



Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar

Thessaloniki, 26 – 28 May 2014

Forests Working Group



*Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process
Mediterranean Region*

Selected habitats

- 9260 : *Castanea sativa*
- 9320 : *Olea* and *Ceratonia* forests
- 9330 : *Quercus suber* forests
- 9340 : *Quercus ilex* and *Quercus rotundifolia* forests
- 9540 : Mediterranean pine forests with endemic Mesogean pines
- Proposal to add 9180 , *Tilio – Acerion*) as selected habitat, due to high biodiversity values (all characteristics of refuge area)



The forest group came together.....



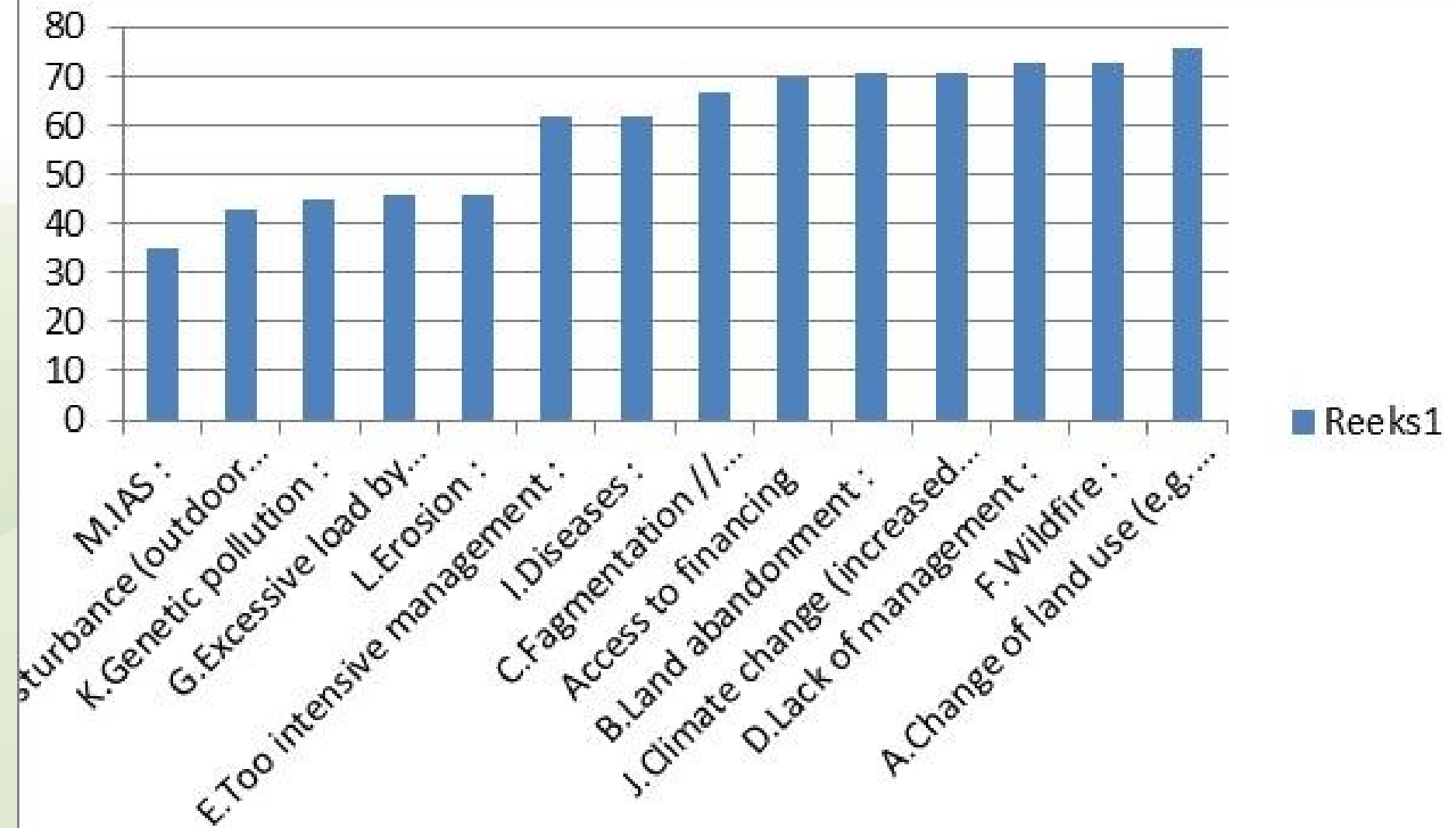
.... and has considered many wise ideas

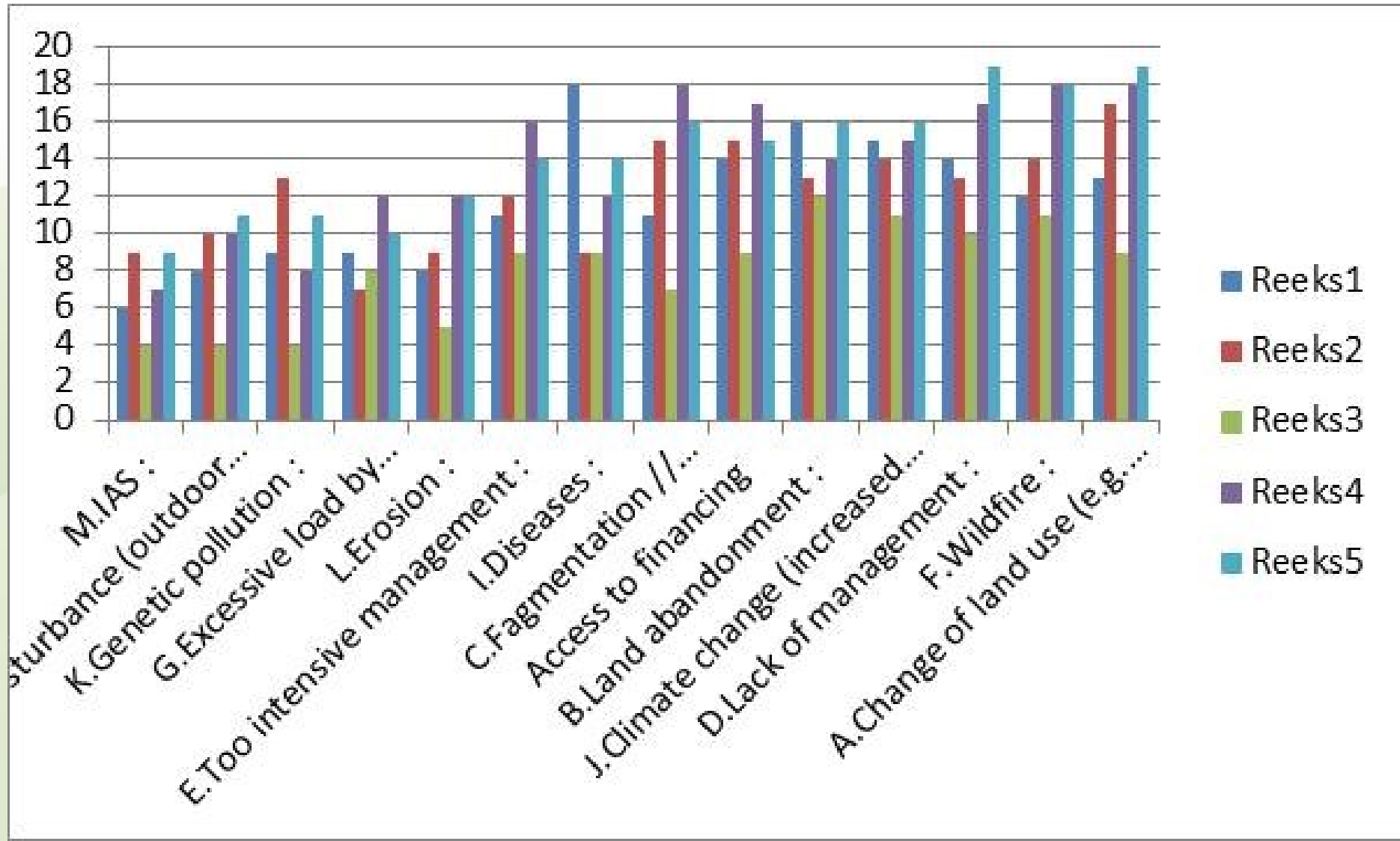


Main issues, problems

- Change of land use (e.g. urbanisation, conversion to agriculture, developments of infrastructure)
- Land abandonment // fragmentation // conflicting policies affecting forests e.g. development leading to fragmentation of forests within N2000 (external influence)
- Lack of management
- Too intensive management (maximising production of timber, cork, fruits) e.g. short rotation coppice, inappropriate debarking
- Wildfire
- Excessive load by ungulates
- Disturbance (outdoor sports activities, leisure, vehicles, camping,...)
- Diseases
- Climate change (increased temperatures, lower precipitation)
- Genetic pollution
- Erosion
- IAS
- Access to financing







Management needs and practices

- Appropriate management e.g. **longer rotation periods**, abandonment of **coppice management**
- **Appropriate cork extraction**
- In **extensive forests**, **horizontal heterogeneity** should be favoured, maintaining or generating mosaics of forest-bush-grassland
- conversion of the pure chestnut forests into **mixed high stand forests** will lead to more natural forests that are better resistant against any disease or natural threat
