



BUILDING COOPERATION, DEVELOPING SKILLS
AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE
FOR NATURA 2000 FORESTS IN GREECE



A COOPERATION NETWORK

FOR THE NATURA 2000 FORESTS IN GREECE

L A Y M A N ' S R E P O R T



THE GOULANDRIS NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
GREEK BIOTOPE/WETLAND CENTRE

LIFE ForestLife:

From a collective request to a creative idea

The Directorate General of Forests and Forest Environment of the Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy joined forces with The Goulandris Natural History Museum – Greek Biotope Wetland Centre (EKBY) in the ForestLife project. The project will boost dissemination, encourage exchange of knowledge, circulate best practices and cultivate cooperation between competent Agencies of forest management in Greek Natura 2000 sites. The Mediterranean Biogeographic Seminar (Thessaloniki, Greece, 2014), stressed certain drawbacks in forest management and ForestLife came as a logical consequence:

- Fresh knowledge in forest management did not circulate efficiently.
- Limited tackling of pressures on important forest habitat types, particularly those associated with recreation and tourism.
- Training of forest management personnel was delayed. Additionally, the Seminar identified weak information about benefiting from non-state funds.

Forests and Natura 2000 in Greece

- Forests are a particularly important category of ecosystems for Natura 2000 in Greece. 40% of the country's forests are within Natura 2000 areas, while 60% of the area of the network's areas is covered by forests and more than half of the country's habitat types are forested.



Objectives and main actions

The aforementioned remarks concerned a large part of the Greek Forestry Service personnel and other agencies involved in the matter. Based on the above, the LIFE ForestLife project was designed with a general purpose:

the project's general objective was to support the exchange of best practice and the development of skills of forest managers and other personnel working in forests within Natura 2000 sites in Greece.

The project specifically aims:

Objectives

Actions

Dissemination of guidance and knowledge and strengthen of cooperation between all stakeholders involved in the management of forests included in Natura 2000 sites

Development of an online "Collaboration Platform for Forests" (CPF)

Development of skills of all stakeholders involved in the management of forests through training

Training seminars on climate change, visitor management etc.

Information and awareness of forest users

Development of web-based app for smart mobile devices

Show off of Greek forests where recreation and outdoor activities are compatible

Communication activities

A project for the forest community

The target audiences of the project are:

- Employees of the Greek Forest Service and other public competent agencies (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Rural Development and Food, Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency - NECCA).
- Members of forest cooperatives and other enterprises with forest harvesting activities.
- Non-state forest managers.
- Employees of tourist enterprises involved in outdoor activities in forests.
- Researchers, university teaching staff, consultants.
- Non-Governmental Organisations
- Visitors and other users of forests.

Project implementation

Collaboration Platform for Forests design and development

The action includes essential preparatory actions for the design "Collaboration Platform for Forests" (CPF) and the application for smart phones and tablets and their development. In particular it regards:

- The assessment of the needs of the forest community
- Platform and application design development
- A strategic plan for the dissemination of the platform, the expansion of the network and its use for the benefit of the forest community.

