the thematic field of crisis management for forest management and constantly works on new, associated thematic fields. This knowledge collection is transferred into educational material designed for practitioners and related target groups like forest owners, state foresters, students, as well as the general public. Accessibility and comprehensibility of the knowledge are at the core of all outputs. Example products are checklists, guidelines, short articles and presentations reflecting the regional context. Consequently, most of the material is provided via an online platform.

Awareness: The project promotes a cultural transformation from reactive disaster management towards a proactive risk culture, taking into account all phases of the crisis management cycle, especially the prevention and preparedness phases, as the latter offer most potential for mitigating damages from natural hazards. All education and communication material within the project is designed to not only share information, but to address typical adaption barriers. Sensitizing decision-makers for climate change and forest risks is also one of the key areas of activity.

Community of Practice: As embedded in the project name, the initiative is driven by a network of different partners from science and practice. Legitimacy is highly important in areas of uncertain future development, therefore associations of all forest ownership types are part of the network. The network helps to spread the information communicated by the project staff and to reach all stakeholder groups in the field. The bottom-up perspective is equally important in the network design since the community provides feedback to the project staff on the practical relevance of the educational material and the communication strategies. The idea of creating a Community of Practice[21] is the mutual interest and

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[19] PLANAT Homepage mission statement: http://www.planat.ch/en/planat/mandate/
[20] IPCC SREX report: http://www.ipcc.ch/report/srex/
[21] Community of Practice: http://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/

results in vivid relationships between involved experts and members, as well as shared practice such as regular meetings. Respectively, a smooth flow of information in all directions is key for success.

Project development

Emerging out of a previous project on crisis management, an initial group of interested people from several state forest administrations and different types of forest ownership associations comprised the core of the network at project start in mid-2014. The project staff is employed at the three main organizations working on the project, the Forest Research Institute of Baden-Wuerttemberg (FVA) as scientific partner, the Federation of German Forest Owners (AGDW) and the German Forestry Council (DFRW) who represent all types of forest ownership of Germany. Thus, all target groups have a legit and reliable contact partner within the project. Consequently, the project has been widely considered unbiased since its beginning.

Based on the voting and suggestions of the community, the project staff developed various educational materials during the first years and transferred them into presentations, trainings, seminars, direct consultation and online handbooks. Since raising awareness is one of the key ideas, new methods and media were integrated in the concepts, such as informational teaser films or interactive self-tests during events.

A yearly combined meeting of the project advisory board and the whole community (network meeting) has been established as the "backbone" of the community. The network meeting is hosted by a member institution of the network, presenting their own situation in a risk management or climate change context and their lessons learned. The organization and program is supported or sometimes lead by the project staff, which presents the developments and achievements of the last year. Areas of focus and priorities for the next year are also discussed and voted for during these meetings.

Lessons learned

The KoNeKKTiW project is clearly a success story based on its impact in the field. Many different stakeholder groups could be reached during the first project phase and the feedback from practitioners has been very positive.

On the other hand, the networking activities have shown to be more complicated and slow-moving compared to other project activities. It takes a dedicated core group to maintain the exchange and information flow running. This is mostly due to the fact, that the community is based on people from several different institutions which have their own dynamics and work flows which can sometimes conflict with the informal networking activities of the community of practice.

Another lesson learned in the project is the urgent need for more accessible, locally and practically applicable information on risk management and climate change. It has been shown that in most cases there is no need for more information, but the need for information broken down to the local situation of practitioners.

Outlook

Recently, the project has been extended until the end of 2020. Mainly this was due to the positive reception by its target groups, as well as plenty of open requests at the end of the first project period in 2018. Future efforts will focus on creating more durable outputs, such as a homepage for the community of practice containing all the gathered knowledge and experience of the staff and network.

Another important task is the aim to make the community of practice more independent from temporal funding by promoting direct cooperation between members of the community, as well as by searching for a stable funding source.

The development of the German network will be closely linked and inspired by the developments of its umbrella institution, the European Forest Risk Facility[22], which links regional and topical networks across the European level.

3.4- Other network focal points and nodes

- CTFC, regional focal point on forest resilience management and disturbance interaction.
- Irish Forest Service in cooperation with Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- UK Forestry Commission (forest disturbances) and south Wales Fire Service (Wildfire)
- Pro Silva Bohemica and University of Life Science Prague, Czech Republic

3.5- Good Practice Examples: UN-FAO networks

The **North American Forest Commission** (NAFC) is one of six regional forestry commissions of theFood and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Established in 1958, NAFC provides a policy and technical forum for Canada, Mexico and the United States to discuss and address forest issues on a North American basis.

NAFC carries out its mandate by supporting research and natural resource management activities through nine working groups that explore issues of concern to the three countries. These working groups include: climate, atmospheric change and forests, fire management, insects and diseases and invasive plants, silviculture, forest inventory and monitoring, forest genetic resources, and urban programs. There is also an *ad hoc* working group on resiliency. Since Canada, Mexico and the United States contain a mix of boreal, temperate and tropical ecosystems, the results of the commission's work can be applied more broadly to assist other countries and regions facing similar conditions.

