

LIFE Project Number
LIFE14 GIE/GR/000304

Final Report
Covering the project activities from 16/07/2015 to 15/07/2022

Reporting Date
31/10/2022

LIFE PROJECT NAME or Acronym
LIFE ForestLife

Data Project

Project location:	GREECE
Project start date:	16/07/2015
Project end date:	15/07/2019 Extension date: 15/7/2022
Total budget:	1,021,628 €
EU contribution:	607,546 €
(%) of eligible costs:	60% of total eligible budget

Data Beneficiary

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2. List of key-words and abbreviations

CINEA: European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency

CMS: Content Management System

CPF: Collaboration Platform for Forests

DGFFE: Directorate General for Forests and Forest Environment (Associated Beneficiary)

e-App or App: Electronic application for smartphones and tablets

EASME: Executive Agency for SMEs

EC: European Commission

EKBY: The Goulandris Natural History Museum/Greek Biotope Wetland Centre (Coordinating Beneficiary)

EMT: External Monitoring Team

FC: Forest Community

FS: Forest Service

HT: Habitat Types

MinEE: Ministry of Environment and Energy

N2K: Natura 2000 network

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

3. Executive Summary

The Forestlife project came as a response to the need for supporting the exchange of good practices and developing the skills of forest managers, especially in Natura 2000 forests, in accordance with recommendations from the Natura 2000 bio-geographical seminar for the Mediterranean Region, held in Thessaloniki, Greece, in May 2014.

The project's main objectives were to facilitate knowledge sharing, to foster the development of skills of forest related target groups through training and to enhance cooperation between them.

At the project start, a needs assessment was carried out among the project target groups' members through a questionnaire survey (action A1, 268 participants) combined with interviews and focus groups [action C1, 43 interviews (with 62 participants) and 14 focus groups (with 63 participants) held in 29 cities/villages of the country]¹.

The needs assessment formed the basis for the design of the structure of functions of a cooperation platform for forests (CPF)² and of an e-application for forests (App) (actions B1 and B5), the design of training seminars (action B4) and the project networking and other dissemination actions (group of actions D). It also helped develop a strategic plan for the dissemination and communication of the CPF³. Finally, this assessment provided a basis against which the project results could be assessed at the project end (group of actions C) and beyond.

The CPF (www.forests-yphen.gr) was released in May 2022. The platform provides access to forest management knowledge and documentation, geospatial data, events and news. The CPF contains (the content being an output of the project action B2) an E-Library, Knowledge base and tools, a utility for viewing and downloading geographical data, News (related to Natura 200 and forests, events, training and vacancies), a search tool, a publication tool and a discussion forum. It also includes communication tools for sharing good practices and experiences and for building cooperation. The majority of the content material published on the CPF is open to the public and is provided under Creative Commons (CC) Licences. Some content may be restricted to authenticated members (i.e. sensitive scientific data, certain forum discussions).

The DGFFE has appointed a content administrator. Technical maintenance is provided by a contractor.

In the few months of operation after its launch (action B3), the CPF had 16,848 visits, 2,140 unique users, and 167 registered users.

The App (<https://greekforests.gr/>) focuses on 88 selected Greek forests and includes information on location (including map), protection status (including Natura 2000 sites in the area), biodiversity (including plants and animals), cultural features, paths and points of interest (information infrastructures, museums, archaeological sites and monuments, refuges, etc.).

In the few months of operation after its launch, the App had 31,584 visits and 5,913 unique users.

Training focused on five themes (management measures, adaptation of forest management to climate change, restoration of oak forests, visitor management and financing), and involved the organization of two live seminars and four webinars. Overall, 39 speakers were involved and 832 different people participated from all stakeholder groups and all around Greece. The material from seminars is on the internet⁴. The participants were satisfied with training as shown from feedback gained through questionnaire surveys carried out at the end of seminars.

Dissemination actions included production of printed material (three-page leaflet, Flyer, roll-up banner and Layman's report, action D1); the operation of the project website (www.forestlife.gr), which had around 60,000 visits from more than 24,000 unique visitors in

¹ Deliverable A.1.1 at <https://forestlife.gr/to-ergo/paradotea/>

² Deliverable A.1.2 at <https://forestlife.gr/to-ergo/paradotea/>

³ Deliverable A.1.3 at <https://forestlife.gr/to-ergo/paradotea/>

⁴ Deliverables of action B4, <https://forestlife.gr/to-ergo/paradotea/>

6.5 years of operation (D3); advertising through the media (D4); participation in 32 meetings, workshops and conferences live or on the Internet, and organisation of a project closing meeting (D5); very intense and fruitful networking (D6).

The project monitored its impact on the target groups as well as its socioeconomic impact (actions C1 and C2 respectively).

A management team guided by a steering committee, where both beneficiaries were represented, managed the project. The ISO 9001-certified quality management system of EKBY enabled appropriate organization, monitoring and control of project implementation.

The project faced an unprecedented number of external difficulties including political turmoil in Greece; major restructuring of the public sector; major changes in legislation; several changes in personnel and; the Covid-19 pandemic, followed even by the consequences of the Ukraine war near the end. As a result, there have been deviations from the original time schedule. The EC was supportive by approving, twice, the prolongation of the project.

The project delivered all its outputs, with the exception of radio and TV spots (action D2), and managed to achieve all its main objectives. The target groups have embraced the CPF and the App, as evidenced by the high, and increasing, number of users and visits. Feedback from target group members indicated the perception of a clear positive contribution of the project actions to knowledge sharing for a considerable part of the Greek forest community from all around Greece.

A tangible benefit from the project was the inclusion, in the new official and mandatory standards for forest management plans, of requirements related to: a) biodiversity, notably in N2K areas, and b) adaptation to climate change. This is an accomplishment, which is expected to produce long-term benefits, and the project is proud to have contributed to it.

The project results will be communicated and disseminated after the project end. In specific, the forest service has confirmed it will continue to operate/use the CPF and the App. The Ministry has appointed a platform administrator for the period after the project end. The CPF will be uploaded in the Greek government cloud. The coordinating beneficiary has undertaken to update/enrich the App and the project website on a regular basis. The CPF will be used in the context of the LIFE GoProForMed project. The beneficiaries will promote project results through participation in events and networking and will further seek funding for more extensive communication and dissemination action.

Overall:

Despite many difficulties, the project Forest was completed successfully and has met its aim. It gave a strong push to the Greek forest community towards becoming aware of conservation needs for N2K forests, better accessing and sharing knowledge, experience and good practices, improving skills and enhancing cooperation. Finally, it has paved the way for the future use and dissemination of the project results.

4. Introduction

Problem targeted: The project LIFE ForestLife “*Building cooperation, developing skills and sharing knowledge for Natura 2000 forests in Greece*” came as a response to the need for supporting the exchange of good practices and developing the skills of forest managers, especially in Natura 2000 forests. This need is attributed, among other reasons, to the lag of the Greek FC and relevant stakeholders to disseminate assess and adopt new knowledge and experience on forest management. This fact did not allow to best addressing pressures and threats to Greek forests, especially those distributed within N2K. The above were also among the main findings and recommendations of the Mediterranean Biogeographic Seminar (Thessaloniki, Greece, May 2014). In specific, the main pressures and threats to N2K forest habitat types (HT), prioritized during that Seminar⁵, were: poor forest management, land-use change, fragmentation, disturbance by recreation, diseases, climate change, changes in hydrological conditions, accessibility to financing and invasive alien species. These pressures and threats were not being adequately addressed by the forest managers due to weaknesses at different levels (central, regional, local) regarding e.g. technical guidance for sustainable management, transfer and dissemination of new knowledge between the FC and awareness raising for different target groups regarding the ecosystem services provided by forests in N2K.

Objectives: The project LIFE ForestLife aimed to support the exchange of best practice and the development of skills of forest managers in N2K sites and other stakeholders in Greece. In specific, the project’s specific objectives were:

- to facilitate knowledge sharing, to support the exchange of experience and best practices, and to enhance cooperation between forest managers and other stakeholders in the forest areas of N2K,
- to foster the development of skills of forest related target groups through training and
- to raise awareness regarding forests in N2K, to disseminate the values of forested areas, as well as to reduce human disturbance from forest users.

Stakeholders: The project targeted mainly employees of the Greek Forest Service (FS) and other public services with authorities related to forests, at all levels (central, regional and local). The next most important stakeholders’ group were the employees of N2K management bodies. The project also targeted the academia and research institutes, as well as non-state forest managers and forest users, such as members of forest cooperatives, forest consultants, employees of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO’s) working in relevant fields, employees of tourist enterprises involved in outdoor activities in forests, hunters and, of course, forest visitors.

Baseline situation: The Greek FS, at all levels, had been considerably weakened during the last decade as it remained understaffed and over-burdened with bureaucratic procedures and had been unable to keep up with developments in knowledge and skills relevant to managing N2K forests and safeguarding forests from climate change. On the other hand, other forest users lacked the knowledge on how to contribute to forest protection and conservation. Also, the management bodies of forest N2K protected areas were in need of guidelines and good practices on the conservation and promoting awareness on the values of forest HT, on environmental interpretation infrastructure. Moreover, in Greek forests, uncontrolled visitor access with no information and awareness threatened their significance and values.

Information/Communication Strategy: To achieve its objectives and engage its target groups and relevant stakeholders in the conservation of forests within N2K, the project has implemented the following sets of actions, making use of the means described below:

⁵ Of the seven forest HT identified at Mediterranean level, the following six occur in Greece and thus consist focus areas of the project: 9260, 92A0, 92D0, 9320, 9340 and 9540.

Needs assessment. This preparatory action, through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods (i.e. questionnaires and interviews), helped to identify the needs of the FC, as regards their knowledge and skills, and also tools and information needed in forest management.

Collaboration Platform for Forests (CPF). The operation of the CPF facilitated knowledge sharing, supported the exchange of experience and best practices and enhanced cooperation between forest managers and other stakeholders in the forest areas of N2K.

Capacity building. Five targeted topics were discussed in 2 live and 4 online capacity-building seminars and fostered the development of skills of forest related target groups and stakeholders.

Electronic application for smartphones and tablets (e-App). The e-App, along with e-book "*The Forests of Greece*" by late Emeritus Prof. Sp. Dafis, contributed to informing and raising awareness on the values of forest areas, thus, contributing to mitigation of the impact of the tourism activities in Greek forests.

Dissemination material. The project website, printed material, social media, participation in events/meetings/conferences, networking etc. were the main means to inform the project target groups and relevant stakeholders and to raise awareness of the public, as well as to promote and disseminate project results.

Monitoring of project impact. The project impact as a response to the challenges faced by the Forest Service and other stakeholders regarding the protection and management of N2K forests, as well as the extent to which project objectives was monitored with the use of specific indicators throughout the project duration.

Socio-economic context. The project produces benefits to local populations in forested areas in both economic and social terms, directly and indirectly. Benefits are also expected to arise from increased visitors' spending and from investments to forest related business (including tourism and recreation), which are expected to maintain or create job positions.

Expected longer term results. As reflected on some of the indicators used to monitor impact, the project resulted in the building of capacity of the employees of the FS on key topics and has raised the level of awareness and skills of the FS. In addition, several project outputs will continue to operate after the project end: a) the CPF will be a basic channel of cooperation between the FS and all relevant stakeholders at central, regional and local levels; b) the e-App will also continue its operation and its content will be updated; c) the project website will continue to operate for at least five years after project completion and d) both project beneficiaries will continue to present the project and its results, and to take part in actions promoting networking on issues related to the management of N2K forested sites. Long term impacts are expected by the integration of biodiversity conservation and climate change considerations into two of the most important forest-related policy-making documents, drafted in the last decades in Greece: a) the National Strategy for Forests (issued in 2018) and b) the New Standards on drafting Forest Management Plans (issued in 2017). Finally, long term impacts are expected to arise from climate adaptation measures, that were promoted by the project for inclusion in the Regional Plans for Adaptation to Climate Change.

5. Administrative part

Project partnership and working method: The project partnership comprised EKBY as Coordinating Beneficiary and DGFFE/MinEE as Associated Beneficiary. Each project partner provided input to the project in accordance with their expertise and competence. In specific, EKBY is a scientific organisation with long experience in forest conservation and management of N2K sites, in the development and application of modern tools for nature conservation and communication, and in supporting public authorities in the implementation of policies related

to the environment. As such, it was first responsible for the preparatory action (A1), which led to the sound design of the main project outputs. Specifically, it provided technical specifications and was responsible for the content development of project products, including the creation of material for CPF, App and seminars (B2). It had also the scientific coordination of the capacity building seminars (B4) and of the monitoring of project impact actions (C1, C2). Regarding dissemination actions, EKBY had undertaken the promotion of project activities and results via Web, mass media, participation in events/meetings and networking (D3-D6). The DGFFE, as the central Government Authority for the conservation and management of forests, was responsible for the production and operation of project outputs B1, B3 and B5 (CPF and e-App) and contributed to the content of these outputs. Moreover, it was in charge of the production of printed and audio-visual project material (D1, D2) and for the promotion of project outputs to the Greek FSs in order to ensure cooperation and participation.

Project management: Project management (E1) was performed by EKBY, in full accordance with the General Conditions annexed to the Grant Agreement. In addition, the project was managed in line with the Quality Management System of EKBY, certified according to ISO 9001:2015 standard for Quality Management Systems. The project progress was monitored through specific qualitative and quantitative targets/indicators (Action E2). The project Management Team was composed by: a) the Project Manager, who assumed high supervision of the project, b) the Coordinating Officer, responsible for every-day communication with the MinEE, External Monitoring Team (EMT) and Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME), and for reporting, c) the Administration Officer, d) the Finance Officer, e) the Technical Officer and f) the Communication Officer. A Steering Committee was set up, consisting of Members appointed by EKBY and the DGFFE.

