

MOROCCO

U.S. FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Support by U.S. Forest Service technical experts to the Moroccan High Commission on Water, Forests, and Combating Desertification on sustainable rangeland management and forest fire management activities.

Activities funded by the United States Department of State Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science, through the US-Morocco Free Trade Agreement.

Recent activities by U.S. Forest Service staff alongside staff from the Moroccan High Commission trained over 35 Moroccan counterparts in the basics of incident command system processes to respond to forest fires, natural disasters and other emergencies; plan is to train dozens more in the coming months.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Morocco's forests, which cover about 12% of the country, are home to many of the world's unique and endangered plant and animal species, including the Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*), cork (*Quercus suber*), argon (*Argania spinosa*), and truffles. The Government of Morocco has recently made commitments to stemming an escalating deforestation rate that is driven primarily by an increased demand for wood products and uncontrolled, anthropogenic fires.

The U.S. Forest Service cooperates with Morocco's High Commission on Water, Forests, and Combating Desertification to support their efforts to advance natural resource conservation through rangeland and wildfire management programs. Previous work in Morocco was funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Current activities are funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science, as part of the environmental chapter of the US-Morocco Free Trade Agreement.

The Morocco rangeland management program aims to enhance grazing practices and extension programs, fostering cooperation between grazing associations and forest managers on collaborative land management planning. U.S. Forest Service experts have supported Moroccan counterparts to develop a range school in collaboration with a local grazing association in order to pilot rotational grazing concepts that aim to improve soil and plant health while also allowing for improved livestock production.



US Forest Service and Moroccan High Commission colleagues participating in incident command system field simulations in Rabat.
Photo by Mark Rooney, US Forest Service

The forest fire management program aims to further professionalize Moroccan forest fire response and coordination capacity, in order to utilize resources more efficiently, and enhance wildfire management and response in the Kingdom, promoting overall forest conservation. U.S. Forest Service fire specialists mentor and support Moroccan High Commission colleagues through provision of training, hands-on work sessions, and study tours as a national forest fire response center and corresponding operating procedures are developed.

