



How effective are some country-specific policies in mitigating the impacts of wildfires?



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CONTEXT

The growing wildfire risk is a global challenge with local solutions. These should aim to reduce the likelihood of fire ignition and manage the propagation and intensity of wildfires.

Pooja Pandey examines wildfire-related policies of the United Kingdom; Portugal, France, Italy, Greece, and Cyprus (the Mediterranean); South Africa; Australia; Canada, and the USA (North America). She describes their strengths and weaknesses and offers country-specific recommendations. Furthermore, her work calls for an integrated approach characterised by cooperation between policymakers, researchers, communities, and other stakeholders.

OUTCOMES

The most relevant strengths and weaknesses of wildfire policies the author identified are:

Region	Strength	Weakness
United Kingdom	Provides funding for research on fire prevention and suppression technologies.	Other natural disasters receive more attention and funding.
Mediterranean	With measures for forest management, including fire prevention plans.	Law enforcement is weak.
South Africa	Existence of Fire Protection Associations for risk management.	The legislation may not be well-resourced or fully enforced.
Australia	Well-established legislation.	The legislation may not fully address the increasing risk of wildfires due to climate change.
North America	Cooperation between federal, state, and local agencies.	Legislations are not fully enforced due to conflicting interests.



Pooja Pandey and colleagues learning place-based about wildfire management in Cyprus.

IMPACT ON WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

- Wildfire policies must respond to local contexts' realities.
- Wildfire risk mitigation can be attained by following the recommendations provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Institute effective law enforcement mechanisms. Model: well-established legislation in Australia.
- Raise social awareness of wildfire risk and mitigation. Model: FireSmart programme in Canada.
- Build wildfire-adapted communities. Model: Fire Protection Associations in South Africa.
- Implement forest management strategies that cover prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Create firebreaks.
- Invest in firefighting equipment and personnel spanning prevention, suppression, and mitigation.
- Integrate science into practice. Model: The National Action Plan in the USA.

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