Given their multi-functional nature, management of the Mediterranean forests necessitates the development of a more integrated approach. With a view to adapting to climate change, it is absolutely crucial that modes of forest governance should move forwards to enable the Mediterranean area to develop in harmonious and sustainable fashion. Enhancing cooperation between the forestry sector and other sectors involved in Mediterranean forest management (water, agriculture, energy, tourism, environment, land planning, etc.), as well as between the various stakeholders involved at local and regional level (forest owners, breeders, farmers, environmental associations, local councillors, park managers, the general public, etc.), is therefore of the essence. This argues for participatory decision-making processes and improving the means for dialogue on the planning and management of rural areas.

In response to these challenges, territorial project leaders have developed appropriate integrated, interactive management initiatives, some of which were presented and discussed during the « Forests, society and territory » sessions. This provided an opportunity for far-ranging exchange of experience, methodological tools and ideas between parties interested in the sustainable management of Mediterranean areas. The discussion led to the identification of the main issues, risks and opportunities as well as keys to the success of such approaches, with recommendations subsequently being drafted for the attention of local decision-makers, forest managers and international cooperation stakeholders. The outcome of these sessions will feed into the work programme to be drawn up for Silva Mediterranea’s group n°3 on « Mediterranean Forests and sustainable development ».
Session Programme

Summaries of the presentations can be found at:
http://www.planbleu.org/publications/2emeSemaineForestiereMed_SessionsPB/Programme_resumes_FST.pdf

The power point presentations can be downloaded from:
http://www.planbleu.org/actualite/fr/SessionsPB_AIFM_SemaineForestiereMed.html

Session 1

Accounts of territorial experience with the participative management of Mediterranean woodland ecosystems, based on four case studies:

- The participative creation of Bouhachem Natural Park (Nisrin Alami, Tangier-Tetouan Regional Council, Morocco)
- Dannieh: National Park project for the protection and promotion of forest heritage (Mohamad Saadieh, Dannieh municipality, Lebanon)
- Regional nature parks in the Region of Puglia: example of the « Terra delle Gravine » Park (Patrizia Tartarino, Bari University, Italy)
- Public participation in forest management and proposals for improvement: the case of Mersin (Ahmet Senyaz, Ministry of the environment and forests, Turkey)

Debate with participants.

Session 2

Presentation of two methodological approaches to territorial and forest governance:

- The « Imagine » method of systemic and prospective sustainability analysis (Julien Le Tellier, Plan Bleu)
- The Model Forest concept (Riccardo Castellini, Mediterranean Model Forest Network)

Critical analysis of two methods for applying territorial and forest governance:

- Territorial forest policy and governance tools in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region (David Devynck, COFOR PACA, France)
- Master Plans for the sustainable development of the Sierra Espuña nature park (Mario Velamazán, Murcia Region Autonomous Community, Spain)

Debate with participants.

Session 3

Summary of previous sessions by the rapporteur (Pierre Dérioz, Avignon University) and discussion.

Formulation of conclusions and recommendations.
Summary of presentations and discussions

In his analysis of the presentations and discussions, the rapporteur, Mr. Pierre Dérioz, identified points of convergence and flagged up crucial points for improvement, which were reflected in the final recommendations.

His summing-up focused on the following points:

1. Including woodlands in the global territorial issue

Besides recognising the multifunctional nature of Mediterranean woodlands, most of the presentations addressed the inclusion of woodlands within the broad-ranging issues of territorial development, and in particular combating poverty by promoting activities, some of which may be based on woodland resources.

Most interventions did not focus solely on the woodland issue even in terms of its multifunctionality, tending rather to address the broader territorial scale, with all of its socio-economic issues. Moreover, the scale varies within itself:

- The park scale in the case of Bouhachem, Terre delle Gravine and Sierra Espuña;
- The rural federation scale in the case of Dannieh (in its solidarity with urban areas);
- A dual scale for Mersin province and the villages selected, Sierra Espuña Park and each of its four « pilot » villages.

Although some territorial initiatives are certainly rooted in the woodland issue - Territorial Forest Charter, Massif and Territorial Development Plans, Urbion and Yalova Model Forests - they do not focus on the woodland sector alone: « the Model Forest concept is misleading, since it is not a model…and is not (only) about forests! ». Including issues relating to woodland ecosystems thus makes it possible to avoid the pitfall of the conservative, naturalist approach: « it sometimes seems as if the Park is more interested in biological species than in human activities » (agricultural representative from Terre delle Gravine).