Grant Agreement: The Grant Agreement between EC and EKBY was signed on 16.07.2015 and modified as follows: a) Amendment No 1 (12.2016) referring to modifications of obligation to information, threshold for submission of audit certificate and submission of reports; b) Amendment No 2 (08.2018) referring to modification of the definition of conditions for natural persons, submission of VAT Certificate, and threshold for submission of the certificate of the financial statements; c) Amendment No 3 (10.2018) on the bank account details, and the name and address of the associated beneficiary; d) Amendment No 4 (07.2019), referring to first prolongation up to 15.07.2021; e) Amendment No 5 (07.2021), referring to second prolongation up to 15.07.2022.

Communication with EMT and EASME/CINEA: The EMT representative, performed seven visits to the project, in order to be informed on its progress. There was frequent and smooth communication whenever needed with both the EMT and EASME/CINEA.

Deviations/problems: Political, legal and administrative developments, including the launch of a new law on public procurement as well as the change of the allocation of responsibilities for procurements and the hiring of personnel among the MinEE services, caused serious disruptions to the implementation of certain activities, which in turn resulted in the prolongation of the project duration. The main deviations concerned the launching of CPF and App and the production of audiovisual material. With the exception of the production of the audiovisual material that was canceled, all problems were resolved and planned project results were delivered.

6. Technical part

6.1. Technical progress, per Action

Action A1: Needs assessment and platform design

Actual start date: 30.10.2015

Actual end date: 30.09.2017

This action (together with Action C1) defines the structure and content of the CPF (Action B1) and also provides input to the Application, dissemination actions and the training seminars (Actions B4, B5). The three sub-actions (and deliverables) were: i) the needs assessment of the FC; ii) the CPF design and iii) the strategic plan for the dissemination of the CPF. All three had been concluded and submitted to the EC with the 1st Progress Report and/or the Midterm Report. In particular:

A1.1. Needs assessment of the FC.

This sub-action aimed to identify the current and desired status of the FC, as regards their knowledge and skills in undertaking forest management, and as regards tools and information needed to accomplish their job tasks successfully. It has been implemented through quantitative research, i.e. the drafting and release of an online questionnaire to around 1,000 members of the FC - target groups. The project received and analysed 268 questionnaires. The analysis of the questionnaires, in combination with the findings of Action C1, showed that target groups: a) needed a substantial transfer of knowledge and experience regarding the management of forests in N2K sites in Greece; b) had a clear preference for web-services, such as online catalogues and search tools, rather than interactive tools; c) were in need of reliable and easy access to geodata and databases regarding N2K; d) welcomed guidance documents regarding obligations and opportunities, including funding, in the case of N2K forests; e) were interested for best practices, especially in the fields of biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change; f) welcomed CPF as a solution to the problem of information flow regarding conservation and management of forests in N2K and g) welcomed also the project efforts to organize seminars for the dissemination of new knowledge and information regarding issues such as biodiversity, adaptation to climate change etc.

The results of the analysis of A1.1. provided input to CPF design (A1.2).

A1.2. Platform (CPF) design.

The Platform was designed in a way to promote the specific objectives of the project; strengthening of cooperation, exchange and dissemination of best practices between those active in the forests of the Natura 2000 network in Greece, and strengthening the skills of the staff of forestry departments, and those services, organizations and economic operators involved in the protection and management of the Natura 2000 forests in Greece. In particular, the Platform Design defined the structure of the Platform, the organization of its content, the tools and web services that it should incorporate and the operation mode, in order to fill the identified gaps in knowledge, skills and tools. Widespread information systems development techniques, in accordance with national, European and international standards, were also taken into account in the design. The Central Forestry Office of the General Directorate for Forests and Forest Environment of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (YPEN) was defined as the Responsible party for the operation and administration of the Platform. Detailed functional and technological requirements and specifications for the CPF development were also included and used in the description of the technical requirements of the Call for Tender. Finally, critical factors for the success of the CPF in terms of technological implementation, project management scheme, compliance with

regulatory frameworks, content reliability, and publicity and promotion, were identified and described.

A1.3. Strategic plan for the dissemination of the CPF.

The strategic plan for the dissemination of the CPF addressed communication issues related with the promotion of the CPF. It aimed at the enhancement of collaboration and information sharing between the users' network and included recommendations on how to encourage the FC to actively participate in the CPF as content contributors, to enroll to forum discussions, to share their contact details and expertise information etc. The results showed that, for the dissemination of the CPF, emphasis should be given on the use of social media. In summary, three categories of means of communication were designed for the main four target groups⁶: i) *employees of the Forest Sector and employees of other public services with responsibilities related to the Natura 2000 Network (civil servants)*: Intra-service communication; Events (Training Seminars); Direct communication; E-newsletter. ii) *Executives and staff of Protected Area Management Agencies*⁷: Events (Training Seminars); Internet; Social media; Direct communication; E-newsletter; iii) *University faculty members, researchers of state institutions, members of scientific companies, employees of research companies or independent private researchers, consultants*: Events (Training Seminars, Networking); Internet; Social media; Publications; E-newsletter.

A1 Deliverable name

Needs assessment

Strategic plan

Platform design

⁶ Communication means presented by order of significance.

⁷ Since 2020 they belong to NECCA (National Environment and Climate Change Agency) of the Ministry of Environment.

Action B1: Development of an online “Collaboration Platform for Forests” (CPF)

Actual start date: 01.06.2016

Actual end date: 15.7.2022

The action included the development of an online CPF, with the overall objective to become an information hub for the FC and thus to inspire policy-makers, the public sector and forest scientists all over Greece to share their experiences and best practices in forest management, resulting in cooperation and partnerships building.

A contractor was hired to develop the CPF and the App, according to the specifications and design prepared by EKBY (Action A1), and to include some initial content for the App together with an e-Book based on existing content provided by EKBY.

The CPF has been launched at www.forests-yphen.gr with its final version released in May 2022. The platform is providing access to forest management knowledge and documentation, geospatial data, events and news. The CPF contains E-Library, Knowledge base and tools, a utility for viewing and downloading geographical data, News (news related to Natura 200 and forests, events, training and vacancies), search tool, publication tool and discussion forum. It also includes communication tools for sharing their best practices and experiences and for building consensus on identified issues and actions that need to be undertaken. The DGFFE has appointed a content administrator for uploads and updates, content approval, operation control and user administration. Technical maintenance will be provided by the contractor.

The majority of the content material published on the CPF is open to the general public and is provided under Creative Commons (CC) Licenses. Creators can grant the public permission to use their work under copyright law, by choosing the appropriate CC license to assign certain rights for their reuse. Moreover, some content may be restricted to authenticated members (i.e. sensitive scientific data, certain forum discussions).

To increase the CPF functionality and its interoperability with other national, European and global geospatial infrastructures, a new web map application that integrates a web map viewer and a data catalogue has been developed by EKBY. The CPF's data catalogue now offers data search and download capabilities and metadata view. The CPF will be maintained and hosted by the contractor until 07.2024. Then, the CPF will be hosted at the government cloud infrastructure (gov.gr) (Action B3). The contractor will continue to support all functionalities not replaced by gov.gr.

As of 31.10.2022, the CPF had 16,848 visits, 2,140 unique users, and 167 registered users, surpassing these initial targets set.

B1 Deliverable name

Administrator and user manuals

Final version of the CPF

Action B2: Content development

Actual start date: 01.10.2015

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

This action comprised the collection and development of content for the CPF (Actions B1 and B3), the enrichment and update of content for the Application (App) (Action B5) and the development of supporting material for the training seminars (Action B4).

The supporting material for the training seminars has been developed, the content of the CPF and the App was prepared and was further enriched, improved in quality and quantity and incorporated in the CPF and the App and thus Action B2 has been completed.

In particular: the structure and required information elements for the content material **for the App “Forest LIFE”** (Del. B2.1) have been defined by the project team, 88 Greek forests in which the App focus have been identified, and information (text and geospatial) along with images have been uploaded.

In all 88 forests presented in the App, the information (including geospatial data) comprised points of interest (information infrastructures, museums, archaeological sites and monuments, refuges, recreational infrastructures, etc.) and paths (see also Action B5), as well as the description on the natural environment. Another important point was the inclusion of content (texts accompanied by photographs, where available) for about 310 plant and animal species that the visitors can observe at the Greek forests, which was uploaded in 310 newly created web pages. Moreover, at least 314 photos of animals and plants have been uploaded to the App. Another part of the content was a separate section for the values of Greek forests, where the importance of Natura 2000 is also mentioned.

With regard to the CPF, its content comprises the documentation for the platform’s E-Library (Del. B2.4) and the other content material for the CPF (Del. B2.5)⁸.

With regard to the E-Library, the content uploaded by the project team counts more than 500 documents, several of them digitised from the archives of DGFFE, EKBY, other authorities and private collections, which were generously made available by their owners. From these, about 120 are documents related to the European and national legislation and management for Natura 2000 along with best practices, reports, scientific publications and other data related to the implementation of the network, or habitat types and species of European interest. Some of the records actually redirect CPF users to web pages of the European Commission or other EU and national authorities and institutions that contain several useful legislative documents, guidelines etc.

The content for the “Knowledge base” is organised as follows: I) concise texts for the Greek forests, as well as for the main project themes (management measures, adaptation of forest management to climate change, restoration and rehabilitation of degraded coppice forests, visitor management and environmental interpretation infrastructures, funding, N2K), II) catalogue of projects, III) catalogue of funding resources, IV) catalogue of data repositories-geoportals, V) catalogue of organisations and VI) catalogue of experts. Metadata elements of the catalogues had been also defined by the Platform Design deliverable (Del. A1.2, submitted with the MidTerm Report) and are used to assist the information discovery within the CPF’s search engine tools. It is noted that: a) the catalogue of experts will remain empty, as it includes personal data that shall be submitted by the experts themselves, after they approve the CPF’s terms for privacy and user agreement and b) a general contact mail is

⁸ The content includes: a) Metadata for the content for the E-library, b) Geospatial data, c) Knowledge base, d) News and announcements, e) Photos and f) Supportive texts for the website.

given for communication purposes: forestlife@prv.ypeka.gr. The last update is available through the Forum. The “News and announcements” section includes news, events and job recruitments announcements. Finally, 108 photos have been collected, documented, organized in several categories and uploaded to the CPF.

The geospatial data for the CPF have been developed, updated and overall improved. In particular, the areas of authority of former “Management bodies of Protected Areas” have been replaced with the updated areas of authority of the recently established “Protected Area Management Units”. The CPF web map viewer currently includes 27 layers, 15 of which are geospatial services created by the project team and uploaded to the CPF catalogue and 12 are map services obtained from other geospatial infrastructures. In particular, geospatial data of the Natura 2000 protected sites, the National Protected Areas (as included in the Common Database of Designated Areas), the CLC 2018, the Copernicus relevant to forests High Resolution Layers (HRLs), and the national monitoring data under Art.17 of the EU Habitats Directive (distribution and conservation status of habitats and species) and under Art.12 of the EU Birds Directive (distribution and population trends of breeding birds), were obtained from the European Environment Agency (EEA) public map services (<https://www.eea.europa.eu/code/gis>). Other open map services were also obtained from the LIFE IP 4 Natura Project (i.e. the ecosystem type map of Greece).

In particular, a concrete catalogue of geospatial data and services and a description of the work-flow of their collection-processing-harmonisation-creation and metadata creation are provided. Metadata were filled in only for the geospatial data of the CPF, in compliance with the INSPIRE Directive (2007/2/EE).

The content material for the e-Book (Del. B2.2, submitted with the MidTerm Report) has been concluded and it includes text documents and high resolution photographs (and their accompanying captions).

The content for the Guidelines for the Visitor management and design of environmental interpretation facilities (Del B2.3) has been completed.

The Review on forest management measures of selected Mediterranean forest types is available (Del. B2.6).

B2 Deliverable name

B2.1 Content material for the App “Forest LIFE”

B2.2. Content material for the e-Book

B2.3 Content for the Guidelines for the Visitor management and design of environmental interpretation facilities

B2.4 Documentation for the platform’s E-Library

B2.5 Content material for the platform

B2.6 Review on forest management measures of selected Mediterranean forest types

B2.7 Forest Geospatial data and metadata for the platform and the App

B2.4u Updated documentation for the platform's E-Library

B2.5u Updated content material for the platform

B2.7u Updated Forest Geospatial data and metadata for the platform

Action B3: Collaboration Platform operation: Site administration and maintenance, and collaboration and knowledge sharing through the platform

Actual start date: 01.7.2021

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

The action follows Action B1 (development of CPF) as it regards the CPF's content maintenance, monitoring of its functionality, access control, users' administration, content management, etc. The two temporary employees that the DGFFE hired for the project, a forester, responsible, among others, for updating the content of the CPF and an IT expert, responsible for the administration and maintenance of the CPF, were involved in this action as follows.

In order to ensure the CPF's continuation of operation, the DGFFE assigned from November 2021 a member of its permanent staff as the person in charge of the CPF content and web administration. Technical maintenance of the CPF until 07.2024 will remain to the contractor as foreseen in its contract. EKBY, in the frame of a memorandum of cooperation to be signed/joint project to be developed with DGFFE, will also support CPF future operation, by providing scientific content and technical assistance and guidance. The process has been initiated.

