

National Report for UNFF-5 - Greece

Please provide information on the following:

II. Progress and issues related to implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action

General

1. Please provide additional or new information on initiatives taken or lessons learned since 1997 further to the information on forests included in your national reports¹ to UNFF 2, UNFF 3 and UNFF 4, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and other international instruments and organizations on the following points:

- assessment (including of the relevance, priority, status of implementation, planned actions) of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the national context
- development and implementation of your national forest programme or similar national policy framework for forests,
- international cooperation, including development and implementation of partnerships,
- mechanisms or initiatives to facilitate stakeholder participation, including indigenous and local communities, in forest sector planning, decision-making and/or forest management.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 2

Please provide information on: activities undertaken since 1997, progress made, constraints encountered, lessons learned, and issues that have emerged, as well as relevant information related to means of implementation (financing, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and capacity -building) related to the following elements:

Combating deforestation and forest degradation

2. preparing diagnostic studies to analyse historical and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including processes outside the forest sector

- Greece participated in the MEDACTION programme by EU, which studied the political framework of forestry in EU with particular emphasis on Greece, Spain and Portugal.
- In addition to the above, a number of studies have been conducted by the forestry departments in the universities as well as by the forest research institutes, especially on forest fires and erosion phenomena.
- For the purposes of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, an Action Plan has been adopted, which takes into account the special conditions of Greece.

3. formulating and implementing national policies and strategies, through an open and participatory process, for addressing the underlying causes of deforestation

- In 2003 a new forest law adopted by the Greek Parliament, which improved the framework for the forest management in Greece.
- Also, another law has been adopted concerning the establishment of management authorities on the national parks and the protected areas.
- The Forum on Agricultural Policy, is a body where all the relevant stakeholders participate, and where issues of importance for agriculture and forestry are discussed.

4. raising awareness of the importance of issues related to deforestation and forest degradation and the multiple values of forests

- A great number of info-days and conferences have been organised by the Directorate of Forest Resources Development of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food. In addition, numerous leaflets and informative material has been published by the same Directorate with the scientific contribution of University Professors or Institute Researchers.
- The National Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (EKPA), established in 2000, having as a purpose to improve reporting on environmental issues and raising awareness on sustainable development issues.
- Various info-days and workshops have been organized by the forestry departments of the universities, the Forest Research Institute, the General Directorate for the Development and Protection of Forests and Natural Environment (Ministry of Rural Development and Food), and the focal points for the UNCCD, the CBD and the UNFCCC.

Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forest and fragile ecosystems

5. creating or expanding protected areas to safeguard forest and related ecosystems and their full range of values and, developing and applying criteria and methodologies for assessing the conditions and management effectiveness in protected forest areas

- Thirteen National Parks, two marine national parks including forested land areas, 19 Aesthetic Forests, 56 Protected Monuments of Nature, 151 Special Protection Areas and 239 proposed Sites of Community Importance (to be included in the Natura-2000 ecological network of EU), exist in Greece. The Directorate of National Parks, Aesthetic Forests and Game Management, of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, and the respective Directorate of the Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with other relevant authorities, designate new areas to be included in the "Network Natura 2000" and in general, areas to be protected.
- In order to avoid any negative effect on the environment, an Environmental Impact Assessment Study is a prerequisite for every construction work. The management of the protected areas and the national parks is being done according to management plans that are conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development and Food.
- In addition to the above, Special Environmental Studies, are a prerequisite for the designation of an area as protective, and are conducted under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment. Those studies include, among others, the management measures to be taken.
- The designation of management authorities of the national parks and the protected areas is being done according to a law that has been adopted by the Greek Parliament. Those management authorities are participatory bodies having, until now, a consultative role in the management of the areas. The implementation of the management plans is being done by the Forest Service in the state forests.
- A pilot project on monitoring has being carried out in Dadia Wildlife Refuge (Special Protection Area).

6. developing and implementing partnership mechanisms to engage forest owners, private sector, indigenous people and local communities in the planning and management of forest conservation areas and developing and implementing a range of innovative mechanisms for financing and encouraging forest conservation

- The above provision is included in the law which ratified the CBD in Greece. However, it's implementation is still in a preliminary stage.