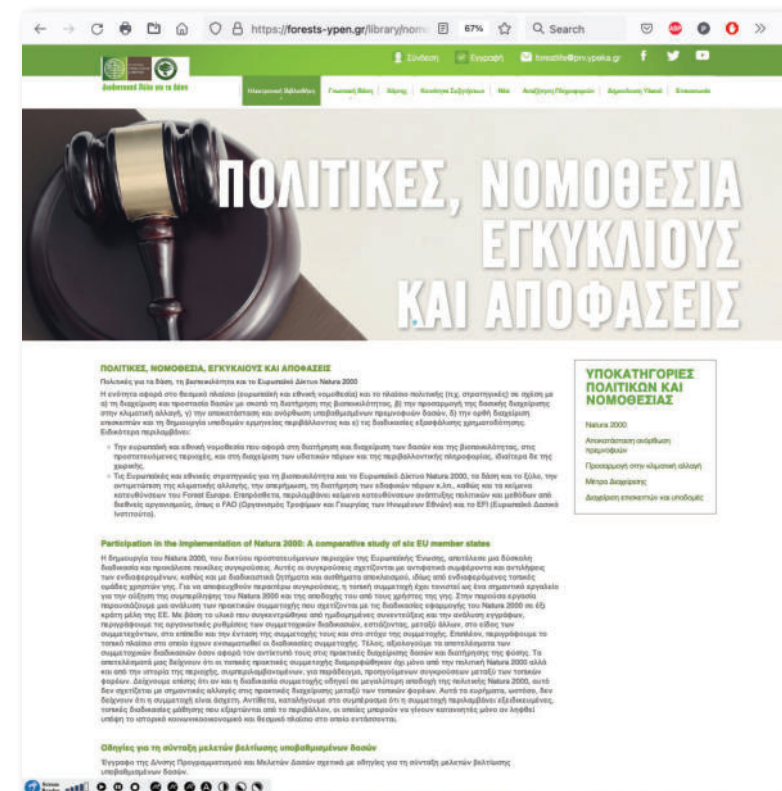
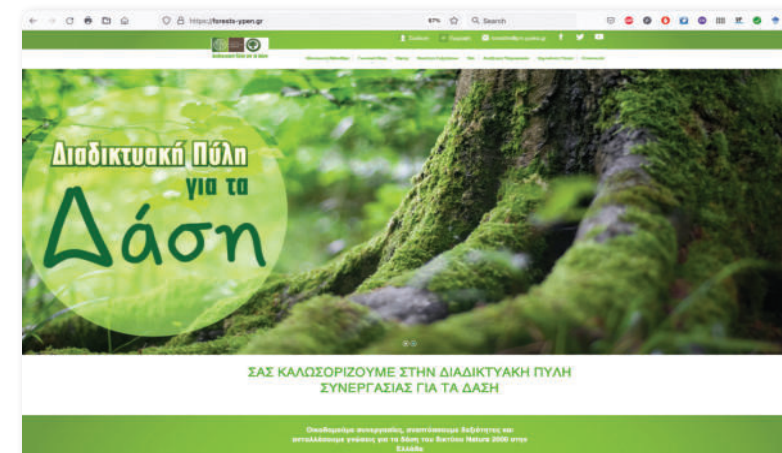
www.forests-yphen.gr

Collaboration Platform for Forests (CPF, www.forests-yphen.gr) will act as an information hub for the forest community and will enhance the sharing of knowledge and good practices among forest managers, research and policy makers working in Natura 2000 forests in Greece.

The platform will provide access to forest management knowledge with the digital library, search information for projects and cooperation through the knowledge base, consult geodata and cooperate with the forum. Everyone can become member of CPF with a simple registration process and be able to submit content and assign certain rights for its reuse by selecting the appropriate Creative Commons license. The Directorate General for Forests and Forest Environment is able to immediately publish and disseminate legal and policy related documents, guidelines and other information material.