Virtually all speakers raised issues other than forestry (albeit related thereto):

- Development, land planning and combating poverty (Dannieh municipality, Mersin province, Yalova, Bouhachem park);
- Services to the public (Sierra Espuña park);
- Urban sprawl (Dannieh municipality, Terre delle Gravine park);
- Tourism and leisure, virtually in all sites.

Thus when included within these territorial initiatives, « woodlands » can also benefit from the dynamics created by other issues. There is, however, also the risk that the woodland sector could be marginalised if it is seen as playing a secondary role.

Forest issues are clearly part of a systemic territorial vision. By « placing mankind at the heart of the area », territorial approaches of « regional natural park » type strive to express this vision in real terms. The Imagine method has adopted this systemic approach as its first « pillar ».
2. Protection and sustainable management of the Mediterranean forests facing the challenge of socio-economic reality

For all stakeholders, from small-scale forestry owners to States, via the municipalities, the issue of woodland management and its objectives (protection, production) often bluntly arises in economic terms, when assessment of the costs it implies is weighed up against the income it generates or could potentially produce. Multiple costs are involved (management but also « non-management »), but the types of « benefit » may also be multiple: timber, non-wood forest products, tourism, carbon storage, water regime regulation and even fire prevention. This raises the issue of the beneficiaries (possibly society as a whole) contributing to management costs.

The economic dimension also links up with the question of the time and spatial scales governing activities: the short term vision of decision-makers and the demands of local stakeholders tend to encourage resource exploitation, whereas the long term external ownership vision is more geared towards conservation.

Assessment of the policies implemented as well as the means allotted to them is a further issue at stake, particularly from the point of view of them producing lasting effects. Several speakers (Territorial Forest Charter, Bouhachem Park, Model Forests and even Dannieh municipality) stressed the need for specific core action on the resource or on associated sectors (cork, chestnut, mushrooms, etc.) and drew attention to the risks relating to non-sustainable subsidies. Interreg type instruments, for example, which are useful for initiating inter-territorial cooperation action, should give way to more specific structural funds. Local governance can only be improved if the project approach is replaced with a process and learning approach with long term vision.

The creation of Bouhachem natural park demonstrates a clear awakening to the fact that the protection and sustainable management of natural resources and landscapes necessarily hinges on the involvement of local stakeholders, which is only possible if the aims of protection dovetail with development objectives: « what is at stake is developing assets to enhance people’s existence through revenue-generating activities. This is the only way to sustainably protect natural resources ».

The approach adopted in Mersin stresses resource and revenue issues, which emerged from the participatory diagnosis, and from an environmental point of view acknowledges erosion and over-grazing. The diagnosis prompted stakeholders to envisage two different scenarios: a « pink » one, where the change towards sustainable management is underpinned by adequate means, and a « black » one in which a lack of means encourages the persistence of practices which threaten or destroy the forests. « Income from timber production is currently channelled to the Turkish government. The challenge now before us is to more fairly share out the benefits rendered by the forests to ensure that they benefit local people (biomass, pastoral farming,...) and improve their living conditions ».

The Dannieh experience illustrates how difficult it is to maintain a forest protection policy against a backdrop of marked poverty (56% of inhabitants live below the poverty line), with the policy depending on external funding.
Feedback from the Terre delle Gravine Regional Natural Park reveals the partly ineffective nature of protection based on a purely naturalist approach, out-of-touch with local concerns (which in this case are mainly related to leisure activities such as hunting or all-terrain vehicles): « you know how many little birds there are but not how many inhabitants… ». This example points to a certain lack of consultation and limited acceptance of the park, essentially deemed to have been established under duress. One of the conditions for the success of the « project » is winning the backing of as many stakeholders as possible.

3. Making the woodlands everyone’s business? What « perimeters » for participatory approaches?

Broad consensus seems to exist regarding the development of consultation and participatory democracy in Mediterranean woodland management. Rather than leaving « forests to the forest keepers », multi-stakeholder governance needs to be encouraged. The terms for such participation remain to be clarified, however, and raise the issue of the legitimacy of the stakeholders involved: it is therefore essential to identify the relevant structures in advance and to specify their status, role, uses and competences. It should be noted that the principle of subsidiarity may be a source of ambiguity and tensions: « Within a municipality the mayor is responsible for the municipal area, which includes private, communal and state-owned woodland… Sometimes the state agrees to tree-felling. This impinges on the Mayor’s responsibilities ». « The State is no doubt the guarantor of a long term vision, but account also needs to be taken of such competences as have been assigned to the municipalities and local councillors who know their land. Governance needs to be improved in respect of the responsibilities of the various bodies involved ».