- The Management Authorities of the National Parks are participatory bodies, where all the relevant stakeholders participate (prefectures, NGOs, etc).
- The activities in the National parks are co-financed by the EU LIFE Programme, providing a strong incentive.
- Incentives are given in national programmes for activities in areas of high value for the people, especially in sites of the Natura-2000 network.

7. giving high priority in national forest programs to the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests and trees in environmentally critical areas, recognising the linkage between forest protection and sustainable development and improving the coordination among such policies and programmes

- In Greece, sustainable forest management is traditionally applied. Forest ecosystems cover almost half of the Greek territory (49.4 %). Due to a number of factors, such as the geographic position, the climate, the intense relief, the geology and the human activities, the forests in Greece play a multifunctional role. In particular, besides their productive function which contributes, among the others, in the income and livelihood of the people living in rural areas, the forests in Greece play a very important hydrological, recreational, hygienic and environmental role for the country's economy and the inhabitants' quality of life. The deforestation, caused by forest fires, insects and diseases during drought periods, and limited encroaching human activities, is counterbalanced by the natural afforestation of abandoned agricultural lands, the natural rehabilitation of degraded forest ecosystems, as well as the afforestation activities as part of rural development and afforestation programmes, resulting in a stable proportion of forests in the country, with a tendency to increase. The above, among the others, forms the main factor for the protection of the mountainous mainland of Greece from erosion phenomena.
- In the new forest law that was adopted by the Greek Parliament in 2003, special emphasis is given to the protection forests.

Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover

8. expanding forested area, establishing and managing plantations to enhance production of forest goods and services, while avoiding the replacement of natural ecosystems, and recognizing the role of imports in satisfying the needs for forest products and services

N/A

9. promoting the regeneration and restoration of degraded forest areas including through partnerships and building capacities to promote effective participation in decision making, and development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies

N/A

10. improving the efficiency of international cooperation to support the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and building capacity to monitor forest resources

N/A

Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and promotion of natural and planted forests

11. promoting the creation of new forest resources through plantations and recognizing their role in rehabilitation of degraded lands and forests in environmentally critical areas

Only restricted areas in Greece can be considered as environmentally critical. A short description of the forest ecosystems in Greece and their role has been done above (Question 7).

12. promoting policies to meet increasing demand for wood and non-wood forest products and services, through sustainable forest management.

- In the new forest law, that was adopted in 2003, the forestry framework in Greece is being improved. The basis for this law is the Article 24 of the Greek Constitution, about the protection of natural environment.
- The demands for wood products are covered at about 35% by the production of the Greek forests and the rest by imports of timber.
- The demands for non-wood forest products and services are covered by the sustainable management of the Greek forests.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 3

Please refer to your national report if appropriate, or provide new or updated information on: activities undertaken since 1997, progress made, constraints encountered, lessons learned, and issues that have emerged, as well as relevant information related to means of implementation (financing, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and capacity-building) to support the following actions:

Economic aspects of forests, including trade

13. valuation of forest goods and services (this may include, among other things, the development and use of new valuation methodologies, valuation of a wider range of goods and services, and policy decisions that reflect a more comprehensive assessment of forest values).

- A number of studies are or have been carried out by the Laboratory of Forest Economics, Section of Planning and Development of Natural Resources, Dept. of Forestry and Natural Environment, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, regarding the valuation of the forests and pastures, the valuation of the sustainable multifunctional use of the natural resources under protection and the valuation of the mapping of forest resources.
- Numerous studies/publications have been produced by the above and other labs of the same department on the multifunctionality and the management of forest resources, on the forest policy, on rural development, on forest enterprises, on environmental education, on forest certification, etc.

14. the amount, scope, or quality of market data and information for wood and non-wood forest products and their substitutes.

- The data for the raw wood production as well as for the non-wood products is being provided by the regional and local Forest Services in Greece, while the data for the processed wood

products is being provided by the General Secretariat of National Statistical Service of Greece. That data serve statistical purposes and are used for planning the future activities.