In order to ensure its continuity and stability, the DGFFE submitted a request to the Ministry of Digital Governance to host the CPF in the government cloud infrastructure and the request was approved. The contractor will assist in transferring the CPF to the government cloud, with guidance from the Ministry of Digital Governance. The inclusion of CPF to the government cloud will increase its level of security. It must be noted that from August 2021 all forest services of Greece were transferred to the Ministry of Environment as regional branches of the Greek Forest Service. After this change, the DGFFE is the central administration of the whole Greek Forest Service. Taking advantage of this fact, a letter has been sent on 26.09.2022 by the Head of DGFFE to all Forest's Service staff around Greece presenting CPF and its capabilities and calling them to register and use it.

As Action B3 was substantially impacted by the delays of Action B1, there was no scope for preparing two reports on its use, within the project timeframe. To address this issue, the project provides a first report on the site's operation and another will be written in 2023, as part of its After-Life commitments. The delays of this action affected the design of action B4, which foresaw the use of CPF to further share knowledge and at the same time promote the use of CPF. To address these issues, the project adapted the material it used at the seminars and, in order to promote the CPF, it: a) exploited the potential of social media, b) prepared the letter from the head of DGFFE, c) promoted the CPF during the 86th Thessaloniki International Trade Fair and d) further promoted its tools and capabilities to its network of cooperation.

Moreover, the project team, just after the CPF release, started working in three levels: a) uploading/renewing content (see details in Action B2); b) improving of CPF's functionality; c) promoting its capabilities.

For the improvement of its functionality, a new web map application replaced the delivered one (see details of geospatial data in Action B2). The new web map application is accessible through <https://maps.forests-yphen.gr/> that is a subdomain of the CPF's domain (<https://forests-yphen.gr/>). The hosting for the web map application is provided by ESRI's ArcGIS online platform, as part of EKBY's maintenance support service. CPF users can easily access the web map application from the main menu (menu item: "Map") and from the home page of the CPF. Hyperlinks of the CPF, the App, the Project webpage and the websites of LIFE and of beneficiaries, are provided at the footer of the web map application, as well as at several parts of the metadata content. This enhancement allows more data to be published and is interoperable with other national, European and global geospatial data

infrastructures, such as the European Environment Agency (EEA) public map services (<https://www.eea.europa.eu/code/gis>), and the map services of LIFE IP4 Natura Project.

With regard to its capabilities, the CPF's data catalogue now offers data search and download capabilities and metadata view. The new web map application can be easily updated with future content, either this is new geospatial data or map services that will become publicly available from other projects (such as the ongoing LIFE EL-BIOS Project, in which EKBY is part of the consortium) (for details on the content please see Action B2).

According to the platform manager's page experience, the CPF provides a quite good user experience; slight improvements can be made to increase some user experience metrics, focusing on the aspects of loading performance, interactivity, and visual stability. The page is mobile-friendly (test was performed with the Google Mobile-Friendly Test available at <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>), the site's connection is secure as it is served over HTTPS, and its content, beyond its pure information value, is easily accessible to the end-user.

As of 31.10.2022, these efforts resulted in 16,848 visits, 2,140 unique users, and 167 registered users to the CPF. Moreover, a high interest in the E-Library and the geospatial data has been already observed (although as mentioned, the CPF operates only in few months). In particular: About 30% of the total pageviews (4,396 out of 16,848) are visits to the E-Library. A 13% of the total pageviews are visits to the Knowledge Base. A number of 1,034 out of 16,848 visits (about 6%) are visits to the News pages. About 500 out of 16,848, are visits to the Web Map Viewer and about 400 are visits to the Photo gallery. As regards the analysis of content visited in the E-library and the Knowledge Base, the following have been observed:

About 30% of visits to the E-library are visits to the legislation category, 18% to publications, 13% to guidelines, 12% to training material, 10% to maps, 7% to best practices, 4% to technical reports and about 6% to other content.

About 25% of visits to the Knowledge Base are visits to the main themes of the CPF, such as the Natura 2000 network and the rehabilitation of oak forests. About 20% visited the organisations catalogue, about 20% the projects catalogue, 15% the portals section, 7% the funds section and about 6% the catalogue of experts, and about 7% to other content.

As regards more analytical insights (metrics available from ArcGIS server) to the Web Map Viewer application, the total views from 24.09.22 to 31.10.22 (period in which it is online) were 849, and the average views per day were 22.95. It is very interesting to note that a high interest is observed in the geospatial data that are served and are available through the RestFull API, and especially in the International protected areas dataset (90,507 total requests and 2,446.14 average requests per day). Other datasets of high interest are:

- the boundaries of the Protected Areas Management Units: total 18,320 requests and 495.14 average requests per day
- the boundaries of the Forest Services: total 17,048 requests and 460.76 average requests per day
- the vegetation zones according to Dafis: total 16,695 requests and 451.22 average requests per day
- the mapping of habitat types in terrestrial Natura 2000 sites: total 10,144 requests and 274.16 average requests per day
- the forest vegetation types and land use: total 4,802 requests and 129.78 average requests per day

On the other hand, a hesitation is observed for tools that publish personal data and expression of opinions, such as the catalogue of experts in the knowledge base and the

communication forum. However, we consider that the transfer to the government cloud will increase users' confidence at personal data security. An effort has been made to increase participation, by the invitation letter that was sent by the Head of the DGFFE to the staff of the Forest Services. Efforts shall also focus on content reliability and information timeliness, to increase trust to the CPF. The availability of geospatial data through RESTful APIs and the possibility of data exchange with other official geospatial data infrastructures are major assets of the CPF that will further increase the visibility and use of the platform. In addition to the above, the CPF will be used in the context of LIFE GoProForMed project and in particular, in relation to actions aiming at connecting technical, training and communication tools already in place within the GoProForMed's partnership. In particular, the Work Package 8 of GoProForMed foresees "A specific sub-domain of the [GoProForMed] website will be dedicated to a hub, that aims at connecting a selection of technical, training and communication tools already in place within the partnership, such as the Database of Good Forestry Practices (LIFE GoProFor), the Collaborative Platform for Forests (ForestLIFE), etc, to facilitate users accessibility to these tools."

B3 Deliverable name

- 1st Annual Report on the site operation and facilitation
- 2nd Annual Report on the site operation and facilitation

Action B4: Knowledge sharing through training

Actual start date: 01.04.2017

Actual end date: 31.05.2022

This action included training in five themes (management measures, adaptation of forest management to climate change, restoration of oak forests, visitor management and financing), through the organization of seminars. All themes were covered with two live seminars and four webinars. It should be noted that initially, two seminars per theme were foreseen for three of the themes, to facilitate participation of trainees from remote areas. This was not necessary with webinars.

- Overall, 39 speakers were involved in the seminars. Speakers were university scholars, researchers from various institutions, high-level staff from the Greek Forest Service etc.
- The seminars had 1,437 participations from all stakeholder groups and from all around Greece in comparison with 500 anticipated. Several of the stakeholders participated in two or more seminars; participants with at least one participation were 832.
- The videos of the seminars continue to have many displays.
- The printed material foreseen in the Action has been produced and used mainly for the dissemination of the project results during the project's participation at Thessaloniki International Trade Fair of 2021 and 2022 and in other live meetings. In these cases, a folder containing the leaflet, the flyer, a notebook and a flash disk was distributed.

More detailed information for each seminar is given in the following table.

Title	Place	Actual date	Foreseen date	Participants	Video displays (30.10.22)
Innovative funding for the management and restoration of forests in Natura 2000	Athens	14.03.2019	31.03.2019	165	n/a
Innovative funding for the management and restoration of forests in Natura 2000	Thessaloniki	19.03.2019	31.03.2019	96	n/a
Adaptation of forest management to climate change	Web	08.04.2021	31.05.2021	294	173 https://youtu.be/1gFtATeq7NA
Biodiversity conservation measures for forests in Natura 2000	Web	27.05.2021	31.05.2021	199	439 https://youtu.be/hLYC6yYH4hk
Challenges and prospects for tourism in protected areas	Web	17.09.2021	31.07.2021	354	55 https://youtu.be/cy_t1j4ua2E https://youtu.be/yZmgCP_eB-w

Title	Place	Actual date	Foreseen date	Participants	Video displays (30.10.22)
					https://youtu.be/r84KMiW9GdQ https://youtu.be/vr0-EDLMZ0Y
Management and restoration of oak forests	Web	31.03.2022	31.05.2021	329	257 https://youtu.be/gSTtHulyA5Y

All presentations were made available after the seminar at the project’s web site and they are also accessible from the CPF. Furthermore, all webinars were recorded and the videos are available from the project web site, from the CPF and directly from the project channel on <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvtkMGm1GjWN8NQ5m6jY0Uw>.

The publication “Guidelines for visitor management” with the final title “Protected areas and tourism: guidelines for visitor management and nature interpretation” is also available online from the project web site and from the CPF.

The impact of the seminars was assessed twice, in the first and the last seminar and in brief is as follows. More details on the assessment of seminars contribution to the impact of the project can be found at the deliverables of Action C1.

Title	Date	Participants/ Replies	Organisation and content assessment	Knowledge improvement
Innovative funding for the management and restoration of forests in Natura 2000	14 & 19.03.2019	165+96=261/111	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent or above the standard: 36% According to the standard: 57% 	High: 1,13% Somehow: 19.59% No change: 79.28%
Management and restoration of oak forests	31.03.2022	329/ 82 (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent or above the standard: 77.11% • According to the standard: 21.69% 	High: 68.42% Somehow: 26.76% No change: 4.82%

The results indicate a clear positive contribution of the seminars to knowledge sharing, especially in the subject of management and restoration of oak forests, as it regards a significant part of the Greek Forest Community from all around Greece. It must also be noted that this knowledge sharing also promotes Natura 2000.

The printed material of the seminars were also used for the promotion of the project and its deliverables at all events and other circumstances where the project was present. They particularly contributed to the dissemination of the CPF and the App at the Thessaloniki International Trade Fairs of 2021 and 2022. They will continue to be used for the promotion

of the projects outcomes. Please see Action D1 for details about the use of all printed material.

Delayed realisation of seminars was the cumulative result of the delay of the tender processes and the pandemic (see section 6.2).

These delays and alterations gave the opportunity to test new approaches of sharing knowledge and promote cooperation. Even the omitted field visits, due to the webinar format, were compensated by the big number of participants.

The experience from the organisation of webinars shows that an appropriate set of speakers on an issue that the forest community has to deal with in practice, is a motive for people to meet and cooperate. That is because people can attend and participate from their office or home. The DGFFE, which is now the central administration of the Greek Forest Service, can take advantage of this experience in combination with CPF tools like the Forum. For example, by utilising the Forum, the DGFFE can poll about the community's interest, identify speakers and proceed with webinars and then disseminate the outcomes through the news, the Forum and the project's Facebook page. Videos and other relevant material can be stored and be available permanently from the electronic library.

Action B5: Tools for forest managers related to tourism and reduction of human disturbance

Actual start date: 01.10.2016

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

This action regards the creation of an App for smartphones and tablets to inform visitors and the general public of forest ecosystems' functions and values, especially those within the N2K and provide guidance for avoiding actions that disturb the forest ecosystems.

It must be noted that during the drafting of the Technical specifications of the App, an extensive market survey was performed on new possibilities offered nowadays by technology for the development of web applications for smart devices (smartphones and tablets). For the drafting of the specifications, the advantages/disadvantages of "native" applications vs "progressive web applications – PWA" were examined. The results of the market survey showed that PWAs outweigh "native" applications, as the latter require more time to develop, time-consuming procedures for their submission and acceptance to application stores (such as Google Play and Apple Store), complicated content update and upgrade mechanisms, and installation and upgrade from their end-users. Web applications are easily updated, are faster (respond quickly to user interactions), do not require complex installation, can be accessed by smart devices as well as by PCs, can be launched easily by adding an application shortcut icon at the device's home screen or PC's desktop, are network independent (can operate either offline or with bad internet connection), do not need to be updated by end-users, their user interface is similar to "native" apps, can be easily shared via a URL, and can push notifications to users to increase their engagement. Moreover, PWAs are built with progressive enhancement and work for every user, regardless of web browser choice. Thus, it was decided to move towards this direction.

The App Forestlife was developed as a PWA, by the same contractor who undertook the development of the CPF (Action B1) and was finally presented to the public in June 2022 after a long period of testing and functional improvements from June 2021, when its initial version was delivered. It was subsequently modified, enriched in terms of quality and quantity and thus gained added value for promoting the Natura 2000 forests of Greece.

It is available from web browsers at <https://www.greekforests.gr/>, which means that it does not require complex installation. It can be accessed by smart devices as well as by PCs and can be launched easily by adding an application shortcut icon at the device's home screen or PC's desktop. Moreover, an offline version is available, to serve its operation when users are offline or are having bad internet connection.