- Addressing the threat of **diseases** by e.g. applying a less aggressive strain of the fungus, properly removing the infected trees and the infected parts, vaccination of seedlings, etc.
- **Defragmentation** is an important tool to restore Mediterranean forest habitats; identify extensive forest fragments and other zones that are well located to fulfil a connectivity function;



Management needs and practices

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- **Leaving dead wood** in the forest
- **Wildfire prevention** by reducing forest densities
- **Protection of water masses** (ponds etc), located within the forests or in the surroundings for preserving biodiversity e.g. insects, birds, amphibians, ...;
- **Reducing high densities** of *Quercus ilex* forests can improve their **resistance to climate change**. Reducing densities can increase the soil water availability for the remaining trees which will improve their resistance to drought.
- **Communication and information activities** can increase the acceptance of local communities of measures to reduce human disturbance, in particular the exclusion of vehicles from the forest habitats.
- **Seed collection** and establishment of **seed banks**

Presentation of two case studies

Actions to maintain and restore the Luberon regional natural Park Forest's biodiversity: focus on islands network to retain old-growth features and ancient forest

- **Mrs Sophie Bourlon**, Parc Naturel Régional du Luberon, France



Natura 2000 contract to save trees of ecological interest and senescence islands

Presentation of two case studies

- *Promoting sustainable forest management in cork oak landscapes*
