

Landscape resilience in the Mediterranean

Translating solutions into policy and practice



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Policy recommendations

- Coordinated and cross-sectoral action is urgently needed to improve landscape resilience in the Mediterranean, a highly climate-sensitive region facing droughts, wildfires and land degradation. This demands policy coherence and coordination across sectors and along geographical, administrative and governance scales.
- The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and related EU frameworks must explicitly address Mediterranean landscape challenges through result-based and locally adapted measures. In addition, non-EU countries could adapt from the CAP.
- Two-way EU–non-EU cooperation is essential to align governance, legislation and knowledge sharing for coherent and sustainable forest and landscape management. Knowledge sharing of climate challenge solutions from South to North needs particular emphasis.
- Digital innovation, strong extension services, and the empowerment of women, youth and local communities are key to scaling sustainable practices and adaptive management.
- Innovative and well-coordinated financing, including public–private partnerships and ecosystem service payments, is needed to secure long-term investment, improve access, reduce duplication and enhance the impact of landscape initiatives.

Introduction: A resilient future for Mediterranean landscapes

The Mediterranean, a recognized global climate-change hotspot, is warming about 20% faster than the global average (Ali and Cramer 2022). Declining rainfall, prolonged droughts, wildfires, soil erosion, biodiversity loss and rural depopulation threaten its landscapes, which have been shaped by millennia of human stewardship. Meanwhile, rapid socioeconomic change, urbanization, land abandonment and political instability further endanger essential ecosystem services, food production and cultural identity (Pingault and Martius 2021; Rodríguez Fernández-Blanco et al. 2022; Peñuelas and Sardans 2023).

The Mediterranean Basin's rich diversity of socioecological contexts presents deep structural challenges. Policies and legislation at national, regional and local levels are often complex, fragmented or outdated, while political and administrative constraints further limit effective landscape management. The absence of a clear framework or catalogue for nature-based solutions, along with insufficient financing for their implementation, hampers progress. Innovative financing mechanisms remain underdeveloped and the value of traditional cultural landscapes is still difficult to quantify and sustain. Finally, aligning legislation, governance approaches and best practices between EU and non-EU countries remains a major obstacle to achieving coherent, resilient landscape management across the region (Borràs et al. 2025).

Reflections from the policy dialogue on translating solutions into policy and practice

Addressing these intertwined ecological, institutional and financial challenges requires a coordinated transformation. During the policy forum, six key strategic directions emerged:

1. Integration: Integrated, cross-sectoral and transboundary collaboration is critical to build landscape resilience. The persistence of institutional and sectoral silos makes it difficult to build landscape resilience in the Mediterranean. While coordination has improved, true integration remains limited. Agriculture, forestry, water and nature-based solutions, in particular, still operate under separate policies. Tourism, social and financial policies also need greater coordination. To date, interministerial bodies, coordination platforms and national strategic plans have proven

Box 1. ResAlliance – The project context

Over three years, the EU-funded **ResAlliance project** united 16 partners to advance climate-resilient landscape management across the Mediterranean through shared learning and knowledge, capacity building and local innovation. Bringing together farmers, foresters, researchers, policymakers and journalists via the LandNet platform and five territorial LandLabs, the network fostered collaboration across diverse Mediterranean contexts. To conclude, ResAlliance presented its White Paper on Mediterranean Landscape Resilience in October 2025 at a policy forum attended by representatives from the Spanish Ministry of Ecological Transition, the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture, and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), an intergovernmental organization uniting 43 countries for dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Moderated by the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, the event gathered about 90 participants from 31 countries to discuss how ResAlliance's lessons can inform future policy and support mechanisms. The *White paper on policy recommendations for landscape resilience in the Mediterranean region* can be accessed [here](#) and also on the **EU-FarmBook**. Other publications and some 120 factsheets each detailing an approach or technology to enhancing Mediterranean resilience can be found [here](#).

conductive to align goals, assess policy coherence and bridge gaps between sectors. But even within each ministry, more diverse perspectives are needed to ensure a more holistic approach. Effective resilience planning must also involve multilevel governance, ensuring that local and regional actors have a voice in national decisions. Examples like regional wildfire management platforms illustrate how multi-actor collaboration can work in practice. Furthermore, public servants can be trained on landscape resilience. International platforms such as the **Union for the Mediterranean** (UfM) foster dialogue between EU and non-EU countries to overcome fragmentation and address cross-border challenges. Concluding a paradigm shift towards integrated, cross-sectoral and transboundary collaboration is essential to increase landscape resilience.