The App presents information on 88 forest areas, which actually correspond to a bigger number of forests, since the boundaries of each forest were drawn with the visitor's perspective that perceives a forested landscape as a whole and not with the administrative boundary of each forest. For each forest, the following set of information is provided: an introductory text and photos, the general location of the forest, its protection status (e.g. inclusion in a Natura 2000 site), information about the vegetation and the most characteristic plants and animals that the visitor can observe at the forest, established hiking trails and points of interest that are worth to be visited inside the forest area or nearby. For each forest, the most important threats and pressures are also briefly described, in order to raise awareness and kindly ask to avoid them. Moreover, the user can find useful information and contact details of forest authorities, Management Units of protected areas, mountaineering associations, etc. For plants and animals, the most characteristic species are mentioned along with descriptions and photos. The App fully utilises the GPS capabilities of the mobile devices, so the user can locate his/her position in relation with nearby forests or specific location and points of interest. It must be noted that when applicable, for the most points of interest their exact location is given. The user can search for forests either through the catalogue or on a web map. Along with the specific information about the forests the user can gain a general idea about the Greek forests through the book "The forests of Greece" of the late Emeritus Professor Sp. Dafis. where the basic characteristics of the forest types of Greece are presented, along with information about their values, the ecosystem services they provide, the main threats and pressures they face etc. The book can be browsed from the App as a digital flipbook and can be downloaded as a pdf file. The App also contains a list of actions that the visitor should avoid, whereas when browsing in a forest, he/she can report a problem (see: <https://greekforests.gr/anafora-problimatos>) that was observed in a forest that he/she visited, such as e.g. illegal dumping of waste, insufficient infrastructure, incomplete trail marking, illegal logging, etc. Reports can be accompanied by the user's geographic location and photographs to document the problem. Special attention was given to secure user's personal data and to avoid spread of fake news. To this end, it was decided that provision of contact information will be optional and that user reports will not be publicly published on the App or shared in social media. Collected user reports will be forwarded to the Forest Service to take action, after a first review by the App's web and content administrator. The App contains also a "How to" video for the new users and provides hyperlinks to the CPF, to the LIFE programme and to the websites of the beneficiaries of the project.

The qualitative research performed for Action C1 with members of FC and the responses in the social media of people visiting the application indicate that it is welcome, but they had also noticed that the content needed update and enrichment, which the project team undertook and substantially improved it. Taking these into account, several improvements in the graphic design were made (colours, logo correction etc). For the improvement of the content, three more pages were added: Forest values, Plants, Animals. Moreover, 310 new web pages were connected to the App, each for 310 plant and animal species that the visitors can observe at the Greek forests. Furthermore, several other functionality improvements were made. Geospatial data for the App were updated and organized per each one of the 88 Greek forests, according to the App's specifications (kml files). These included: the forest

areas, paths and points of interest (information infrastructures, museums, archaeological sites and monuments, refuges, recreational infrastructures, etc.).

All other content additions and editing are discussed in Action B2. It is also worth mentioning the interest of the Film Office of the Region of Central Macedonia for the fast and reliable provision of information for shooting locations for audiovisual productions and related possible impacts that have to be avoided.

There was an impact to the project from the delayed development of the final version of the App. In order to minimise it, the project promoted it through social media. Moreover, as in the case of CPF, the App was also presented and promoted in the letter sent by the Head of DGFFE to all the staff of the Forest Service. We also took advantage of the meeting with press on July 12, 2022 focusing on both the App and the CPF. Documentation for the meeting with the press can be found in Action D4.

The App combines, on one hand, the environmental information that would interest the user and, on the other hand, information on how to tour with safety and comfort through forested areas in Greece. Both the content and utility of the App were further examined in the context of the conducted qualitative research under Action C1 (interviews with members of the FC) and found that it provided added value; the survey showed that there was need for a specialized application for Greek forests. There are a few existing applications for nature and biodiversity but they concern specific sites (e.g. Mount Parnitha) or a wider geographical area (e.g. an island, a municipality, a region). Also, they either provide purely tourist and navigation information, or refer to very specialized subjects.

As of 31.10.2022, the App had 31,584 visits and 5,913 unique users.

B5 Deliverable name

The App entitled “Forest LIFE”

The e-book “Forests of Greece”

Action C1: Monitoring of project impact

Actual start date: 01.01.2016 *Actual end date:* 15.07.2022

This action initially aimed to establish a three-phase monitoring process (baseline, in the middle of the project duration and at the end) in order to measure and evaluate the project impact as compared to the initial situation.

Given that the CPF was delivered in May 2022, the mid-term project impact deliverable was not produced and a two-phase monitoring process took place (baseline, and overall at the end).

With regard to the baseline assessment, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with selected members of the Greek FC (e.g. employees of the FS at all levels, employees of the management bodies of protected areas, employees of other public services, researchers, employees of forest cooperatives and recreational companies etc.) took place. In particular, 43 interviews (with 62 participants) and 14 focus groups (with 63 participants) were held in 29 cities/villages of the country [the number outran the anticipated target as given in the project proposal 20 semi-structured interviews and 6 focus groups for phase A)].

The findings of the study were presented on the deliverable on the baseline assessment, which together with its accompanying Impact Indicators was finalised in September 2017.

With regard to the overall assessment of the project's impact, we made use of quantitative data from questionnaires sent to participants of two live seminars and one webinar. In particular, questionnaires were given: a) to 261 participants in the two live seminars for innovative funding - 111 (42.5%) replies were received b) to 329 participants in the last webinar - 86 (26%) replies were received. In addition to the quantitative data, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted.

The data from the quantitative research showed that from the organisation and content assessment point of view, the seminars fulfilled their objectives by 93% (Innovative funding) and 98% (Management and restoration of oak forests). Regarding the improvement of knowledge, the seminar on “Innovative funding” increased the percentage of participants with good, very good and excellent knowledge for LIFE programme from 54% before the seminar to 91% after. As for oak management, 65% of the participants replied that the seminar improved very much their skills. These results showed that not only the seminars had a positive impact to the members of FC but that they maintained high standards throughout the duration of the action. Regarding the representativity, most of the participants were working for public bodies (43.5%), mainly the Forest Service, while among the participants there were several consultants, researchers etc. Furthermore, the registration data of the participants to the seminars and the geographical distribution of the project’s web site give a clear indication that the project contributed to the dissemination of knowledge and experience and brought together people from different groups from all around Greece. Similar results were reported in the Final Socioeconomic Assessment (deliverable C2.3). In particular, on the basis of focus group meetings with 10 representatives of stakeholders and in depth interviews with 5 representatives, the following results were recorded: more than 50% of respondents replied a) that they benefited from the project in terms of improvement of skills and b) there was an exchange of views and knowledge between them. In fact, respondents reported that they were able to maintain these acquaintances over time and to hold other meetings in order to exchange knowledge and to discuss solving some of their problems. These results were identified as strengths in the SWOT analysis of C2.3 deliverable. As weak points, SWOT analysis indicated issues of content and function of the CPF and the App. These have been resolved as explained in actions B1, B2 and B5.

C1 Deliverable name

Assessment of baseline situation

Impact indicators

Mid-term project impact

Overall assessment of project impact

Action C2: Monitoring of the project's socio-economic impact

Actual start date: 01.02.2017

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

This action assessed the impact of the project actions on economy and population through monitoring. The key questions this action addressed were whether the project influenced stakeholders, whether these groups were more aware of conservation needs after the project and if there would be an influence in the economy, in view of the contribution to green jobs and skills, the improvement of forest ecosystem services is known to have.

The overall assessment was based on quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (focus groups, personal interviews) methods; the data gathered were summarised in a SWOT analysis. The qualitative research involved 15 persons who also received the questionnaire. The main findings of the SWOT analysis were that the stakeholders believe that the project's actions contributed to and promoted exchange of knowledge and experience, brought together people from different groups and created moments and tools for cooperation and that CPF and the App will contribute to the development of tourism at local level and that open new perspectives for funding. Moreover, the stakeholders recognised that the project and mainly CPF and the App can increase training availability by reducing cost in time and money and that they can support development of professional skills. These points have been proven as essential for increasing the gross income and "green" jobs. These are well documented in the literature, while they have been recognised as targets in the National Forest Strategy. On the other hand, the stakeholders stressed the importance of commitment to the operation of CPF and the App by the respective organisations, including increase in data availability and other material and participation in the forum. Due to the project being information/governance and having a national geographical reference, tangible socio-economic impacts (e.g. job positions) are very difficult to be documented in such a short term after its completion. Nevertheless, some clear indications about its positive impact were recorded: a) improvement in forest management planning, b) interest expressed for the promotion of use of the App in the audiovisual productions and c) interest expressed for the use of the App for the education of forestry students. In the first case, a positive effect on the ecosystem services of these forests is expected, in the second case the App may contribute to the attraction of audiovisual productions, which has a tangible positive economic and social effect and in the third case a clear positive social effect is also expected through the improvement of the education of forestry students. Briefly, the project succeeded in its main objectives, but the real success lies on continuation.

The assessment was performed in three different stages from two different subcontractors (external assistance). In particular, the initial and the mid-term assessment was performed by the Sector of Industrial Management and Operation Research of the National Technical University of Athens (SIMOR/NTUA), while the final assessment was done by the Laboratory of Forest Economics of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (LFE/AUTH).

As noted in the final assessment, the impact of the project will develop overtime; therefore, the continuation of the quantitative research after the project end is recommended.

C2 Deliverable name

Assessment of project socio-economic impact

Action D1: Production of printed material

Actual start date: 01.04.2016

Actual end date: 14.07.2022

This action regards the production of printed material for the promotion of project objectives and actions, the dissemination of project results and main deliverables (such as CPF and App). For the above purposes, various means (such as project logo, three-page leaflet, Flyer, roll-up banner, Layman's report) were used. The material was produced with two separate procurements. The first procurement included the production of Roll up banners, Project logo, 3-page Leaflet and the notice boards (deliverables available at the end of 2018). The second procurement included the flyer, Layman's report and the part of the material for Action B4 (graphic design of invitation and programme, folders, notebooks, posters, USB flash disks and the production of "Guidelines for visitor management").

The printed material was used in all live events, where the project was present, mainly the Thessaloniki International Trade Fairs of 2021 and 2022. Details for the distribution of the printed material of Actions B4 and D1 follow. Due to the realisation of the seminars as webinars and the cancellation of almost all live events for 2020 and most of 2021, the printed material of Action B4 was used in combination with this of Action D1.

B4 printed material	Printed (copies)	Distributed	Where
Folders	1500	200	Thessaloniki International Trade Fair 2021, 2022, other meetings
Notebook	1500	200	Thessaloniki International Trade Fair 2021, 2022, other meetings
Posters	8	8	Seminars 14 & 19.03.2019
USB flash disks	1000	250	Thessaloniki International Trade Fair 2021, 2022, other meetings
Protected areas and tourism: guidelines for visitor management and nature interpretation	1500	20	Thessaloniki International Trade Fair 2022
D1 printed material			
Banners	2	1 to EKBY 1 to DGFE	Used in all live events such as Thessaloniki International Trade Fair 2019, 2021 and 2022, the 19th Panhellenic Forestry Conference, Litochoro etc
Leaflet	2,500	1000	Thessaloniki International Trade Fair 2019, 2021, 2022, other meetings e.g. the 19th Panhellenic Forestry Conference, Litochoro, meetings in Palermo, Toulouse etc.
Flyer	100,000	10,000	Thessaloniki International Trade Fair 2021, 2022.

B4 printed material	Printed (copies)	Distributed	Where
Layman's report	250	20	Thessaloniki International Trade Fair 2022

All printed material of the project, including the roll-up banners and the USB flash disks will continue to be used and distributed in every suitable occasion. The banners will be used in every occasion where the project's results can be advertised. On the occasion of fairs and conferences, the leaflet and the flyer will be distributed to the general public. On copies of the leaflet and the flyer, Qcode links to CPF and the App will be added. The folder, the notebook, the layman's report and the USB flash will be distributed to Forest Service staff or members of the other project's target groups. USB flash disks are filled in with useful project material, like the Review on forest management measures of selected Mediterranean forest types, the Guidelines for the Visitor management and design of environmental interpretation facilities and the seminar's videos. The printed version of the "Guidelines for the Visitor management and design of environmental interpretation facilities" will be distributed to the regional Forest Service offices (approx. 250 copies), a number will be sent to NECCA, some will be sent to relevant university schools (approx. 30 copies) and the remaining will be sent upon request.

D1 Deliverable name

Procurement 1

Roll up banners in 2 pieces

Project logo

3-page Leaflet in 2.500 copies (2.000 in Greek and 500 in English)

Notice boards in 2 pieces

Procurement 2

Flyer in 105.000 copies (100.000 in Greek and 5.000 in English)

Layman's report in 250 copies (200 in Greek and 50 in English)

Action D2: Production of audiovisual material

Actual start date: -

Actual end date: -

This action included the production of TV and radio spots. Despite the efforts of DGFFE for the timely production of the two spots, that was not possible and the two spots have not been produced. A short promotional video with the capabilities of CPF and the App was created in the framework of Action D5.

The absence of the spots did not have any impact to other project actions, but had some impact on the promotion of its results, especially the CPF and the App. In order to mitigate this impact, we put more effort to the promotion of the CPF and the App via social media, at the Thessaloniki International Trade Fair of 2022 and we continue to promote its outcomes through the web and other communication channels.

D2 Deliverable name

Radio spot 25sec in Greek

TV spot 25sec in Greek

Action D3: Dissemination of project's activities and results via Web

Actual start date: 01.09.2015

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

This action lasted throughout the project and has been implemented according to its original time plan. It regards the development of a website for the project along with other relevant activities aiming to enhance the project's presence in the electronic media. Three particular means of presence were developed, the project website, presence in social media and an e-newsletter. All means were updated by the project team on a regular basis.