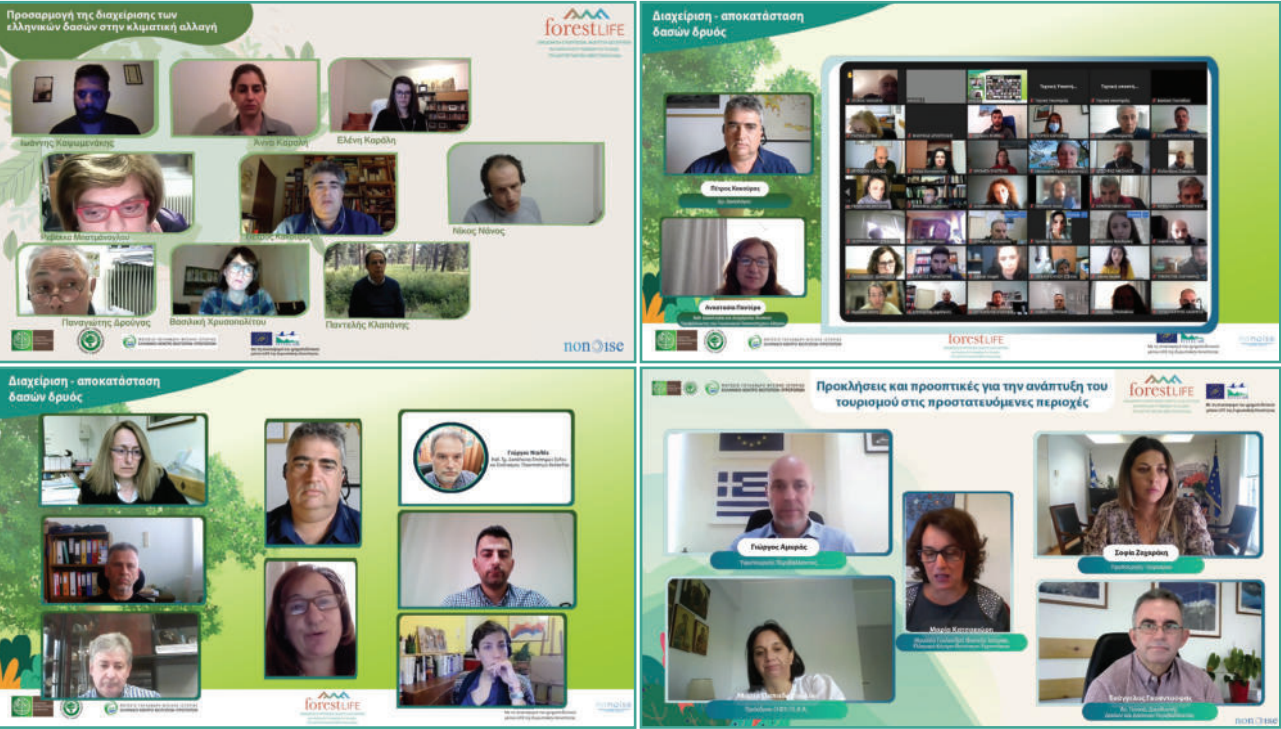
Design principles of Collaboration Platform for Forests



Training seminars

- Six training seminars were implemented on the five topics of the project:
- Management measures for forest biodiversity
 - Adaptation of forest management to climate change.
 - Restoration and rehabilitation of degraded coppice oak forests.
 - Visitor management and creation of environmental interpretation infrastructure.
 - Innovative financing.