Moreover, besides the perennial difficulty of defining the « social perimeter » of the stakeholders to be brought on board, the extent of their involvement also needs to be defined: involvement in the diagnosis, in defining the stakes, in shaping the project, its implementation and assessment? There is scope for misunderstanding and frustration. A participatory approach may also give rise to major and immediate expectations within the local population, which may subsequently prove difficult to satisfy, as was the case for the Sierra Espuña Master Plan.

The fear exists that these participatory approaches may see forestry experts’ views being squeezed out by those of « other stakeholders who see it as a secondary issue »: thus in the case of the Massif and territorial development Plans, the « perimeter » would appear to be limited to woodland stakeholders and those from the timber industry.

All of the approaches presented either in the light of specific experience or from the point of view of the method and tools were « participatory », but to varying degrees:

In the case of the Bouhachem nature park, participation began following the diagnosis stage, when the project under the charter was being drawn up, thus at a relatively « early » stage. Initially it would appear to have had a relatively broad perimeter (locals, administration, councillors…), but was subsequently restricted to municipal level.

The Terra delle Gravine Park was set up at the initiative of the Puglia Region on a « scientific » basis, before being entrusted to the Province of Taranto, which did not have the necessary means. This highlights the risks involved in this type of heavily « top-down »
approach, which the MED Qualigouv project is striving to counteract by developing broader « consultation ». The contours of this consultation have not been clearly defined, however, and it only comes into play once the naturalist inventory has been drawn up and the project defined. The actual work, however, looks very open: « the more the merrier… ».

In the case of the villages in Mersin province, participation is chosen as the basis for the diagnosis: it provides essential information about local issues and expectations clarifies the territorial stakes and prepares project design. Its operational definition, however, seems to fall outside the participatory approach and the State’s land ownership clout may allow the Water and Forests administration to muscle through.

The Imagine method, which to date has been applied to coastal areas, stresses the dual aim of participatory approaches:
- Seeing the local stakeholder as an « expert in and on his territory », and therefore tapping into his essential knowledge about expectations, conflicts, tension, social networks, etc. (« territorialised knowledge »);
- Bringing the local stakeholder into the co-construction of a project, thereby ensuring greater support for the project and better tailoring it to expectations.

The role to be played by participants in decision-taking then arises, with the Urbion Model Forest presentation providing two versions:
- A cross-cutting basis to support decision-taking, based on which those empowered to take decisions decide (and accept responsibility for their decisions);
- A forum for debate « where everyone is angry but everyone is angry to the same extent », from which negotiated compromise solutions may emerge – which would best correspond to the notion of « governance ».

Finally, monitoring and assessment procedures which may also give rise to participatory procedures need to be consolidated downstream.

4. **Keys to the success of participatory territorial management experiences**

When applied to different territorial contexts, the same concepts (the park, for example), same principles and same apparent concerns (biodiversity) appear to produce very different results. So what are the keys to success at the various levels (from the municipality to the various types of parks via inter-municipality levels)? Several aspects emerged from the presentations and discussions:

- The importance of the approach receiving the backing of recognised leaders (Forestry Charter for Les Maures area), who may be although are not necessarily councillors (role of associations for Bouhachem park);
- The choice of the optimal social perimeter for the participatory approach, ensuring that councillors and administrations are highly involved from the outset (in other words the decision-making authority as well as a privileged go-between vis-à-vis financial partners on other levels);
- The first two points converge on the crucial importance of having political backing for intentions as well as projects (underscored in particular with reference to the French regulatory instruments);

- Effective leadership, which requires the means (human and financial) to be able to operate correctly over a relatively long period (the « upstream » and « downstream » mentioned by the Imagine method); as well as rendering the project self-standing in the long term (including financially) to ensure its continuance;

- The relevance of the territorial backdrop to these projects, in other words how tuned-in they are to the local context, which requires a high quality, precise diagnosis. It is the geographic, administrative and social cohesion (the notion of a « population catchment area ») at these median levels which provides for the subsidiarity and proximity of the stakeholders involved, sometimes even including stakeholders from nearby urban centres, through the inter-linkage of built-up, agricultural and woodland areas in the Mediterranean (Dannieh...);