Website: The website was launched at the end of December 2015, according to the General Conditions and is updated on a regular basis (www.forestlife.gr). In its almost 6.5 years of operation, the website has received 60,020 visits from 24,176 unique visitors (as of 31.10.2022). The website includes information about the project (objectives, actions, progress and results, deliverables), news of the project and other activities that are of the FC interest, calls for tenders, an archive of the project's newsletters etc. The project Communication Team is continuously updating and uploading material to the website with the project progress and with news falling within its scope.

The photographic archive of the website has been further enriched and all project Deliverables are uploaded (web-version / personal data, views and opinions were removed).

Social media: The project has its own:

- Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ForestLifeProject> (2,347 likes, 2,516 followers),
- Twitter account https://twitter.com/LIFE_ForestLife (396 followers)
- Researchgate page <https://www.researchgate.net/project/LIFE-ForestLife-Building-cooperation-developing-skills-and-sharing-knowledge-for-Natura-2000-forests-in-Greece> (194 reads, 23 followers).

The project has also a YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvtkMGm1GjWN8NQ5m6jY0Uw>) with 44 subscribers and 1,673 views, where videos from the seminars/webinars (Action B4) and other video material from the project were uploaded. Currently 20 videos have been uploaded. The personnel of EKBY is responsible for uploading news and events of the project and of the FC in general. In the following tables the progress of popularity of the project's web site and Facebook page are presented.

Project's site visits and unique users		
Reporting at	Visits	Unique users
March 2017	15509	4016
March 2018	22342	8040
March 2019	31228	11613
May 2020	36986	12310
June 2021	45799	17744
June 2022	55785	22437
September 2022	59218	23882
October 2022	60020	24176

Project's Facebook Likes and Followers		
Reporting at	Likes	Followers
2019	738	n/a metric
2020	908	1219
2021	1321	1397
2022 (June)	1803	1919
2022 (October)	2347	2516

Newsletters: Eleven e-newsletters containing project news and other information material on forests and the N2K have been sent electronically to 1,077 recipients and also uploaded to the project website (<https://forestlife.gr/enimerotika-deltia/> or in the [Annexes 10 Annexes\10.2 Deliverables\ActionD3_WebActivities\](#)).

D3 Deliverable name

Contract sign

Project website

1st issue of the e-newsletter

2nd issue of the e-newsletter

3rd issue of the e-newsletter

4th issue of the e-newsletter

5th issue of the e-newsletter

6th issue of the e-newsletter

7th issue of the e-newsletter

8th issue of the e-newsletter

9th issue of the e-newsletter

10th issue of the e-newsletter

11th issue of the e-newsletter

The recipients of the newsletter have narrowly exceeded the foreseen target of 1,000 recipients. The project web site reached its foreseen number of unique visitors (15,000) before 2021 and the number of visits foreseen 5 years after project completion (15,000) as early as March 2017. Its Facebook page also reached its targets (1,200 likes five years after its end) in 2021.

The web site will be maintained as a constant reference point of the project. The Facebook page and the Twitter account will continue to be updated for the support and promotion of CPF and the Forestlife App, while the Youtube channel will continue to host videos from the seminars, other project videos and any new relevant videos. The project's page at Researchgate will also continue with the existing or new material.

Action D4: Advertising the project and its results via Mass Media

Actual start date: 01.06.2016

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

This action lasted throughout the project. It aimed at communicating the project actions to the general public, but also to experts that might not have access to other dissemination activities of the project. It regarded the presence of the project at both local and national media and included press releases, press articles, interviews in mass media, information on other websites, broadcasting TV and radio spots etc. The next table presents a summary of the media work.

Deliverables	At the end of project	5 years after	Actual
Press Releases	10	12	15
Press articles	15	18	54
Interviews	5	5	3
Press Conference	1	1	1
Report on the broadcasts of TV and radio spots	1	1	

During the project, 15 press releases were published: a) before, after or both, every important event organised by the project; b) at events that the project participated in; c) after the release of important deliverables. All press releases were published at the web site and at social media of the project, at EKBYS web site (www.ekby.gr) or at the Biodiversity portal www.biodiversity-info.gr and were sent to the media or journalists specialised on environmental issues. From the data gathered by the participants in the seminars (Action B2) it seems that social media were particularly successful. For example, for the seminar for the conservation of biodiversity in Natura 2000 forests, from the 102 registered people that learned for the seminar from the social media, 76 actually participated (74,5%). For the same seminar, the percentage of attendance by people invited by personal emails was 61%.

In the next table, the press releases of the project are presented.

Date	Title/content
27.01.2017	EKBYS promotes the forests of Greece and the ForestLife project, in the context of the KinderDocs documentaries
06.03.2017	Greek Forests exhibition, Green Destinations

Date	Title/content
22.03.2017	EKBY and ForestLife back at KinderDocs
31.03.2017	The exhibition "Greek Forests, Green Destinations" continues at the Athens International Airport "Eleftherios Venizelos"
09.05.2017	The Goulandris Museum of Natural History guides students to the exhibition "Greek Forests, Green Destinations" at the Athens International Airport
15.05.2017	Information and Celebration Event of the 25 years of LIFE
22.05.2017	25 years of LIFE, 25 years of works for nature
05.09.2018	ForestLife at the 83 th Thessaloniki Trade Fair (September 8-16 2018): A project for the forests of Natura 2000 in Greece
17.09.2018	Successful participation of ForestLife at the 83 th Thessaloniki Trade Fair
25.02.2019	Seminar “Innovative funding for the management and restoration of forests in Natura 2000”
05.09.2019	ForestLife, a project for the forests of Natura 2000 in Greece, is presented at the 84 th Thessaloniki Trade Fair (September 7-15 2019).
05.04.2021	LIFE Forestlife project invites to an online seminar for adaptation of forest management to climate change
21.05.2021	LIFE Forestlife project invites to an online seminar on biodiversity conservation measures in Natura 2000 forests
17.09.2021	Article for the meeting “Challenges and perspectives for tourism in protected areas”
11.07.2022	Press release for the closing meeting of the project

The project has been presented in the following media as shown in the table.

Press articles

Date	Publication type	Media	Title
13.09.2015	Web article	Dasarxeio.com	Presentation of the project at the Goulandris Natural History Museum (GNHM)
13.09.2015	Press release	MoEE	Presentation of the project at GNHM
09.10.2015	Web article	Dasarxeio.com	Presentation of the project at GNHM
09.10.2015	Newspaper, national	Kathimerini	Presentation of the project at GNHM
26.02.2016	Newsletter / Web article	EFIMED News	Presentation of the project
03.06.2016	Web article	National Forest rangers Association	Presentation of Actions A1 & C1
06.09.2016	Web article	Eleftheria	Presentation of the project
06.09.2016	Web article	Dasarxeio.com	Presentation of the project
29.08.2018	TV interview	ERT 1 (National Broadcasting Corporation Channel 1)	Impacts of forest fires to biodiversity
16.09.2019	Radio interview	ERT3 (National Broadcasting Corporation Channel 3)	Threats for natural environment and forests in Natura 2000
01.01.2020	Web article	http://www.lifetaskforce.gr	Project LIFE of the month (January 2020) –Forestlife
16.02.2021	Web article	4Green.gr	Article for the meeting: “Challenges and Needs for Forest Management in the 21st Century - The European funding program LIFE and Forests in Greece”.
21.03.2021	Web article	Dasarxeio.com	The restoration of forests in the spotlight, what has Greece done so far and how reforestations are implemented?

Date	Publication type	Media	Title
21.03.2021	Web article	Oraiokastro24.gr	The restoration of forests in the spotlight, what has Greece done so far and how reforestations are implemented?
16.09.2021	Web article	Dasarxeio.com	Article for the conference entitled "Development of tourism in protected areas", organized by MGFI-EKBY in the framework of the LIFE Forestlife project
17.09.2021	Web article	ecopress.gr	Article for the conference entitled "Development of tourism in protected areas", organized by MGFI-EKBY in the framework of the LIFE Forestlife project
17.09.2021	Web article	Capital.gr	Article for the conference entitled "Development of tourism in protected areas", organized by MGFI-EKBY in the framework of the LIFE Forestlife project
17.09.2021	Web article	forin.gr	Article for the conference entitled "Development of tourism in protected areas", organized by MGFI-EKBY in the framework of the LIFE Forestlife project
17.09.2021	Web article	ypaithros.gr	Article for the conference entitled "Development of tourism in protected areas", organized by MGFI-EKBY in the framework of the LIFE Forestlife project
22.12.2021	Web article	Dasarxeio.com	Burnt wood management. Repost from project web site
29.03.2022	Web article	Dasarxeio.com	Management and restoration of oak forests
11.07.2022	Web article	Dasarxeio.com	Closing meeting of LIFE Forestlife (online)
14.07.2022	Web article	skai.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets

Date	Publication type	Media	Title
14.07.2022	Web article	cyprusnews.eu	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	alphatv.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	vorias.gr	greekforest.gr: Everything you need to know for Greek forests in an App
14.07.2022	Web article	greenagenda.gr	greekforest.gr: Everything you need to know for Greek forests in an App
14.07.2022	Web article	CNN.gr	Thessaloniki: 98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	msn.com	Thessaloniki: 98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	amna.gr (ΑΠΕ-ΜΠΕ)	Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	dasarxeio.com	Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	agronews.gr	98 Greek forests available with a few clicks
15.07.2022	Web article	ertnews.gr/ert3	LIFE ForestLife: From a common request to a creative idea
14.07.2022	Web article	klik.gr	A unique App give access to 98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	inewsgr.com	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	fpress.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	newsingreece.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	feeder.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	taxidromos.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets

Date	Publication type	Media	Title
14.07.2022	Web article	terraneews.gr	98 Greek forests in an App
14.07.2022	Web article	emvolos.gr	Thessaloniki: 98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	imathiotikigi.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	diontv.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	greeknewsusa.com	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	analitis.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	facebook.com/analitisgr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	evdomada.ca	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	goodnewsonly.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	facebook.com/eidiseisagrinio24	Thessaloniki: 98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	facebook.com/PressWorld.gr	Thessaloniki: 98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
14.07.2022	Web article	newsbulletin247.com	The 98 forest complexes of Greece in a mobile or tablet application
15.07.2022	Web article	karfitsa.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
15.07.2022	Web article	kontasas.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
15.07.2022 26.08.2022 (update)	Web article	k-e.gr	98 Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
17.07.2022	Web article	dimoprasion.gr	The Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets

Date	Publication type	Media	Title
18.07.2022	Web article	larissanet.gr	The Greek forests in an App for mobiles and tablets
07.2022	Radio interview	National Broadcasting Corporation 102FM	Interview of project's manager Petros Kakouros to the radio show "Mikros, Megalos Kosmos" for the App and CPF.

Other project news can be viewed on section "Project News" of the website (<http://forestlife.gr/category/enimerosi-kat/nea-tou-ergou/>).

In this action, the broadcast of the TV and radio spots were also foreseen, which were not produced as explained in Action D2.

The project received significant publicity due to the seminars (Action B4), the constant presence at the social media and the regular publication of articles and news related to Natura 2000 and forests at the project's website. Moreover, the meeting with the press at the end of the project seems to have reduced the impact from the missing broadcast of the TV and radio spots, given that the CPF and the App had 37 publications and an interview within a few days. Given this good presence of the project, the DGFFE and EKBY will continue the media work focusing mainly in the promotion of CPF and the App. They will also invite a meeting with people from the press from the presentation of the CPF on the occasion of its one year of operation. Because of this publicity gained without cost, it was decided that it would not be necessary to use the external assistance for the two articles for publication on payment in two national newspapers.

Action D5: Organisation and participation in fairs, events and meetings

Actual start date: 01.12.2015

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

This action lasted throughout the project.

This action disseminated the project objectives, outputs and results to relevant stakeholders and the public and promoted communication between the members of the FC (FS and other stakeholders). The project participated at 32 meetings, workshops, conferences both live or via Internet including the organisation of the project closing meeting. The project has participated in the following events, meetings and conferences:

1. 17th National Forestry Conference (Kefallonia, 04-07.10.2015) – poster presentation.
2. EcoplantMed “Use of local flora in environmental restoration and landscaping”, information day/event (Crete, 17.12.2015) – presentation/networking.
3. Workshop on Mediterranean forest management and Natura 2000 (Parc naturel regional du Luberon, France, 09-11.05.2016) – poster presentation.
4. Visit of the Parliament Committee on Environment (EKBY, Thessaloniki, 11.06.2016) – oral presentation.
5. 100 years of Forestry Middle School of Agia (Agia, 02.09.2016) – oral presentation.
6. Eurosite Annual Meeting 2016: Ecosystems at your service: how to incorporate ecosystem services into practical site management (Serres, 07-10.11.2016) – poster presentation.
7. KinderDocs – Documentaries for kids – presentation about Greek forests in the framework of the project (Thessaloniki, 03-04.02.2017).
8. Exhibition in Athens International Airport – Greek Forests, Green Destinations (Athens, 06.03.2017-09.07.2017) – Poster on the project.
9. LIFE Information & Capacity Building Event - Call 2017, Green Fund / Greek LIFE Task Force – presentation “EKBY's experience of implementing LIFE projects in Greek forests: lessons learnt” (Thessaloniki, 29.03.2017) – oral presentation.
10. 25th Anniversary and Celebration Event of the LIFE Program (Athens, 18.05.2017) – poster presentation.
11. Workshop on "Climate action in agriculture and forestry" (Brussels, 01.06.2017).
12. Children Museum – presentation of the project for children (Thessaloniki, 11.06.2017).
13. 18th National Forestry Conference (Edessa, 08-11.10.2017) – poster presentation.
14. 8.5.2018-26.11.2018: Participation of the Project Coordinator in the Working Group for the elaboration of the National Forest Strategy.
15. 8-16.09.2018: Project presence at the Forest Pavilion during the 83rd TIF with banner, information material, demonstration of the website, etc.
16. 21.03.2019: Co-organization of the celebration of the International Forest Day with School of Forestry and Natural Environment (AUTH), Hellenic Forestry Society, Decentralized Administration of Macedonia and Thrace, Forest Research Institute, Geotechnical Chamber and Hellenic Forest Owners Association.
17. 9-11.04.2019: Project Presentation in "The LIFE ForestLife project and its contribution to the promotion of sustainable tourism in protected areas" by M. Katsakiori at the 11th Working Meeting of the European Charter Network on: "The Social and Cultural Impact of Tourism: Seeking a Sustainable Response».

