



MIRTO Minimizing forest fire risks for tourists

**2009 CALL FOR PROPOSALS
CIVIL PROTECTION FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT
FOR COOPERATION PROJECTS
ON PREVENTION AND
PREPAREDNESS**



European Civil Protection

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MIRTO - The rationale - 1

The South European regions are heavily affected by forest fires, with more than 50 000 fire events recorded every year. The Mediterranean islands, in particular, show during the summers season, a high fire risk and fire represents here one of the major threats for tourist safety and for the environment.

Several measures have been adopted to increase public awareness of forest fires and to enhance the preparedness of both residents and tourists. All the current mass communication channels are used to reach the general public but a lack of strategy, targeted communication and continuity over time are often observed

As Mediterranean islands represent one of the leading tourist destinations in Europe the effectiveness of awareness raising campaigns is of utmost relevance. Specific actions targeted to different sectors of society (tourists, land owners, farmers, etc) and educational activities (i.e. appropriate behaviour to prevent fires and react after fires start) are considered urgently needed activities.



MIRTO - The rationale - 2

Different behaviors (incautious, dangerous or inappropriate) often shown by tourists can cause fire breakouts. In most cases, however, tourists have to be considered as victims of forest fires.

Tourists are particularly vulnerable to forest fires as they:

- are psychologically unprepared to face an emergency,
- come generally from areas where forest fires are unknown or rare,
- ignore local fire danger conditions and underestimate risks,
- have little knowledge of the region they are visiting,
- do not speak the local language and have poor access to local information sources.



Forest fires may cause significant downturns in tourism levels. Nonetheless the tourist industry often fear that forest fire prevention campaigns may give a picture of unsafety to their region.

On the contrary, participation of local authorities, tourist operators, local inhabitants may rise significantly the effectiveness of prevention campaigns and result in an increase of public awareness.