- The importance of an appropriate legal framework, able to provide the right tools (Regional nature park, Territorial Forest Charter and joint syndicate, Urbion Model Forest association, setting up of nature parks in Morocco through a recent law, etc.) or on the contrary to compromise the approach (legal « duds »: right for owners to pull out of the Terra delle Gravine park, ban then subsequent authorisation of hunting, lack of an ad hoc legal framework for Dannieh national park);

- Lasting roll-out of the approach, leading to collective learning and the shaping of a shared local woodland and/or consultation culture, paving the way towards forms of « adaptive management »;

- The honesty of the participatory approach, in other words its openness, including the expression of positions far removed from what the promoters of the approach would like, such as the local population’s dire need for firewood or grazing land or the disengagement and disinterest of certain French woodland owners. Opening the debate is always risky, but it is a risk which must be accepted and overcome. Transparency in communication procedures as well as clarity in defining the role allotted to participants are key aspects of this « honesty »;

- Granting scientific knowledge its rightful place - it must structure the debate whilst allowing it to flow;

- External openness, allowing the exchange of ideas, methods and good practices (bilateral cooperation between Bouhachem nature park and Luberon regional nature park, international network, Model Forests, Imagine method, AIFM network...);

- In certain cases, the success of the initial actions (hence the importance of their choice, cf. Territoire des Maures Forest Charter, Bouhachem nature park), or conversely the existence of negative events which provide a kick-start for stakeholders (the fires in Les Maures in 2003, for example).

5. **Precision and adaptability of the methods and tools for participatory sustainable management**

The « toolbox » presented during the sessions seemed to be relatively well-stocked, both with tools for instigating and rolling out collective approaches and in terms of the regulatory framework for such approaches. Both offer some leeway for adapting to the specific features of
the territorial context, which does not rule out their strict implementation. Some of the most sensitive issues concern:

- Defining the **social scope of participation**, as well as gaining the loyalty of stakeholders involved in the approach (risk of failure where there is excessive turnover of participants highlighted in the case of the *Imagine* approach);
- Methods for « freeing-up language » (rich pictures, meta-plan method, study visits, etc.);
- Questions relating to the **scale** and **socio-spatial coherence** of the roll-out areas (predefined or to be defined);
- Efficient dovetailing between stages, in other words between the shared diagnosis, definition of issues and collective drafting of action plans.

6. **Networks for the exchange of experience and methods and for « cross analysis »**

The validity, relevance and effectiveness of the tools tested and developed should not remain under wraps, nor should the tools be confined only to those areas where they have borne fruit. With the necessary tweaking, they could also work elsewhere. Thus the role of networks for the exchange and sharing of experience (the AIFM and the cooperation actions it coordinates, including the MED Qualigouv project, which involves participants from Terra delle Gravine and Sierra Espuña regional parks, the Mediterranean Model Forest Network, Plan Bleu and Silva Mediterranea networks, etc.) seems to be essential in order to:

- Transmit knowledge and know-how;
- Create synergy between initiatives and networks, the latter varying widely in terms of their theme, institutional point of view, scale and the nature of the players they bring together; these networks may also be somewhat unaware of each other.

The construction of a « meta-network » or « network of networks », to which Mediterranean forest week has probably contributed, looks like an operation to be continued and consolidated.
Recommendations

Following the presentation and discussion of the summary, the following recommendations were debated and adopted by participants at the final session:

1. Improving the knowledge base on the territorial context, the forest resources, the services provided by woodland ecosystems, and the risks and opportunities, by including the «climate change» factor (impact, mitigation potential, adaptation options).

2. Promoting inter-sectoral approaches and the inclusion of forest management within local projects for the long term.

3. Bringing relevant local stakeholders into projects from the outset, particularly local decision-makers (political backing) and administration (consistency with existing activities and budgets, financial support).

4. Defining the project area in compliance with the social, politico-administrative, geographical and ecological context.

5. Devoting the necessary time and human and financial resources to the learning processes offered by territorial development operations, particularly in terms of running activities and communicating.

6. Assessing the benefits rendered by woodland ecosystems and associated management costs. Identifying beneficiaries. Developing sustainable funding mechanisms.

7. Developing, improving and adapting tools for collective approaches (including the use of prospective approaches) in order to facilitate the emergence of joint visions, strategies and programmes of action.

8. Testing, assessing and developing instruments and measures (legal and economic) for the implementation of collectively adopted programmes of action.

9. Developing and running networks for the effective sharing of experience between Mediterranean areas.

10. Clarifying and enhancing the links between consultation and decision-making processes.