18. 19-24.05.2019. Results presentation of research needs 7th International Conference on Environmental Management, Engineering, Planning and Economics (CEMEPE 2019) and SECOTOX Conference, Mykonos island, Greece.
19. 02.05.2019. Presentation on forest management in Greece in the context of an educational visit of the know-how and networking project PROSPECT_2_Bio, Karditsa.
20. 7-15.09.2019: Project presence at the Forest Pavilion during the 84th TIF with banner, information material, demonstration of the website, etc.
21. 29.9-01.10.2019. Participation in 19th Panhellenic Forestry Conference, Litochoro, Greece.
22. 23-24.10.2019. Project presentation and networking with other LIFE projects at the LIFE Project Networking Conference on Nature and Biodiversity in Greece from the projects (LIFE IP4 και LIFE Greek Task Force).
23. 12.11. 2019. Presentation of the project at the Workshop: European training system for forest management in Natura 2000 Network, Department of Agricultural Food and Forestry Sciences (DSAAF) University of Palermo, Italy in the framework of LIFE GoProFor.
24. 27.11.2020. Co-organisation and participation in the online thematic conference “Challenges and Needs for Forest Management in the 21st Century - The European funding program LIFE and Forests in Greece. https://forestlife.gr/life_forestsgreece/
25. 4-7.05.2021. Presentation of the project at the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Mediterranean Seminar (4 – 7 May 2021)-Online.
26. 6-9.05.2021. Presentation of the project at the Southern Europe Regional Meeting “Recovery Through Biodiversity” of the Greek chapter of International Forestry Students’ Association (6 – 9 May 2021)-Online.
27. 7-9.07.2021 Presentation of the project at the conference of Interreg project “Mo.Na: Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co-existence”.
28. 11-19.09.2021: Project presence at the Forest Pavilion during the 85th TIF with banner, information material, demonstration of the website, etc.
29. 16-18.02.2022. Presentation of the project Final European web conference of LIFE GoProFor “Towards Forest Management in line with the Protection and Conservation of Biodiversity”.
30. 23.06.2022. Presentation of the Collaboration Platform for Forests and the application “Forestlife”.
31. 12.07.2022. Closing meeting of the project (Online).
32. 10-18.09.2022. Project presence at the Forest Pavilion during the 86th TIF with banner, information material, demonstration of the website, etc.

The project has also participated in the following events and meetings, through invitation of its preceding project LIFE+ AdaptFor:

- ✓ LIFE Platform Meeting on Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture and Forestry in the Mediterranean Region (Madrid, 13-14.03.2018).
- ✓ Best LIFE Awards (Brussels, 23.05.2018) – for LIFE+ AdaptFor project (candidate for Best of the Best LIFE award) – outside this reporting period.

In the following tables, a short review of the foreseen and the actual date of deliverables and milestones is presented. Please note that the participation in PHILOXENIA (last exhibition 12-14.11.2021) and Athens Digital Arts Festival (ex Athens Video Art Festival; last event 10.6-10.9.2021) was not possible since the App was not available at the time.

D5 Deliverable name

Report on participation in PHILOXENIA tourism exhibition
Report on participation in International Trade Fair of Thessaloniki 2018
Report on participation in International Trade Fair of Thessaloniki 2019
Report on participation in International Trade Fair of Thessaloniki 2020
Report on participation in Athens Digital Arts Festival (ex Athens Video Art Festival)
Report on participation in events
Report for the Closing meeting of the project (to be verified)

The project participated in much more events (32) than those foreseen (9). It also co-organised two meetings and an exhibition. Of particular importance was the online thematic conference “Challenges and Needs for Forest Management in the 21st Century - The European funding program LIFE and Forests in Greece”, where all the spectrum of LIFE contribution to the management of Greek forests and particularly those in Natura 2000 was presented. This conference had 483 attendees from all around Greece, representing all project’s target groups. The project had a leading role to the agenda of the meeting and participated with two different presentations. The presentations are available at https://forestlife.gr/life_forestsgreece/. Another event where the Greek forests in Natura 2000 were presented to the public was the exhibition in Athens International Airport – Greek Forests, Green Destinations. The exhibition had numerous visitors from Greece and abroad. The efforts put by the project were part of the response that the project had to undertake in order to compensate as much as possible for the delays in the development of CPF and the App. In order to minimise their impacts, the project presented the application as soon as it was available to representatives of the tourist sector and the audiovisual industry from the Region of Central Macedonia. They were very interested for the use of the App, they made specific suggestions and they stated that a meeting will be arranged in order to seek particular ways of cooperation.

Action D6: Networking

Actual start date: 16.07.2015

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

This action lasted throughout the project.

The project established routes of communication and exchange of information with several other LIFE and non-LIFE projects and organisations. Networking was always a component of every activity or communication since its core actions were to create and maintain networks of knowledge sharing, to exchange experience and to build cooperation. Actually, networking varied from simple exchange of communication and informal exchange of experience, to regular communication for information and experience exchange, co-organisation of events until built-up of new projects proposals. Briefly, the project established regular communication with projects related to forests from Greece and abroad (mainly LIFE projects) and several organisations which were involved in these projects or have significant activity for forests, especially to forests within Natura 2000 on the areas of nature conservation, research, tourism. Examples of the former are LIFE IP 4 Natura, LIFE GrecaBat, LIFE GoProFor and for the latter examples are the Green Fund, NECCA, Hellenic Agricultural Organization “DEMETER”, Development Agency of Karditsa, DREAM Italia, IFSA-GFSA, etc.

In the framework of this action, the networking activities have taken place with the following projects/organisations:

Project/Organisation	Country	Area of networking cooperation
LIFE Natura2000Value Crete http://www.ecoalue-crete.eu/	Greece	Support, exchange of experiences during the implementation of projects in issues connected with administrative, financial, nature conservation on Natura 2000 sites and communication issues.
LIFE HEALTHY FOREST http://www.lifehealthyforest.com/	Spain	Exchange experience and dissemination of project's outcomes.
LIFEinFORESTS http://www.lifeinforests.eu/about/lifeinforests_project	Hungary	Exchange experience and dissemination of project's outcomes.
LIFE Greek Task Force https://lifetaskforce.gr	Greece	Exchange of information about projects on forest management and funding (2 networking events), cooperation on the dissemination of LIFE's role in the conservation of forests in Natura 2000 sites, etc.
LIFE IP 4 Natura www.edozoume.gr	Greece	Exchange of information. For example, CPF provides geospatial data produced by IP 4 Natura, direct links to deliverables of IP 4 Natura. The project manager of IP 4 Natura took part in the closing meeting of the project. ForestLife also provided input for the preparation of Priority Action Framework.
LIFE-IP AdaptInGR https://www.adaptivegreece.gr	Greece	Exchange of information, promotion of the project and inclusion of LIFE-IP AdaptInGR project results. LIFE-IP AdaptInGR was also presented in the seminar for the adaptation to climate change.
LIFE GoProFor https://www.lifegoprofor.eu/en/	Italy	Exchange of experience and best practice (participation in meeting at Palermo, cooperation in LIFE proposals submission etc.)
Piattaforma delle Conoscenze http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/	Italy	Exchange of information on partnerships.
Green Fund https://prasinotameio.gr	Greece	Exchange of information about projects on forest management and funding, transfer of knowledge (participation in the seminars for funding), cooperation on the dissemination of LIFE's role in the conservation of forests in Natura 2000 sites, etc
Hellenic Agricultural Organization "DEMETER" www.fri.gr www.fria.gr	Greece	Exchange of information and knowledge transfer with the two forest research institutes and participation of researchers in the seminars of the project.
NECCA https://necca.gov.gr/	Greece	Exchange of information and knowledge.
Region of Central Macedonia Film Office – Central Macedonia https://filmofficecentralmacedonia.gr/en/	Greece	Cooperation for the use of Forestlife App for the promotion of shooting locations and avoidance of human-origin disturbance in forests.
DREAM Italia http://www.dream-italia.it/	Italy	Exchange of information and knowledge, support and cooperation in the submission of LIFE proposals.
IFSA – GFSA International Forestry Students' Association-GreekFSA	Greece	Promotion of forest professionals cooperation, transfer of knowledge gathered from Forestlife, use of CPF and the App.

Networking gave the opportunity for the submission of other three LIFE proposals (PAIVA-LIFE17 NAT/PT/000503, LIFE TrainN2K-LIFE20 PRE/IT/000010 and LIFE GoProFor MED 101074738 — LIFE21-NAT-IT-L). LIFE TrainN2k and LIFE GoProForMed submissions resulted from information channeled by Piattaforma delle Conoscenze to DREAM Italia, in combination with the project's presence at the Luberon Conference (see Action D5) and at the "Adapting forests to climate change" European symposium, held by LIFE FORECCAST in Toulouse (19-20.11.2019). From these three projects LIFE GoProForMed will be funded. The project also supported 2 proposals for LIFE projects, including GoProFor. The project participated in 5 (1 foreseen) events with clear networking character:

1. 29.03.2017. Invited presentation on EKBY' experience in the submission and management of LIFE projects. Event organised by LIFE Greek Task Force.
2. 02.05.2019. Presentation on forest management in Greece in the context of an educational visit of the knowledge and networking project PROSPECT_2_Bio, Karditsa.
3. 23-24.10.2019. Project presentation and networking with other LIFE projects at the LIFE Project Networking Conference on Nature and Biodiversity in Greece from the projects (LIFE IP 4 Natura και LIFE Greek Task Force).
4. 12.11. 2019. Presentation of the project at the Workshop: European training system for forest management in Natura 2000 Network, Department of Agricultural Food and Forestry Sciences (DAAF) University of Palermo, Italy in the framework of LIFE GoProFor.
5. 4-7.05.2021. Presentation of the project at the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Mediterranean Seminar.

D6 Deliverable name

Report on networking activities, on action end

Action E1: Project management

Actual start date: 16.07.2015

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

Project management was performed in accordance with the General and Special Conditions, annexed to the Grant Agreement. Members of both the Steering Committee and the project Management Team were in frequent communication in order to organise steps to be taken or to resolve problems encountered. This action lasted throughout the project.

The project was managed in line with the Quality Management System of EKBY, certified according to ISO 9001:2015 standard for Quality Management Systems. Key components of this management system are sound planning, coordination, monitoring of project targets and undertaking of preventive and corrective action when there is risk of reduced performance or deviations from the plan.

EKBY organised the project Opening Meeting that was held at the premises of The Goulandris Natural History Museum, Athens, on 13.09.2015, with the presence of the provisional Minister for the Environment and Energy, the Director General for the Development and Protection of Forests and the Rural Environment, and other representatives of the FS. The Closing Meeting took place online on 12.07.2022. Also, the project participated in the LIFE14 Kick-off meeting (Brussels, 28.10.2015).

Action E2: Monitoring of project progress using indicators

Actual start date: 16.07.2015

Actual end date: 15.07.2022

This action lasted throughout the project to evaluate project progress and to undertake corrective actions in case of deviations in technical specifications, time plan or budget. The project progress was monitored throughout its duration with the use of specific qualitative or quantitative targets/indicators. The indicators provided in the framework of this action are actually based on the descriptors of the Key Project-level Indicator (KPI) database web-tool (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

Apart from the above, and in line with the ISO 9001:2015 standard for Quality Management Systems, the Coordinating Beneficiary uses EuroProject, an information tool for monitoring and management of projects and individual activities within the projects.

Two Steering Committee Meetings took place at the premises of the DGFFE, Athens, on 10.12.2015 and 22.03.2016, with the participation of representatives from both beneficiaries. Due to the unprecedented and successive number of serious external difficulties encountered by the project, the managerial staff of the two beneficiaries, including Steering Committee members, had very frequent communication and several live or web meetings to resolve the project problems and forward its aims. Furthermore, frequent working meetings took place with the participation of the members of the management team, where administrative issues, as well as scientific matters were discussed, project progress was assessed and monitoring indicators were recorded.

The key mandate of the Steering Committee was therefore performed through this continuous cooperation and joint effort; it was as if there was an ongoing Steering Committee meeting. In view of this, the organisation of additional “formal” Steering Committee meetings would take valuable time without adding any value to the project.

Regarding the hiring of temporary personnel, after some problems with the hiring of the forester and the lack of candidates for the IT expert, the forester was hired on March 14, 2019. The IT expert was hired in September 2020 after the third call, which was open with amendments to the specifications of the unsuccessful calls. The forester’s contract was renewed in July 2019 until July 2021. From this point until the end of the project (July 2022), due to legal issues, the experts continued to support the project as external assistance.

E2 Deliverable name

Completed indicator tables with 1st Progress Report

Completed indicator tables with Final Report

Action E3: Audit

Not applicable as an action; the auditor certificate was not needed since the EC contribution was below 750,000 €.