 - **Dr Miguel N. Bugalho**, Researcher at Centre for Applied Ecology, School of Agriculture, University of Lisbon, Portugal and Forest Officer consultant for the Mediterranean Program of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)



Main shortcomings at this moment

- lack of indicators for evaluation of conservation status (uniform approach by MS)
- Common understanding of favourable conservation reference values (which indicator species, amount of dead wood, etc.); lack of a common methodology / common standard!
- Lack of CC projections and impacts on Mediterranean forests
- Lack of knowledge on innovative stakeholder involvement approaches // lack of awareness amongst stakeholders // lack of suitable communication material



Main shortcomings at this moment

- Lack of knowledge in best restoration techniques (e.g. seed germination and production of seedlings)
- Lack of adequate, up-to-date mapping, spatial database dealing with continuous changes in the field // lack of up-to-date standard data forms // lack of spatial database for biodiversity surrogates
- Lack of knowledge sharing on fire prevention management in N2000, fire fighting and restoration (after wildfires) in N2000; focus on prevention!;
- Lack of knowledge on regeneration ability of forest species under different management conditions



Main shortcomings at this moment

- Reasons for high mortality old cork oaks unknown
- Lack of insight in ecosystem services provided by forests in N2000 for different user groups (might be basis for attracting extra funding)
- Lack of knowledge regarding innovative financing of nature restoration in N2000 (public-private, private, ...)
- Lack of technical guide on sustainable forest management or lack of knowledge transfer between MS
- Advisory services in sustainable forestry
- Role of non-indigenous forest tree species in N2000 forest management (what is negative and positive?)