15. use of economic and policy instruments to facilitate progress towards sustainable forest management (these may include improved tax policies and forest revenue collection systems)

- Incentives are given in the new forest law, such as tax-free forest products from private forests, the management by the state even of forests not fully owned by the state, for environmental purposes, etc.
- Fuel wood is being supplied either for free or for a small price, to the people leaving in rural areas.
- Technical wood of limited quantity can be also supplied upon request, and for a small price, to the people leaving in rural areas.
- Another incentive is the provision of fuel to the forest workers in reduced price, to cover the needs of their equipment.
- The quantity of wood harvested from a forest per year, is always less than the annual increment, with a purpose to secure sustainability.

16. efforts to reduce negative impacts of trade,

- The illegal logging in Greece is extremely restricted, less than 1% of the total amount of legal logging, which is a result of the efficient mechanism for survey, monitoring and control.

17. participation in forest certification and labelling schemes and work toward mutual recognition and comparability of such schemes.

- Efforts have been made for the certification of the Greek forests according to the PEFC scheme. The procedure is on-going and a Management Committee for the PEFC-Ellas is about to be established with the participation of various stakeholders (Ministry, Research Institute, NGOs, etc).
- A pilot project has been carried out in mount Menalo, where an attempt to issue provisions for the certification of the Greek forests, based on both PEFC and FSC provisions, has been made.

18. efforts to reduce illegal trade (exports from or imports into your country) in wood or non-wood forest products. Please indicate achievements made, lessons learned, constraints encountered, and planned initiatives.

- Special provisions have been included in the law which ratifies the CITES Convention in Greece. That law requires the existence of certain certificates or verifications for the legality and the origin of the wood and non-wood products and has been successful in its implementation.

Forest health and productivity

19. If damage to forests from air pollution is a significant problem in your country, please provide information on recent national strategies or programmes to minimize damaging air pollution. Please indicate if your

country is involved in any international cooperation efforts aimed at strengthening scientific knowledge, increasing information access or reducing the impacts of long-range air pollution on forests, as well as your views on the role of enhanced cooperation at the regional and international levels to facilitate such work .

- Greece, and in particular the Forest Research Institute, is a member of the ICP-Forests Network (International Cooperative Programme on Forests) of the UNECE. A network of plots (Level I and Level II) have been established in Greece and a number of parameters concerning the growth conditions are monitored on a regular basis. In particular, Greece has ninety one (91) Level I and four (4) Level II plots, representing important forest ecosystems (Maquis, Oaks, Beech, Fir) and geological types of the country. Meteorological stations, operating near the plots. The following parameters are monitored: crown condition, soil, foliage, increment, deposition, soil solution, meteorology, ground vegetation, phenology, air quality (ozone), litterfall. With respect to national evaluations/interpretations the following have been done:
 1. Calculation (each year) of volume-weighted monthly and annual concentrations and monthly and annual water and ion fluxes for bulk precipitation, throughfall and stemflow.
 2. Recorded meteo instrument charts are “read” and monthly tables are constructed with daily values of each mandatory meteorological parameter.
 3. Extensive and intensive phenological observations are analysed and the beginning and duration of each “growing phase” is compared with the corresponding phases of the previous year.
 4. Ozone like symptoms are identified and quantified for the main forests species of each plot.
- Based on the results from the above monitoring and assessment, a number of scientific publications have been issued.
- The results obtained so far have shown that non significant damages from air pollution occur only in a few places in Greece, as a result of the specific local climatic conditions.

Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs

20. Please indicate progress made and lessons learned in efforts to harmonize or to make compatible policy frameworks in your country (e.g. national forest programme or a similar policy framework for forests, biodiversity strategies and action plans, national action plans to combat desertification, etc.) that collectively address the full range of forest values.