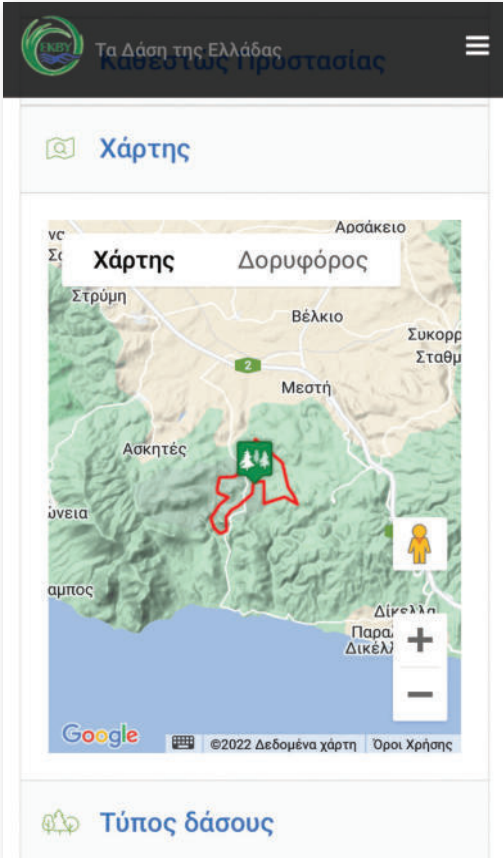
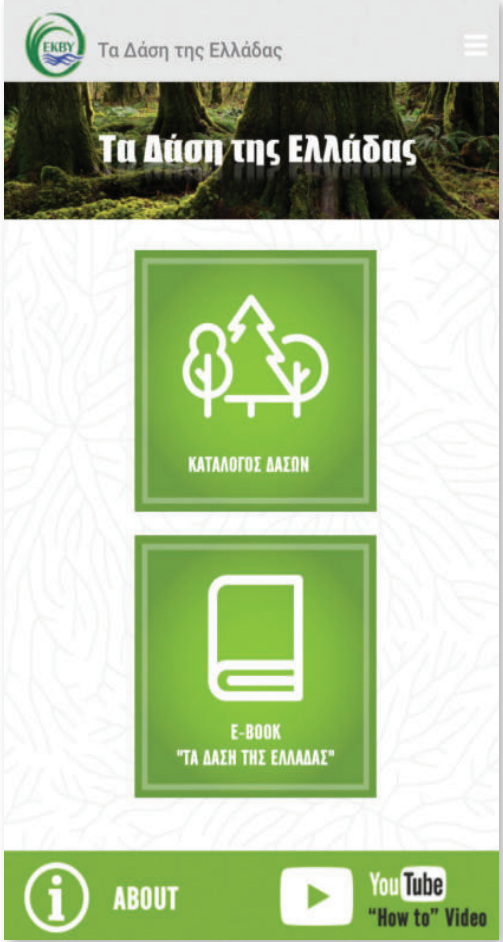
Academics, researchers from various institutions, high-level representatives from the Greek Forest Service etc were the 39 key speakers. Attendees reached 1198 from all stakeholders groups such employees from the Forest Service, NECCA and public authorities involved in forest management, researchers, consultants, students from all around Greece. The presentations and the videos from the seminars are available from CPF.



The application for Greek forests

The application provides a wealth of information on Greek forests, taking advantage of modern technology. It incorporates texts, maps, photographs and videos and the electronic version of the book "The forests of Greece", the most comprehensive publication on Greek forests. The application contributes to the awareness of citizens about the values of Greek forests and, at the same time, facilitates the visit to lesser-known destinations. This has a positive impact on local communities but also on the country's best-known forests, in which lower level of pressures and threats related to the number of visitors, is expected.

Install the app in your mobile or tablet from <https://greek-forests.gr/>



Communication

The project maintain the website www.forestlife.gr and had a strong presence on social media (Facebook, twitter, ResearchGate, YouTube). It was available for the presentation of its objectives and actions and of Greek forests, in over 30 national and international meetings, exhibitions and conferences. In 2017 the project organised the "Greek Forests - Green Destinations" exhibition at the Athens International Airport "Eleftherios Venizelos" and in cooperation with the Green Fund and the LIFE Greek Task Force organised a successful online meeting for the contribution of LIFE in the conservation of Greek forests, in November 2020.



Participation in the 83rd TIF



Participation in the 85th TIF



Exhibition «Greek Forests - Green Destinations» Athens International Airport «Eleftherios Venizelos»

...after LIFE...

The large number of participants in the seminars, the warm reception of CPF and the application for the Greek forests, along with the commitment of the project partners to the continuation of its actions:

- Empowered the staff of the Forestry Service and other organizations, through training and information activities and enhanced their skills and knowledge to apply the best available approaches and practices for the management of the forests of the Natura 2000 Network of the country.
- It will contribute to the formation of a social alliance of all those working for the conservation and sustainable management of forests in the areas of the Natura 2000 Network.
- It will increase support from the public and stakeholders for the adoption of environmentally friendly attitudes and behaviors, for more effective compliance with environmental legislation, in relation to the forested areas of the Natura 2000 Network.

<https://www.facebook.com/ForestLifeProject>

https://twitter.com/LIFE_ForestLife

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvtkMGm1GjWN8NQ5m6jY0Uw>