Action E4: After Life Plan

The After Life Plan has been prepared following EC specifications, in Greek and in English.

6.2. Main deviations, problems and corrective actions implemented

The project faced an unprecedented number of serious external difficulties: political turmoil due to the financial crisis and public unrest; a referendum; capital controls; major restructuring of the public sector as part of Greece's rescue pacts; changes in legislation that affected implementation of key project actions; changes in personnel at all levels of administration affecting the project.

As a result, there have been several deviations from the original time schedule. The EC has been supportive by approving, twice, the prolongation of the project. The second prolongation period coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, disastrous forest fires for two consecutive years and a major restructuring of the entire forest service, involving transfer of decentralized and local services to the Ministry of Environment. This process is still underway.

Despite all these difficulties, the project beneficiaries remained firm in their decision to complete the project and produce the expected benefits.

The project managed to deliver all its outputs, with the exception of radio and TV spots, and to achieve its main targets. The key deficiency was the late delivery of the CPF and the App for Greek forests. Despite the short period of their operation, target audiences have embraced them, as evidenced by the high, and increasing, number of users and visits (see section 6.3).

The forest service has confirmed it will continue to operate/use the project outputs. As part of this, the Director General for Forests has circulated a letter recommending the use of the CPF and the dissemination of the App by all forest servants in Greece. The Ministry has appointed a platform manager. The coordinating beneficiary has mandated personnel to update/enrich the app and the project website on a regular basis. Other evidence is detailed in the following sections.

Many stakeholders have confirmed that: a) there is need for the project deliverables (see section 6.1, Actions A1, C1, C2) and b) they have benefited by the project actions (see section 6.1, Actions C1, C2 and section 6.3).

6.3. Evaluation of Project Implementation

Methodology applied: The methodology applied by the project aimed at monitoring the accomplishment of its three key objectives, namely: a) to facilitate knowledge sharing, to support the exchange of experience and best practices, and to enhance cooperation between forest managers and other stakeholders in the forest areas of N2K, b) to foster the development of skills of forest related target groups through training and c) to raise awareness regarding forests in N2K, to disseminate the values of forested areas as well as to reduce human disturbance from forest users. The CPF for the FC, capacity building seminars for the personnel of the FS and relevant stakeholders, the e-App for forest visitors, and a broad communication and dissemination package for the general public were the tools to achieve the above project objectives.

Table of indicators: The evaluation of the project implementation was performed through the monitoring of specific project indicators. The project targets (mainly quantitative) set out in the proposal vs the results achieved are presented below:

Table 1. Indicators for the evaluation of the project implementation (from Action E2)

Project objective	Expected result / Deliverable	Monitoring protocol / Indicators	Target Value	Degree of completion	Source of verification	Comments
To assess the needs of the FS and other relevant stakeholders (FC) with regard to: a) knowledge and skills in undertaking forest management, and b) tools and information needed to accomplish job tasks successfully	Survey carried out to assess the needs of the FC	Questionnaires widely distributed to members of the FC (quantitative survey)	200	134%	Action A1.1 Deliverable	Sub-action A1.1. has been completed. The analysis was based on 268 questionnaires.
		Interviews and/or focus groups with selected members of FC (qualitative survey)	80	96%	Action C1 Deliverable	57 interviews and focus groups have taken place in framework of the 1st phase (assessment of baseline situation). Another 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted on project completion, providing input on satisfied and remaining needs
To facilitate dissemination of knowledge and exchange of best practice, and to strengthen cooperation between the FS and other stakeholders in forests within Natura 2000 sites	Online Collaboration Platform for Forests (CPF)	Number of CPF visits	15,000	112% [stats of 2022-10-31]	Final report of the project (Actions B1-B3)	16,848 visits/2,140 unique users [stats of 2022-10-31 after only few months of operation]. The number is growing at a fast pace.
		Number of CPF registered members	150	111% [stats of 2022-10-31]	Final report of the project (Actions B1-B3)	167 registered users [stats of 2022-10-31], after only few months of operation].
		Number of participants to CPF forum discussions and/or other interactive tools	100	0	Final report of the project (Actions B1-B3)	The letter of Director General of Forests dated 26.09.2022, which is addressed to all the forest services in Greece and encourages the use of the CPF forum is expected to enable attainment of this goal in the next few months.

Project objective	Expected result / Deliverable	Monitoring protocol / Indicators	Target Value	Degree of completion	Source of verification	Comments
To enhance the capacity of the personnel of FS (and other relevant sectors) in the fields of biodiversity conservation, restoration of coppices, adaptation of forest management to climate change, innovative funding and sustainable tourism	Training seminars to forest managers	Number of seminars organised by the project	8 seminars/ 5 themes	100%	Training documentation (participation lists etc.) (Action B4)	All themes covered with 2 live seminars and 4 webinars. It should be noted that initially, two seminars per theme were foreseen for three of the themes, to facilitate participation of trainees from remote areas. This was not necessary with webinars.
		Number of personnel of forest services (and other relevant sectors) trained	460	181%	Training documentation (participation lists etc.) (Action B4)	There were 1437 participations in the project seminars. Several of the stakeholders participated in two or more seminars; participants with at least one participation were 832. Most of them are coming from the Forest Service, the rest comes for other public services, are researchers or consultants etc
To increase the ability of forest users to access information and to reduce the disturbance they cause to	e-App for smartphones and tablets	Total downloads at the end of the project	10,000 ⁹	n/a	Final report of the project (Action B5)	The metric of number of downloads is not applicable for technical reasons, since the option of PWA was chosen for the App, as explained in section 6.1. On 2022-10-31 i.e. after few months of operation, the App had 31,584 visits and 5,913 unique visitors.

⁹ As amended in Midterm report

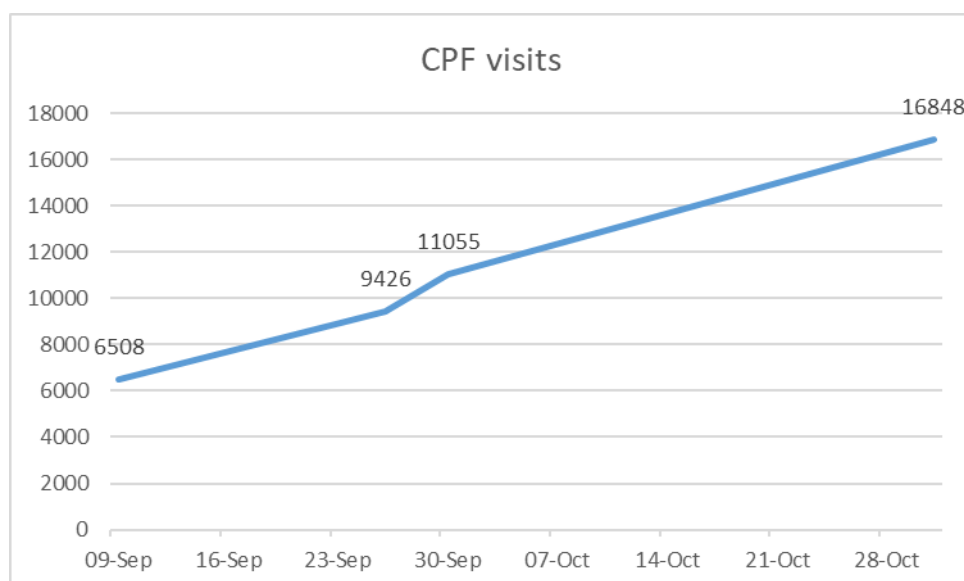
Project objective	Expected result / Deliverable	Monitoring protocol / Indicators	Target Value	Degree of completion	Source of verification	Comments
the areas they visit		Total visits		31,584 [stats of 2022-10-31]		
To inform and raise awareness to relevant stakeholders and to the general public, and to demonstrate that recreation and conservation can be compatible in Greek forests	Printed media and communication work	Number of three-page leaflet's copies (Gr and En)	2,500	100%	Midterm report of the project (Action D1)	Items printed
		Number of Layman's Report's copies (Gr and En)	250	100%	Final report of the project (Action D1)	Items printed
	Web media and communication work	Number of visits at Project Website	15,000	400% [stats of 2022-10-31]	Final report of the project (Action D3)	The project website has received 60,020 visits from 24,176 different users [User/Visits as of 2022-10-31]
		Number of e-Newsletters	11	100%	Final report of the project (Action D3)	All e-Newsletters have been sent so far to 1077 recipients
	Mass media and communication work	Number of articles (press and web)	15	360%	Final report of the project (Action D4)	54 articles have been published in websites, newsletters and newspapers, promoting project activities including the CPF and App launch.

Project objective	Expected result / Deliverable	Monitoring protocol / Indicators	Target Value	Degree of completion	Source of verification	Comments
		Number of interviews at local, regional and national media	5	60%	Final report of the project (Action D4)	Interviews took place before and after the CPF launch.
	Organisation of / participation in events	Number of events (fairs, exhibitions, meetings, other events)	9	360%	Final report of the project (Action D5)	The project was presented in 32 events (see action D5 above).

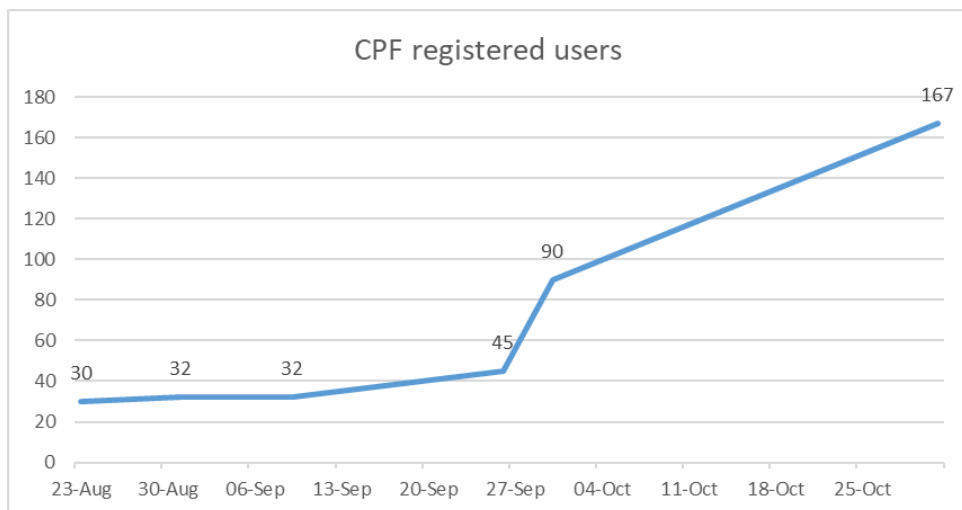
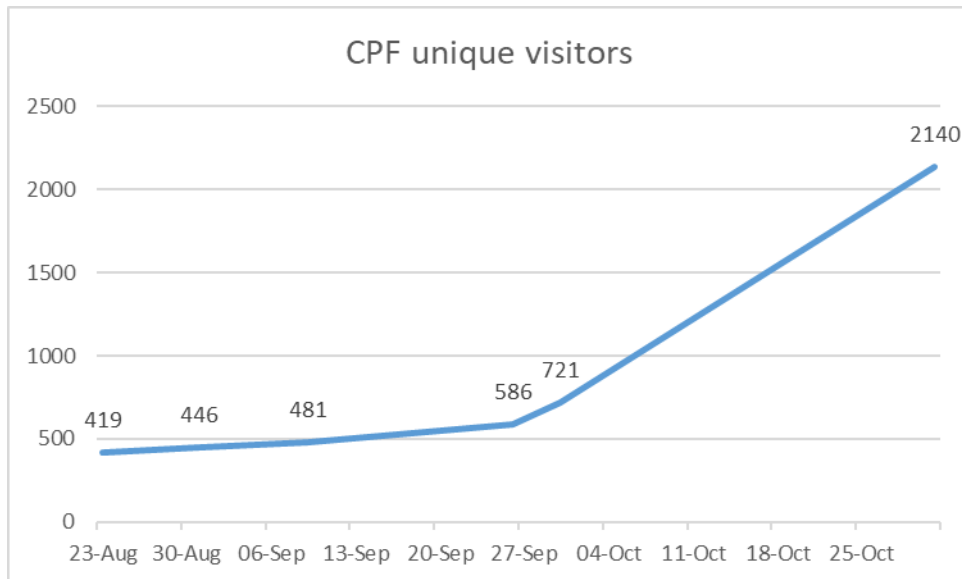
Comments on the results achieved

Surveys carried out to assess the needs of the FC: Both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews/focus groups) surveys formed the basis for the specification and development of all following project outputs. 268 individuals (against 200 foreseen in the project proposal) were reached through the questionnaire survey carried out in the framework of Action A1 (degree of completion 134%). As for the qualitative survey, in the first phase of implementation of Action C1, 57 interviews (out of 80 foreseen in total in the project proposal) were performed (degree of completion in phase A alone, 71.3%). On project completion, another 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted providing input on the degree of satisfaction of needs and remaining needs to be addressed in the future. This adds to 197 replies to questionnaire surveys carried out after the project seminars and webinars, although not initially foreseen.

Online Collaboration Platform for Forests (CPF): Two out of three quantitative targets (number of visits and registered users) set for the CPF use have been exceeded in only few months of its operation¹⁰. The numbers of visits, unique visitors and registered users, as well as their quick increase over the short period since the CPF launch as shown below, indicate that the members of FC found it useful and are beginning to use it. Particularly useful was the circular of the Director General of Forests (on 26.09.2022), addressed to all forest services in Greece, asking the personnel of forest services to register as CPF users and to use it. We expect that following the letter, the target with regard to the number of participants in the forum will also be met.