- In 2003 a new forest law adopted by the Greek Parliament, which improved the framework for the forest management in Greece and which addresses all the aspects of forest management giving particular emphasis on the multifunctional role of forests. However, some problems appeared in its implementation regarding mainly the ownership status of a limited percentage of Greek forests (15.25%), which is a complicated issue in Greece.
- Regarding the activities for the UNCCD, the Action Plan of Greece to Combat Desertification has been adopted and it is at its early stage of implementation.
- About the activities for the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, since the details for the inventories of the forests have been decided in 2004, the two Action Plans drawn so far didn't have any provision about the forests. However, until now, taking into account the function of forests as carbon sinks, the sustainable management of the Greek forests was further promoted and, in particular, the forest management and the fire-preventive and fire-suppressive measures were further financed. In addition, a study was carried out about the “Proposal for Actions for the utilisation of the Articles 3.3 and 3.4 of the Kyoto

Protocol, in Greece” and another one on the estimation of the emissions related to the above articles.

An ad-hoc committee to serve the purposes of the UNFCCC has been established, having as members, experts from the different ministries involved.

- The Action Plan on Biological Diversity is at its final stage of preparation.

21. Please provide information on recent efforts to assess long-term trends in national supply and demand for wood, non-wood forest products and services and whether your country’s national forest programme or similar policy framework for forests takes into consideration future needs for forest goods and services. Please provide views on how enhanced cooperation at the regional and international levels, including through UNFF, could further facilitate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action

- A review of the supply and demand of forest products and services is being carried out on an annual basis by the Directorate of Forest Resources Development of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food. The tendencies and the demands on particular forest products and services are taken into account in planning the future management activities.
- The policy framework in Greece is in accordance with the relevant policies and strategies of EU and also with the declarations and resolutions of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). The Criteria & Indicators developed by the MCPFE process have been also adopted.
- The cooperation at both regional and international level is a key point on the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. However, due to the multifunctionality of forests and the subsequent involvement of various stakeholders, cooperation even at national level is a very important and key factor. The aforementioned multifunctionality of forests and the involvement of various stakeholders makes the need for information as another key point. The availability of information will facilitate the cooperation, the decision making and the planning of future actions. Taken at regional or international level, the availability of information will ensure that the special conditions and needs that exist in a particular country will be taken onboard and that the future activities will be designed accordingly.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 4

Please refer to your national report if appropriate, or provide new or updated provide information on: activities undertaken since 1997, progress made, constraints encountered, lessons learned, and issues that have emerged, as well as relevant information related to means of implementation (financing, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and capacity-building) related to the following elements:

Social and cultural aspects of forests

22. promoting the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of forest genetic resources and addressing the issue of intellectual property rights, including the identification of the origins of forest genetic resources, taking into account work undertaken by the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international agreements

- Greece is a member and has ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity and there is on-going reporting work on Access and Benefit Sharing .
- The greater percentage of the forests in Greece are state-owned and they are managed by the local Forest Services. Local cooperatives of forest workers also participate in the management activities. The access to the forests is open to the public and many places for recreational purposes have been established.

- The artificial reforestation activities have mainly a protective role, and the material that is used comes from seed orchards, established for that purpose taken into account the great genetic variation of the forest species in Greece. The natural regeneration is also promoted so as to secure the maintenance and preservation of the local genetic material and variation. The public has also access to and can use the material collected from the seed orchards and from the forest nurseries.
- In many places around Greece cooperatives have been established by women, having as activities the utilisation of non-wood forest products and the promotion of the local knowledge about those products.

23. strengthening the role of women in sustainable forest management, including through capacity building and greater participation in community-based forest management

- In many places around Greece cooperatives have been established by women, having as activities the utilisation of non-wood forest products and the promotion of the local knowledge about those products.

24. integrating local and indigenous communities in sustainable forest management programmes, particularly as regards (a) recognition and respect of the customary and traditional rights and privileges of indigenous and local communities, (b) participation in decision making regarding the management of forests, (c) the attainment of secure land tenure arrangements, (d) capacity building and technology transfer for sustainable forest management directed at indigenous and local communities.

- There are no indigenous communities, per se, in Greece.
- In some areas, the local populations manage the local oak and chestnut forests, in a traditional coppice way. The above management takes place mainly in private-owned forests and in a limited percentage of state-owned forests. The above way of management occurs in order to support the local populations.
- The Management Authorities of the National Parks are participatory bodies, where all the relevant stakeholders participate (prefectures, NGOs, etc). The same goes for the management authorities of the protection and protective forests.
- The new forest law includes also provisions to settle some land tenure problems that exist in Greece.
- Local cooperatives of forest workers participate in the forest management activities. The Rural Development Regulation of EU, which is implemented in Greece through the Operational Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development and the Restructuring of the Countryside, gives the incentives and co-finances forest workers to modernise their equipment.