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[22] European Forest Risk Facility: http://sure.efi.int/Riskfacility

The Fire Management Working Group[23] within NAFC was established in 1961, at the first NAFC session. Annual meetings have since rotated among the member countries. A consistent and active membership resulted in an impressive list of accomplishments. The 1992 annual meeting ratified the original Working Group charter, reaffirmed in 2005 and most recently revised in November 2016.

Lessons:

The NAFC Fire Management Working Group serves as a good practice example. It is existing since 1961. Some key ingredients for its success and longevity can be analysed:

- FAO is providing an enabling frame and global mandate
- Group of peers that cooperate voluntarily with the same visions and strategic direction
- Trust and mutual respect has grown over decades
- Accomplishments are impressive in terms of cooperation and sharing, mutual support and exchange
- FAO and network members dedicate time and resources for NAFC, operational budget available (network capacitated)

3.6- Silva Mediterranea

Already in 1911, the idea of Mediterranean forestry cooperation was launched and in 1922, a Mediterranean Forestry League was established under the name of *Silva Mediterranea*. In 1948, *Silva Mediterranea*[24] evolved into an FAO statutory body as a Committee of Mediterranean Forestry Questions where the Mediterranean member countries of the European Forestry Commission, the Near East Forestry Commission and the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission could meet, share experiences and establish cooperative programmes. *Silva Mediterranea* adopted a conceptual strategic framework, the Mediterranean Forest Action Programme in order to support Mediterranean countries in setting up their own forest policies and implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992), which urged all countries to draw up national forest programmes. *Silva Mediterranea* is coordinated and facilitated by a small secretariat; work, research and activities are conducted by the network members and the country, respectively the topical experts. Where research was needed, the Committee established cooperative research networks on subjects identified during sessions. Six research networks were established on:

- Forest fire management;

- Selection of multi-purpose species for arid and semi-arid zones;

- Silviculture of species: *Cedrus* spp.;

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[23] https://www.fs.fed.us/global/nafc/2017/factsheets/english/FireManagementWG.pdf
[24] http://www.fao.org/forestry/silva-mediterranea/en/

- Silviculture of species: *Pinus pinea*;

- Selection of stands of Mediterranean conifers for the production of seed to be used in reforestation programmes;

- Silviculture of species: *Quercus suber*.

Lessons:

The *Silva Mediterranea* serves as a good practice example. It is existing since 1911 and as a FAO network respectively since 1948. Some key ingredients for its success and longevity can be analysed:

- FAO is providing an enabling frame and global mandate
- Group of peers that cooperate voluntarily with the same visions and strategic direction
- Trust and mutual respect has grown over decades
- Accomplishments are impressive in terms of cooperation and sharing, mutual support and exchange
- FAO and network members dedicate time and resources for *Silva Mediterranea*, operational budget available (network capacitated)

3.7- EUFORGEN[25]

EUFORGEN – the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme – is an international cooperation programme that promotes the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe as an integral part of sustainable forest management. It was established in 1994 as a result of a resolution adopted in 1990 by the first Ministerial Conference of the Forest Europe process. The Programme is managed by a Secretariat and overseen by a Steering Committee of nationally appointed representatives.

Experts from member countries come together within EUFORGEN to exchange information and experience, analyse policies and practice, and develop science-based strategies, tools and methods to improve the management of forest genetic resources (FGR).

The EUFORGEN Secretariat manages the Programme and coordinates its activities.

Using the resources provided by the countries, the European Forest Institute (EFI) appoints the EUFORGEN Coordinator and other staff to work for the Programme. The Secretariat collaborates with EFI and with FAO and informs them of EUFORGEN activities. The Secretariat may also seek advice from EFI and FAO on relevant scientific, technical or policy-related issues.

The Secretariat prepares technical and financial reports annually and sends them to National Coordinators. It also represents the Programme at relevant events and meetings.

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[25] http://www.euforgen.org/about-us/how-we-operate/funding-agencies/

EUFORGEN operates as a multilateral trust fund. Individual countries formally join the Programme by signing a Letter of Agreement with the European Forest Institute, which hosts the EUFORGEN Programme. This agreement specifies the annual financial contribution to be made by the country.

4- Future Steps

The activities to establish a European Forest Risk Facility with the motto *collect-connect-exchange* and the strategic vision of *resilient landscapes – adapted communities – adequate response* have started before and during 2012 with projects of the European Forest Institute.

After 6 years of developments and several projects, like the current NetRiskWork project here, that are supporting the vision it can be concluded:

- The initiative and vision are a timely activity.
- The focus on empowering people, decision makers and implementing agencies through collect-connect-exchange is supporting other existing initiatives, i.e. EFFIS
- The set-up and operational structure, the networking partners are constructively working.
- Funding is still only project based, continuous operational funding is a crucial need. Both, the secretariat and the network nodes need continuity instead of short term project funding.
- A political supportive framework, i.e. *Forest Europe*, could provide stability and official mandate for national and regional Forest Risk Facility activities.