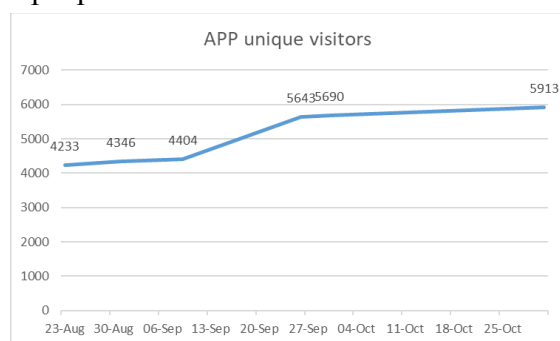
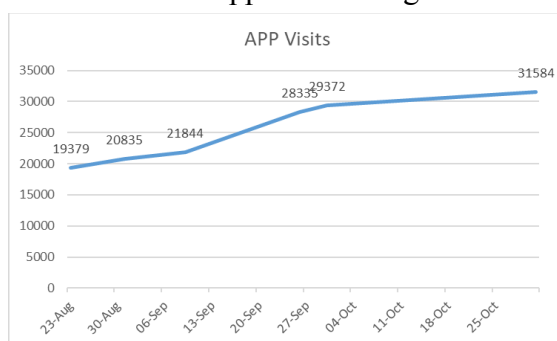


¹⁰ The CPF was released in May 2022. Measurements of its use are available since August 2022.



Out of the 167 registered users, 49% (82 users) come from the Forest Service (57 users from the Central Service and 25 from the regional departments). Six users (3.6%) represent private companies, 28 (16.8%) come from the research sector (University and Research organisations), 1 user from a local authority and 1 from the Fire Service. The remaining 49 users (29.3%) have registered as individuals.

e-App for smartphones and tablets: The numbers of visits and unique visitors is satisfactory. Their increase over the short period of time since the App's launch, as shown below, indicate that the App is attracting the interest of people.



They also show that the effort undertaken by the beneficiary to edit/update/enrich the information for each forest, to add information and photographs on plants and animals and to make functional improvements to the App, bear fruit. The effort will continue and the results in terms of visits/visitors are expected to be very satisfactory.

Number of visits at Project Website: The target set originally has been exceeded by far. The website has been visited by more than 24,000 unique visitors/individuals against 3,000 mentioned in the project proposal and has surpassed 60,000 views.

Number of events: Through its participation in 32 events/meetings/conferences etc. (against nine foreseen in the proposal), the project has already exceeded its target regarding this indicator (degree of completion, 360%). It should be added that the project has reached almost all its target groups through these events.

Training seminars to forest managers: The number of participants (832 in total) exceeded by far the target set originally. This is proof to the interest of target groups in the training offered by the project, which is an indication of good performance of Action A1. It is also the result of the successful choice to turn to webinars, when the pandemic started. What is also important is that through online seminars, it was possible to have speakers and participants from all over Greece and to reach all project's target groups.

Effectiveness of dissemination activities: The project became known to the Greek FC from its start, when around 1,000 members of the FC, which were contacted in the context of Action A1 to identify and assess their status and needs, were in parallel briefed on the project, its objectives, expected products and results. Furthermore, the project reached thousands of people through its main dissemination deliverables (i.e. the website, e-newsletters, Facebook, Twitter and ResearchGate accounts, articles in the press and on the web). We estimate that more dissemination activities reached more than 30,000 people, as the website alone has been visited by more than 24,000 individual users. Finally, at regional, national and international levels, the dissemination of the project and its aims has been achieved through the participation in events (meetings, conferences etc.) in Greece and abroad and through networking activities. After the launch of the CPF and the App, dissemination activities were intensified and the project objectives and results are becoming known to many more stakeholders and the public.

Policy Impact: The project was the first major effort to acquaint the Greek forest service, at all levels, and the wider forest community with the EU Habitats Directive, the N2K network, as well as the EU biodiversity strategies and climate action, and to encourage and facilitate them to include the relevant policy instruments as considerations when they perform their tasks.

This was done initially through seminars, the operation of the project website, the circulation of newsletters, the participation in massive events and in more targeted ones and, near the project end, the operation of the platform (CPF) and of the App for Greek forests.

The project actions reached a big number of target group members and had an impact on their level of awareness on the themes targeted, and their access to knowledge and information sources. Testament to this are the replies members of target groups gave when questioned/interviewed at project end (see Actions C1 and C2); for example, they stated that the seminars fulfilled their objectives; as part of this, the one on management and restoration improved very much their skills on the management of oak forests, (habitat type of Community interest according to the Habitats Directive).

The project contributed to the protection and management of forests in line with EU Forest Strategy to 2030 and EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 through its core actions, as well as

by participating in the preparation of the New Standards on drafting Forest Management Plans and the National Strategy for Forests. **All habitat types targeted by the project maintained or improved their conservation status in the period 2013-2018.**

As a contribution to the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, the project also lobbied to the Regions of Greece developing Plans for Adaptation to Climate Change, in order to integrate adaptation measures for biodiversity and natural ecosystems (forests and wetlands) into these Plans. The plans have started to be approved.

Further to that, the project contributed to sustainable tourism in protected areas, through its App where there is ample information on protected areas/species and guidance on good practices when visiting protected areas.

The project further sought to promote the contribution of EU and the LIFE in particular in the conservation and sustainable management of Greek forests; it therefore co-organised the online thematic conference “Challenges and Needs for Forest Management in the 21st Century - The European funding program LIFE and Forests in Greece” with the Greek LIFE Task Force, The Green Fund, MinEE and the European Commission, which was a very successful event with 483 attendees.

In view of all the above, it is fair to say that the project had an EU added value.

6.4. Analysis of benefits

For all its drawbacks, the project LIFE ForestLife gave a strong push to the Greek forest community towards becoming aware of conservation needs for N2K forests, better accessing and sharing knowledge, experience and good practices, improving skills and enhancing cooperation, cooperation. A tangible benefit was **the inclusion, in the new official and mandatory standards for forest management plans, of requirements related to: a) biodiversity, notably in N2K areas, and b) adaptation to climate change. This is an accomplishment, which is expected to produce long-term benefits, and the project is proud to have contributed to it.**

Direct benefits: The project had a tangible impact on the employees of the FS and other stakeholders related to forests. Specifically, the project supported the exchange of best practice and the development of skills of forest N2K site managers and other stakeholders, and enhanced cooperation between them and through the seminars, the operation of the web site and the social media and a broad set of dissemination and networking actions.

The project raised awareness of forest visitors and the general public regarding forests in N2K and disseminated the values of forested areas and the need to reduce human disturbance from forest users, through the App the guidelines and the other dissemination activities (i.e. website, newsletter, printed material, participation in events etc.). According to the reactions on the Facebook page of the project (likes, comments, views etc) the App attracted immediately after its publication the interest of people. An example of a direct benefit is the use of its deliverable “Guidelines for the Visitor management and design of environmental interpretation facilities” by Pieriki Anaptyxiaki on Mount Olympus.

Long-term environmental benefits: Apart from the promotion of the tools (CPF, e-App etc.) produced in the framework of LIFE Forestlife, a key consideration of this project was to address the pressures and threats to N2K forests and other forested areas through reaching and building capacity of the personnel of the FS at all levels. This is expected to improve their every-day practice in forests, in terms of sustainable management. Specifically, the project enhanced, through the project seminars and CPF, the capacity of the local FSs to

implement the approaches it promoted, including: a) adaptation of forest management to climate change, b) enhancement of forest biodiversity, c) restoration and rehabilitation of degraded coppice forests, d) visitor management and creation of environmental interpretation infrastructure and e) seeking financing.

Overall, the project promoted the improvement of forest management practices all over Greece; it is expected that forest managers, influenced by this project actions and empowered by the tools it produced, which will be maintained by the project beneficiaries, will gradually begin incorporating the above approaches in their everyday practice.

Socio-economic benefits: According to the findings of the actions C1 and C2: Monitoring of project impact and Monitoring of the project's socio-economic impact the project contributed to: a) increase funding especially in FS and other stakeholders at local level, b) access to expert knowledge within FS or not for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of forest products, communication etc. and c) training. The benefits of this can be significant, since forests that are managed properly in terms of sustainability, tend to provide upgraded social and economic services to the society; most notably local societies of mountainous forest areas can benefit from this. One of this project's endeavors was to provide the employees the FS with the skills to seek funding from national and European funding sources, including the LIFE project, in order to be able to implement the sound management practices promoted by the project. Information on available funding opportunities, as well as on previous and ongoing projects funded by the EU and the Greek State, collected by the project and disseminated in the CPF and seminars, is a means to improve the capacity of the FC to make use of available opportunities. Another benefit is that the positive experience from the webinars and the resources that will be available from CPF will assist future collaboration and training of personnel from the office or in the field, without the need for long and expensive trips.

Sustainability: Several project outputs will continue to operate after the project end with the technical and financial support of both project partners. In particular, the CPF will disseminate knowledge and promote cooperation between the FS and all relevant stakeholders at regional and local levels (DGFFE will be responsible for its operation and has taken the necessary administrative measures to ensure this is done). The App will also continue its operation and its content will be enriched/updated (EKBY will be responsible for updating its content). The project website will continue to operate for at least five years after project completion. Its content will be updated as well, at least by EKBY. Finally, both project beneficiaries will continue to take advantage of every opportunity to present the project and its results, mainly CPF and App and to take part in actions promoting networking on issues related to the management of N2K forest sites. Please note that the CPF will be used in the implementation of LIFE GoProForMed, which will run from 2022 to 2028.

Replicability: The project's concept idea can be replicated in the same and/or other sectors at the local, regional, national or even EU level. Specifically, the approach demonstrated in the framework of the project, regarding the exchange of best practice and the development of skills of forest managers and other personnel working in forests within N2K in Greece, can be replicated in other Mediterranean or European countries for forests or other ecosystem types. Networking activities, participation of the project in two national committees/working groups (for the National Strategy for Forests and the New Standards for Forest Management Plans) and as well lobbying to integrate project ideas and considerations into national and regional policies, already proved to be fruitful in that direction.

Best practice lessons: Although the project was not mandated to produce any new good practices, promoting good forest management practices in five thematic axes (management measures and forest biodiversity, adaptation of forest management to climate change, restoration and rehabilitation of degraded coppice forests, visitor management and creation of environmental interpretation infrastructure and financing and implementation of the Natura 2000 network) was at the core of the project activities. Further, a good practice that was tested and proved particularly successful was the organisation of online seminars, which allowed the participation of speakers and attendees practically from everywhere, thus overcoming any geographical, financial or other obstacles. The FS has been acquainted with organizing such seminars and can do so in the future, the CPF being a potential tool to use.

Innovation: The CPF is considered to be innovative at a national level. A couple of private, dispersed initiatives exist already (e.g. www.dasaxeio.com) on the dissemination of knowledge and best practices on forest management related issues, however, the CPF bears the validity mark of the central competent authority for forests in Greece, namely the DGFFE/MinEE. Finally, modern tools such as the e-App have been produced to be used to raise awareness of the public regarding forests in N2K, to disseminate the values of forested areas as well as to reduce human disturbance from forest users.

Policy implications: The project LIFE ForestLife, right from its start, contributed to policy-making in the field of forest protection and management, at a national level. As documented above, the project took active part in the process of drafting the new standards for Forest Management Plans, by providing input on the issues: management measures and forest biodiversity, adaptation of forest management to climate change and restoration and rehabilitation of degraded coppice forests. The aim of the new standards is to promote and integrate biodiversity conservation in forest management practices. The process was launched in January 2018 by the DGFFE and the new standards have been issued by form of a Ministerial Decision in April 2018. It is worth noting that these standards include, among others, provisions for integrating into the forest management plans measures for landscape protection and biodiversity conservation, measures for the conservation of fauna and flora habitats, and measures for adaptation of management to climate change. Further to the above, the new standards ensure that the conservation objectives set for protected N2K areas (under the Habitats Directive) are taken into account.

The project was also involved in the drafting of the National Strategy for Forests. This was a joint initiative by the MinEE and the Standing Committee on the Protection of the Environment of the Greek Parliament, launched in April 2018. The outcome of this process was the official adoption of the National Forest Strategy (Ministerial Decision 170195/758/26.11.2018 (Official Journal B' 5351). Several directions closely related or identical with the content of the project are included. In particular, Horizontal Axis 1, Direction 6 calls for the creation of web-based open portals for information, management and monitoring, and open geospatial databases. A relevant progress indicator is also proposed. Horizontal Axis 3 (Research and Innovation) (Direction 1), includes among other Directions: the creation of a) volunteer registry for the scientific staff of Forest Service, b) a repository for research and innovation etc. Direction 3 foresees the best use of the forests within N2K for the enhancement of innovation and the adaptation of best practices in Greece. Conservation of biodiversity, protection of forest ecosystems and optimisation of ecosystem services (Vertical Axis 3) and Climate change (Vertical Axis 2) are also closely related to and arise from the project objectives. Moreover, after the restructuring of FS with the transfer of all regional FS offices under the DGFFE, the CPF will act as a key information channel of the FS.

7. Key Project-level Indicators

The spreadsheet with KPIs has been filled in.

At the comments column there are explanations as to where the value of the indicator comes from/what it refers to. More details on each of these values are given in relevant other parts of this report, notably section 6.3.

