SALUS: SALUS; Wildfire risk solutions for Spain

Description

Forest fires caused over 54 billion in economic losses in Europe between 2000 and 2017. Spain is one of Europe s most impacted countries with 219 large fires between 2011 and 2020 and damages worth 525 million. These numbers are inevitably bound to rise given the economic growth outlook, expected rise in population, and forecasted impact of climate change. The current state-of-the-art in forecasting fire spread has proven inadequate to tackle what is becoming a systemic risk. There are many reasons for this: from data gaps, limited capacities, reliance on static stochastic simulations of what could happen using historical data, which simply cannot capture the evolving dynamics brought by climate change.

The SALUS project (from the Roman goddess of safety and welfare) lays out the foundation for an integrated ecosystem that combines ground-breaking science-driven models and tools with risk transfer solutions capable of narrowing the protection gap (what was lost/what was insured). To this end, SALUS brings together a consortium of four partners recognized for their wildfire expertise and commitment to improving societal resilience, risk awareness, and citizen preparedness for wildfires. Expected deliverables are tailored to make an immediate impact by

- involving relevant stakeholders;
- implementing operational pilots for one or more area(s) in Spain; and
- paving the way for scaling up, which would strengthen institutional capacity and support socioeconomic and ecological transition towards more resilient communities.

In the short run, SALUS will contribute with the availability of science-based tools to improve the understanding and mapping of evolving risks of extreme wildfire events. In the medium term, the project builds on an ambitious commercialization and dissemination plan for scale beyond Spain, in line with EU targets in the wildfire space under the EU 2030 climate & energy framework. As a whole, SALUS seeks a new paradigm shift in not only how we respond to risks related to wildfires, but also how we strengthen resilience and accelerate recovery against a changing climate.

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