

# How can we build resilience in territories with wildfires through changes that truly meet the needs of local communities?

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## CONTEXT

Building resilience to wildfires brings the opportunity to adapt better to more extreme wildfire situations at the same time that societal well-being improves. The term **Socio-Ecological Resilience (SER)** involves that the improvement takes place through a continuous process involving local communities but also public and private actors operating at multiple geographical scales. In order to enhance societal well-being without leaving anyone behind, it is key that unmet needs are collectively defined through different spaces of participation, and shared decision-making power.

Rodríguez Fernández-Blanco *et al.* (2022), evaluate the capacity to build SER of the **Forest Defence Groups (ADFs)** in Catalan). These are groups of volunteers with strong links to the territory and an active role in the prevention and suppression of wildfires in Catalunya, a fire-prone region in Northeastern Spain.

## OUTCOMES

- A cohesive network of members of local communities can effectively reveal and raise issues of concern to higher political levels.
- Natural disturbances, social and political processes are interlinked so that they co-evolve and shape each other.
- When stakeholders from local and regional scales identify common needs, governance arrangements that imply collective action can occur.
- Trust, inclusive dialogue, and the construction of knowledge and institutions by different stakeholders working together are key in building SER.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For policymakers

- Get to know the social network and their needs in the territory.
- Facilitate
  - Opportunities for innovation and the creation of associations.
  - Economic resources for rural communities.
  - Communication between different administrative levels.
- Ease the bureaucracy to rural communities.

### For emergency responders

- Look for interlocutors to mediate the conversations with rural communities.
- Channel the possibility for rural inhabitants to act during both the preparedness and emergency management.

## IMPACT ON

### Wildfire management

- Recognise that building SER is an activity that adds value to the territory

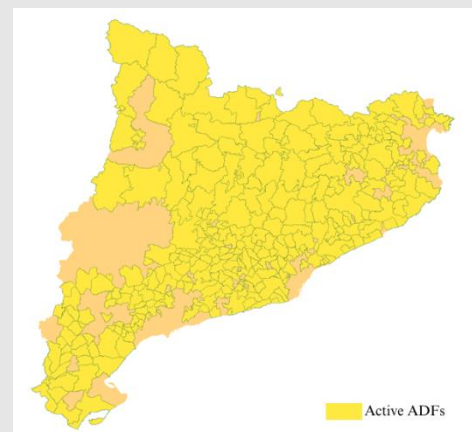


Figure 1: Map of Catalonia showing the areas with active ADFs. Source: SFADF.



Figure 2: Image showing Catalan firefighters and an ADF working together. Source: SFADF.

**FULL ARTICLE:** Rodríguez Fernández-Blanco, Carmen; Górriz-Mifsud, Elena; Prokofieva, Irina; Muys, Bart & Parra, Constanza. (2022). Blazing the trail: Social innovation supporting wildfire-resilient territories in Catalonia (Spain). *Forest Policy and Economics*. 138. 102719. 10.1016/j.forpol.2022.102719. Available at <https://bit.ly/430mTqu>