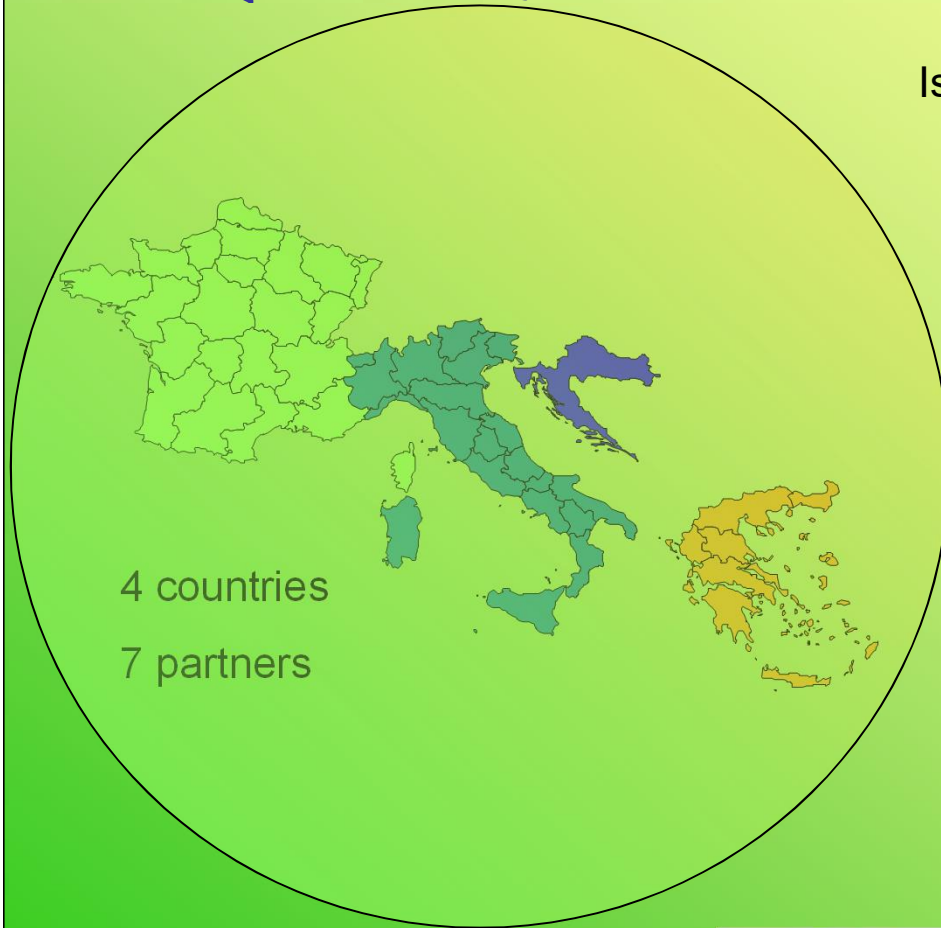
MIRTO - The aims

- Enhance public awareness
- Improve preparedness of tourists in fire-prone areas
- Improve effectiveness of forest fire information campaigns which address tourists
- Contribute to reduce human victims, economic and environmental damages from forest fires in tourism areas
- Raise public awareness of forest fire risks and adequate behaviour without damaging tourism economy



- Develop innovative cooperation and communication methodologies
- Improve cooperation between public and private operators with different roles and functions (civil protection – tourism promotion)
- Cooperation between tourists' countries facing similar issues
- Identify and propose communication strategies and effective information materials to be adopted in larger campaigns.

MIRTO - The team



4 countries

7 partners



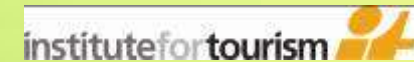
Ambiente Italia
Istituto di ricerche, Milano



Prefecture of Magnesia,
Volos (GR)



Provincia di Livorno (I)



Institute for tourism,
Zagreb (KR)



University of Thessalia,
Volos (GR)



Entente pour la forêt Méditerranéenne,
Valabre (F)



Parco Nazionale Arcipelago
Toscano, Portoferraio (I)

MIRTO - The tasks - 1

1. Collection and critical assessment of content and effectiveness of existing information campaigns

2. Information needs assessment: critical assessment of information needs based on actual information level and risk, preceded by collection of data regarding the forest fire issue in the project areas,

3. International information and experience exchange:

- a) exchange of information needs assessments between countries,
- b) comparison of methodologies for assessment, for development and implementation of information campaigns, by means of workshops held during information needs assessment, methodology and monitoring/evaluation.



MIRTO - The tasks - 2

4. Implementation of a highly effective pilot information campaign for Mediterranean islands:

production of an **information video** for broadcasting on ferry boats and **handbooks** for distribution to tourists on camp sites and holiday house occupants during summer. Effectiveness to be assured by means of: accurate **information needs assessment** (national and international assessment of people's information needs),

involvement of communication experts to provide clear but reassuring message to tourists (essential to encourage tourism industry cooperation)

involvement of specific groups (e.g. young people) in the definition of communication campaigns to better address people with the same age,

cooperation with tourism and travel industry – ferry boat companies (essential to reach target during travel and at point of arrival) cooperation of territorial public authorities to give authority to the campaign and bring together civil protection and economic operators involvement of national civil protection authorities to ensure use of achieved results and products.

MIRTO - The tasks - 3

5. Development of a joint methodology for information campaigns addressing emergency civil protection situations and tourists:

the pilot campaign (focused on island territories, addressing principally domestic and southern European tourist flows) is the basis of a discussion to develop a joint approach and best practices collection, core of the project, which considers the particular problems of improving preparedness, enhance awareness and give the necessary information for a correct behaviour in case of emergency. The general methodology is to be based on the key elements experimented and developed in the pilot campaign to ensure effectiveness: strong information basis, well-considered communication strategy, public/private cooperation, effective use of international cooperation.



MIRTO – The pilot areas



South Corsica

Tuscan Archipelago

Croatian Islands

Sporades Islands

MIRTO – The budget

Total cost of the project € 408 750
EC contribution € 306 561



MIRTO – The timetable

Project begin 2009 November 1st
Project end 2011 April 30th
Project duration 18 months