Traditional forest-related knowledge

25. inventorying, cataloguing, and applying traditional forest related knowledge for sustainable forest management and promoting research on TFRK with the involvement of the knowledge holders.

As it was stated elsewhere, in Greece, sustainable forest management is traditionally applied and the SFM methods applied take into account the TFRK, where such knowledge exists. It is documented mainly in the library of the Department of Forestry and Natural Environment, which was established in 1917.

In Greece, the majority of the forests belong to the state and they are managed by the regional forest services by employing the local cooperatives of forest workers. In doing so, the forest workers apply both the traditional knowledge that is inherited from previous generations, in addition to modern technological methods.

26. supporting the application of intellectual property rights and/or other protection regimes for traditional forest related knowledge, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of traditional forest related knowledge, innovations and practices.

As it was stated in the previous topic, the traditional forest-related knowledge is incorporated in the SFM methods applied in the Greek forests. Thus, that knowledge has the form of tradition which is still operational, and it is attributed to the local population.

Scientific forest-related knowledge

27. disseminating scientific knowledge to all interested parties, including through new and innovative ways, and strengthening capacity and mobilizing funding for national and regional research institutions and networks

- The General Directorate for the Development and Protection of Forests and the Natural Environment, of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, organises info-days, workshops and conferences on various scientific issues of interest. The same General Directorate publishes leaflets, booklets as well as the proceedings of the info-days, the workshops and the conferences and distributes them to all the local forest services as well as to other authorities involved and interested bodies.
- Similar activities are also carried out by the forestry departments of the universities, the technical educational institutes on forestry, as well as by the Forest Research Institute.
- The Geotechnical Chamber of Greece publishes a monthly newsletter which covers all aspects including the scientific, and also the Geotechnical Scientific Issues, a scientific journal published every two months.
- The Society of Forest Science of Greece is organising a scientific conference on a biannual basis, where people dealing with forestry from the universities, the research institutes, the ministries, the forest services and other authorities participate. The proceedings from these conferences are widely distributed.
- The Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources, of the Democritus University of Thrace is a member of the MEDFOREX Network (MEDiterranean FORest EXternalities), which is established under the European Forest Institute (EFI).
- Greece participates in the Silvae Mediterranea initiative of FAO.

28. enhancing interaction between scientific research and policy processes, including priority setting of research, addressing of knowledge gaps and using scientific knowledge to support decision making

- In the preparation of the new forest law in Greece, a drafting and consultative committee was established, where, among others, representatives of the scientific community participated.
- In the participatory process for the certification of the Greek forests, all relevant stakeholders participate, and among them the representatives of the scientific community.

- Working groups with the participation of the scientific community are established by the General Directorate for the Development and Protection of Forests and the Natural Environment, of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, to deal with emergency issues and issues of interest.

Monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions

29. improving information on national forest resources, making the information widely available, assisting other countries in their related efforts.

- The Directorate of Forest Resources Development of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food carries out a review of the activities of the forest sector in Greece, which includes information on the forest resources. This review is disseminated to all the regional forest services and other interested authorities.

Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

30. developing and using criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management (at national level and/or subnational level and for policy, planning, management and/or monitoring purposes), and participating in regional and/or international C&I processes

- Greece is a member of the pan-european process of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and uses the set of Criteria & Indicators developed by the above process.

III. Preparation of the Report

31. Describe the process of preparing this report, including which government agencies and stakeholder groups were involved, and the extent to which they contributed. Provide information on successes, challenges and lessons learned in the preparation of this report.

The information for this report was provided by the Directorates of the General Directorate for the Development and Protection of Forests and the Natural Environment, of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Department of Forestry & Natural Environment of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the Department of Forestry & Management of the Environment & Natural Resources, the Forest Research Institute, the focal points for the CBD, the UNCCD and the UNFCCC.