2. Sustainable management: The CAP needs revision to promote greater cooperation across EU programmes. It has been a key tool – within the European Union – for promoting sustainable management of Mediterranean cultural landscapes and advancing nature-based solutions. However, stronger alignment is needed between the CAP, local policies, monitoring systems and the Joint Research Centre classification of farming practices. The revision of the CAP is an opportunity to shift from practice-

based to result-based incentives and to use landscape partnerships as delivery mechanisms. Greater cooperation across EU programmes – such as integrating CAP with **Interreg Euro-Med** – can better connect agriculture, rural development and landscape resilience. The UfM helps countries integrate result-based approaches into their CAP plans through working groups, capacity building and peer learning.

- 3. Two-way collaboration:** Effective collaboration between EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries depends on mutual learning and co-creation rather than one-way knowledge transfer. Many climate-change-related environmental challenges emerge in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean regions first, making South-to-North knowledge exchange essential. An example is the efficient use of water resources for rainfed agriculture in drought-prone areas (Elaieb et al. 2023). Two-way cooperation allows all partners to share expertise and jointly develop solutions for resilience. This collaboration is especially vital for cross-border forest health, wildfire prevention and implementation of nature-based solutions. Any plans to transfer knowledge should consider the legislation of the recipient country. In some cases, practices from abroad may encounter political obstacles that are difficult to overcome. Forward planning is therefore crucial to optimize knowledge transfer. This is particularly true for non-EU countries, whose legislation is more heterogeneous than that of EU countries.
- 4. Digital innovation:** Scaling landscape resilience in the Mediterranean requires digital innovation, strong extension services and the empowerment of women and youth. Digital tools can improve access to information and enable timely responses to climate threats, but they must be affordable, accessible offline and available in local languages. Supporting women and youth through rural development groups, incubators and start-ups and cooperatives in sectors like agri-food, ecotourism and forest restoration can unlock significant innovation potential. However, the lack of coordination between public administrations, complex land ownership, lack of trust between communities and administrations, and short-term funding remain major obstacles to achieving lasting landscape resilience and sustainable management across the Mediterranean. Building trust, fostering collaboration, and adopting long-term, coordinated strategies are essential.
- 5. Inclusive participation:** Beyond established finance tools, new funding mechanisms – such as public–social–private partnerships (PSPPs) and payments for ecosystem services (PES) – are essential for scaling landscape resilience and supporting sustainable transitions in the region. Innovative tools like PSPPs and PES are expected to complement public funding by attracting additional resources, strengthening local ownership and rewarding positive environmental and social outcomes. Initiatives like the **2030 GreenerMed** and the UfM regional platforms can promote best-practice exchange; scale harmonized approaches to nature-based solutions; and enhance collaboration among governments, investors and local actors to ensure long-term project sustainability.
- 6. Innovative financing:** From a non-EU country perspective, international collaborations are critical for financing landscape resilience, especially where access to large funds is limited. While EU mechanisms like Interreg Euro-MED, **PRIMA MED**, and **Interreg Next MED** are important, non-EU countries often rely on UN organizations (such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme or the United Nations Environment Programme) or state agencies for international cooperation (such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), African Development Bank

or the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation), as supporting platforms to access funding from global mechanisms such as the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** or **Green Economy Financing Facility**. Major challenges include politically influenced funding, difficulty accessing large international funds and duplication of efforts among agencies. Effective collaboration also requires clear coordination among EU and non-EU organizations, ensuring projects are demand-driven and maximize local impact.

Conclusions and next steps

Building Mediterranean resilience requires moving from project-level innovation to structural integration within European and national policy frameworks. ResAlliance's white paper and final policy dialogue provide timely input for ongoing EU programming cycles, including future updates of the CAP and the Green Deal's Nature Restoration and Soil Strategies. Policymakers emphasized the CAP's central role in supporting sustainable land use and nature-based solutions in Mediterranean landscapes.

Stronger synergies in policies, extension services and innovation support are needed between EU and non-EU countries, alongside broader international cooperation. Embedding six strategic directions – integration, sustainable management, two-way cooperation, digital innovation, inclusive participation and innovative financing – into national adaptation plans and regional mechanisms can help align actions across the Mediterranean Basin. The knowledge and good practices compiled on the EU-FarmBook platform provide a foundation for continuity, ensuring that recent achievements inform future programmes, partnerships and investments for a resilient Mediterranean landscape.

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