



**VOLunteers in ACTION : Raising Awareness For Volunteer Fire Fighters”
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Good Practice n°1 from TRAINING 2000**

1. Title of the activity or event

The “Firewise programme” in Tuscany

2. Objectives/aims expected by this action

In Tuscany, especially in past few years, the trend of wildfires has brought the Regional Organization of Wildfires Firefighting (AIB) to the limit. In 2018, in collaboration with the American National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), AIB organized a conference on prevention of forest fires which also involved local communities in self-protection interventions, the “Firewise programme”.

This good practice offers a way to make citizens aware of the risk in which they live and to which they can expose the operating staff by self protecting their private areas. On its side, the Tuscany Region offers proper management of the forest heritage by managing the wildland-urban interface (WUI). These actions comprehend the cleaning of shrubby vegetation; the mowing of the vegetation; the thinning of conifers; any intervention to promote the affirmation of broadleaved trees in mixed woods. In this way the public and the private sphere merge together creating a new model of prevention and fire impact reduction based on self-protection and a risk-sharing mindset.

3. Target group (or groups)

This good practice addresses whoever lives in a high-fire hazard area in the countryside and wants to achieve a higher level of protection. Forestry officers, representatives of the union of the municipalities and the local residents are the main target groups.



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

In Tuscany the active firefighting is coordinated by specialists such as analysts, group managers, and experts and is carried out with helicopters, equipped AIB teams with pick-up and tankers. On the other side, prevention starts with the drafting of a program based on the risk assessment of the area (dangerousness and vulnerability of the area) and then it's realized in two ways. In the public sphere, AIB organizations transform the forest to reduce the risk (managing the grass and trees trimming, conifers substitution), while in the private sphere, local people are informed about the risks of wildfire and actively follow the guidelines shared by the AIB organization such as not letting combustible sources amass in the gutters, avoid leaving wooden material near the house and getting rid of the excess of vegetation.

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

Before a firewise is implemented in a territory, mayors, official technical staff members and experts work to identify and analyse a risk area. AIB organizations organize meetings and share leaflets trying to raise awareness of the communities living in the risk area while teaching how to manage the woodland around them. The interventions of the AIB organizations aim to make the forest more resilient.

Moreover, all the cities of the area involved receive specific documents about the firewise programme describing all the good practices of prevention needed.

Being one of the first to implement a firewise programme along with Spain, Tuscany is organizing on May 5, 2018, the "preparedness day" that sees all the Firewise communities of the world engaged in self-protection activities of their living spaces.

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

The evaluation of this practice is difficult to assess because every forest fire depends on many factors but the ultimate test is collecting the damages left behind by the fire. Generally speaking, many cities and communities of the four high-risk areas of Tuscany tend to be already aware and actively participate to avoid any potential risks.

7. Conclusions



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Finally, this project represents a way of improving the risk perception of local communities while promoting a call for action about wildfire prevention and fire impact reduction in case of accident. Risk awareness and civic engagement are key to the firewise programme success.



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