Main shortcomings at this moment

- Lack of knowledge regarding effectiveness of N2000 network (right designated areas, right species,
- Understanding conflicts between policies, at different levels
- Lack of studies/data between forest certification and N2000 requirements



So, things are proceeding too slowly.... Time for action!



....and we identified a number of bright proposals for actions!



cess

Mediterranean Region

Share and collect good practices on sustainable forestry for selected forest habitat types (e.g. CP); interesting cases to be translated and circulated

- What? /
 - Feed ex-post evaluation reports on LIFE+ forestry projects on CP (LIFE+ monitoring team) + link to LIFE+ website
 - Translation : summaries in English preferred!
 - Links to other information sources to be made e.g. WWF France on 'naturalness' and 'ancient forests', European Forest Institute (EFI, Finland based); FAO,
- Who?
 - Every actor to feed the CP with best practices
- When?
 - systematically



Establishment of a network of Mediterranean region N2000 experts (instrument is the CP, where own niche can be created); can also deal with exchanging students; cover identified knowledge gaps; promote communication between science and other stakeholders

- What?
 - Prepare ToR of the group
 - Call on the CP
 - To be discussed in LIFE+ Platform in Cyprus
 - Development and launch of network (use organisation database in CP)
 - Maintenance of network
- Who?
 - Volunteering individual(s)/organisation(s)
- When?



Proposal on twinning projects between N2000 sites in different MS in one biogeographic region ('twinning' page could be introduced in CP) ; principle is mutual challenges, characteristics, mutual visits, etc...

- What?
 - Elaborate principles of twinning
 - Establish specific place on CP → principles on CP, launching call on CP, ...
 - Developing pilot projects
 - Feasibility study on co-funding in the future

- Who?
 - N2000 sites

- When?



Building a portal on N2000 forest spatial information (specific information related to forest management e.g. high conservation spots, old forests, ecosystem services, ability for seed regeneration,....)

- What?
 - Develop concept, purposes, etc.
 - Identify and build on existing initiatives
 - INSPIRE compliance!
 - Investigate application for funding (preparatory project under LIFE+ Communication; could be part of LIFE+ Integrated project?; INTERREG for Mediterranean, ...)
- Who?
- When?



Elaboration of guidance material with regard to innovative financing mechanisms such as corporates funding (refer to case study ppt), PES, – transversal

● What?

- Develop tool to identify promising opportunities (combination of biodiversity hotspots, ecosystem services, businesses)
- Investigate suitability of integration in idea on spatial mapping
- Collect case studies / best practices
- Develop cooperation mechanisms between providers and beneficiaries of ecosystem services and related to nature restoration
- Prepare guidance document – transversal action for all habitats/ all biogeographic regions
- Promote innovative financing – increase awareness amongst stakeholders (public auth., NGOs, businesses, ...)
- Link to EU Business & Biodiversity Platform / NCCF
- Organise ad hoc meeting

● Who?

● When?



Explore feasibility of label rewarding active involvement and good practice in N2000 management (e.g. pilot project)

- What?
 - Collect information on existing systems in EU MS, in particular Mediterranean MS, and investigate benefits of such systems for rewarded actors, for N2000,
 - Propose 'ToR' for proposed labeling system
- Who?
 - Any interested authority/MS/NGO
- When?



Research project on adaptation capacities of Mediterranean tree species with regard to climate change (experiment orchards to test translocation, etc.), contributing to FCS in N2000 forest sites

- What?
 - Develop research idea
 - Investigate possibility to establish experimental orchards (if they exist already, project idea will be left)
 - Launch idea on CP and other fora
- Who?
 - Research institutes
- When?



Mission completed.....



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