



VOLunteers in ACTION : Raising Awareness For Volunteer Fire Fighters”
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Good Practice n°2 from Training 2000

1. Title of the the activity:

GAUF-Group of Analysis and Use of Fire - MASTROS DE FOGU

2. Objectives/aims expected by this action

GAUF is born from the International Fire Project named Paradox. As part of the Directorate of the Forestry Corps of the Sardinia Region (CFVA), GAUF is an implementation of the Regional Plan of prediction, prevention and fight against forest fires, established in 2008. The Group of Analysis and Use of Fire (GAUF) is a working group specialized in the management of fires; able to operate both in the direct fight and as support of the operations of controlled fire use. The members of GAUF are typically named “Mastros de Fogu” in the Sardinian language and the group’s fire fighting is based on two main techniques: “tactical fire” and “prescribed fire”. Specifically, the “tactical Fire” is a fighting technique which allows reducing the spread of fire or divert the wildfire from sensitive targets. (industry and urban areas).” Prescribed fire” is a prevention technique which aims to reduce combustion resources.

3. Target group (or groups)

This project addresses mainly forest rangers specialized in firefighting, and also volunteer’s groups (but marginally, only as a support team) and community members like farmers.



Erasmus+

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4. Description of the activity (methods, materials, human and physical resources, timing, etc.)

Candidate forest rangers will be educated theoretically and practically about the GAUF methodology and means employed in action such as pick-up vehicles carrying gas torches and fire blowers; portable weather stations and radios and all the equipment necessary in fire fighting. The GAUF team also employs the regional and national fleet along with Canadairs and helicopters.

There two main methodologies in their operations: the “tactical fire” technique and the “prescribed fire” technique. When in operational fighting (tactical fire) the GAUF counters the spread of fire by taming it with a fire blower, while in fire prevention (prescribed fire) GAUF members intentionally set fire to the undergrowth with gas torches in order to reduce the combustibility of vegetation.

To compose each GAUF, there are four specialists in each station always operating throughout the day, through a system of shift work. GAUF members are an official police force present in seven provinces of the Sardinia Region.

5. Steps for the implementation (operative steps to implement the good practice)

CFVA operators follow theoretical and practical training to be able to join the GAUF group. This training is considered a continuous process because even if you are part of the team, training activities are never ending.

For example, when fire prevention activities such as the "Prescribed Fire" are carried out, the opportunity is also exploited for staff training.

6. Impact of the good practice and evaluation of the results achieved

GAUF interventions represent a valid means of prevention of wildfires and disasters management with security and economic implications. There are similar groups in Europe and in Portugal in particular which inspired the Sardinian GAUF.

Among the positive outcomes of this project, it is important to mention, obviously, a successful means of prevention already employed in different countries; a stimulus for the forestry-related



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research area in terms of biodiversity; a connection between the academic world and the labour market (collaboration with the National Research Council). Last but not least, this project aims to raise awareness in wildfire prevention among stakeholders and citizens.

7. Conclusions

Finally, this practice is a new way that comes from the past to engage the community in firefighting. It's a support for all the people involved to prevent wildfires, so it is important to learn and practice, for example, to avoid secondary fire outbreaks. Professional training for GAUF members and active citizenship are key to prevention.

The more these techniques are known, the more the knowledge becomes widespread strengthening the protection of the environment and biodiversity.



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