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Providing tailored climate information to forest fire stakeholders and end-users

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In EU project CLIMRUN, there has been a continuous interaction with stakeholders and end-users to develop new and improved tools to extract useful and useable information tailored to the needs of specific sectors. In this work, we review the provision of climate information services required in the Mediterranean country of Greece where forest fires represent a major hazard. Intense terrain, sparsely vegetated with typical Mediterranean flora makes Greece a fire prone environment. That, in addition to the abandonment of rural lands and extreme weather conditions due to climate change the last few decades, constitutes an issue of an annual cycle of catastrophe from forest fires.

An iterative and bottom-up (i.e. stakeholder led) approach for optimizing the two-way information transfer between climate experts and stakeholders has been adopted from the start of the project with a workshop in Athens helping to define the framework for the forest fires case study.

The main objectives of this workshop were to better understand who the wildfires stakeholders are and what they need from climate services. After the first workshop three main categories of stakeholders were identified: short term fire planners, long term policy makers and education stakeholders. To address the needs of these stakeholders' categories the following actions were taken:

1. In collaboration with the forecasting team at the National Observatory of Athens, an application providing fire risk forecasts for the following 3 days (http://cirrus.meteo.noa.gr/forecast/bolam/index.htm) was developed, to address the needs of short term fire planners.

2. A web-based application providing long term fire risk and other fire related indices changes due to climate change (time horizon up to 2050 and up to 2100) was developed in collaboration with the Greek WWF office, to address the needs of long term fire policy makers (http://www.oikoskopio.gr/map/).

3. Finally, an educational tool was built in order to complement the two web-based tools and to further expand knowledge in fire risk modeling to address the needs for in-depth training. An initial version of this educational software tool was presented in the first CLIMRUN summer school, held at ICTP, Trieste in October 2012 (http://cdsagenda5.ictp.trieste.it/askArchive.php?base=agenda&categ=a1257&id=a1257/announcement) .