



european Network on Extreme fiRe behaviOr
COST Action CA22164

Navigating the fire environment to ignite preparedness and readiness for extreme wildfires

MEETING MINUTES

Working Group Assembly 2024 – Athens, Greece

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Revision History

Version	Date	Edited by	Description
0.1	15.04.2024	Akli Benali, Georgios Papavasileiou, Giacomo Sbaragli, Fabio Silva, Ljiljana Seric, Renata Martins Pacheco	Draft version – Raw input provided by WG leaders
0.2	17.04.2024	Theodore M. Giannaros	Final draft version – Organization of raw minutes
1.0	18.04.2024	Theodore M. Giannaros	Final version

PREAMBLE

The 2024 Working Group (WG) Assembly of NERO took place as a face-to-face meeting event between Wednesday 3 April and Thursday 4 April 2024, at Impact Hub Athens, in Greece.

The overarching goal of the NERO Working Group Assembly was to facilitate the exchange of ideas, foster the mutual exchange of feedback between researchers and practitioners, and promote active participation from an interdisciplinary spectrum of scientists and fire operatives within the field of wildfires and extreme fire behavior. The session programme offered opportunities for establishing collaborations across the entire range of NERO's challenges. Specific issues that the Working Assembly addressed include:

- Production of the NERO storytelling template (WG1)
- Definition of a data collation roadmap (WG1)
- Compilation of the NERO case study manual (WG2)
- Recording of practitioners' needs and requirements (WG3)
- Definition of a strategy for the active collaboration between researchers and practitioners (WG3)
- Preparation of the NERO fire brief template (WG4)
- Definition of a strategy to engage NERO with relevant international projects/initiatives (WG4)

1. Meeting agenda and presentations

Wednesday 3 April 2024

08:45 – 09:15	Welcome and registration of participants
09:15 – 09:30	Welcome talk – Action Chair (Theodore M. Giannaros)
09:30 – 09:50	Invited talk – Edwin Kok (Instituut Fysieke Veiligheid, Netherlands)
09:50 – 10:10	Invited talk – Jean-Paul Monet (Bouches-du-Rhône F.D., France)
10:10 – 10:30	Invited talk – Akli Benali (Universdade de Lisboa, Portugal)
10:30 – 11:00	Discussion
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	Focus on WG1 activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Storytelling template▪ Data collation roadmap
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break (self-paid)
14:00 – 15:30	Focus on WG2 activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Case study manual▪ Case studies to focus on
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 17:00	Wrap-up discussion

Thursday 4 April 2024

08:45 – 09:15	Registration of participants
09:15 – 09:30	Summary of previous day – Action Chair (Theodore M. Giannaros)
09:30 – 09:50	Invited talk – Vasko Raychinov (Sustainable Development Association, Bulgaria)
09:50 – 10:10	Invited talk – Franco Casula (Corpo Forestale e di Vigilanza Ambientale Regione Sardegna, Italy)
10:10 – 10:30	Invited talk – Mariza Kaskara (BEYOND/NOA, Greece)
10:30 – 11:00	Discussion
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	Focus on WG3 activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Practitioners’ needs and requirements▪ Strategy for active collaboration between researchers and practitioners
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break (self-paid)
14:00 – 15:30	Focus on WG4 activities:

- Fire brief template
- Strategy to engage with relevant international projects/initiatives

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00 Wrap-up discussion

Presentations given at the meeting can be accessed through the NERO website (<https://nero-network.eu/resources>, Section Documents).

2. Participants

A total of 62 unique participants attended the NERO WG Assembly.



Group photo of the participants attending the NERO WG Assembly in Athens (Greece), 3 – 4 April 2024.

3. Discussions summary

3.1. WG1 Session

WG1 session focused on refining the roadmap for data collation within and beyond the NERO network. Key conclusions drawn from the discussion are as follows:

- Define very clearly the approach to be followed for selecting wildfires for which data will be collected across different countries/regions.
- Identify very clearly what data needs to be collected: fire progression (isochrones), fire behavior descriptors, fuel model data, and weather station data. For fire behavior descriptors, participants indicated rate of spread (ROS), fire intensity, spotting, and the occurrence of pyroconvection.
- Data shall be collected based on relevance and availability, not focusing strictly on “extremes”.
- Steps to obtain data: (1) historical data retrieved from researchers and practitioners in NERO; (2) historical data retrieved from other NERO-related projects (e.g., FireEUrisk FIRE-RES); (3) real-time data collected during the lifetime of NERO from active events (exact approach to be described later in the lifetime of NERO).
- Define the necessary structure and organization of the data.
- Establish a Data Management Plan (DMP) that will also address issues related to intellectual property.
- Participants proposed that the work of data collection may need to be organized in different sub-groups, involving the definition of national contact points.
- It was suggested that towards the end of NERO, we shall reach out to JRC to express the importance of collecting data on fire behavior instead of simple fire statistics.

3.2. WG2 session

WG2 session focused on identifying wildfires to be studied and setting up the case study manual. Key conclusions drawn from the discussion are as follows:

- Several participants expressed their interest to study the following events: Pedrogao Grande (2017, Portugal), Mati (2018, Greece), Rougnac (2016, France), Pont de Vilomara (2022).
- Participants agreed to identify a list of top-5 most relevant wildfires for their countries.
- While discussing candidate case study wildfires, the issue of data availability rose again.
- The Action Chair urged participants to be open and demonstrate their willingness to share data.
- A variety of different topics to focus on were proposed, including isochrones (fire spread/progression), fuel data, multiple simultaneous ignitions, and live and dead fuels.
- Participants proposed that apart from numerical models, other tools (e.g., statistical methods) shall be used for conducting the studies.
- Practitioners present in the meeting highlighted the need to address even simple questions in the studies, which could yield useful and easily communicated information

to those operating in the field. They also underlined the importance of identifying tipping points for the occurrence of dangerous fire behavior.

- Several participants expressed their interest to focus on particular aspects of extreme fire behavior, including spotting and pyroconvection.

3.3. WG3 session

WG3 session focused on the needs and requirements of practitioners, as well as on the definition of a plan for their more active engagement. Key conclusions drawn from the discussion are as follows:

- Practitioners shall be engaged in training WG1 and WG2 members concerning data collection (What data? How to collect? How to process?)
- It is important to exchange experiences on data collection to possibly develop a standard methodology that could be applied for collecting data from active wildfires during the lifetime of NERO.
- WG3 Leader suggested the implementation of a Hackathon, after data are collected, to focus on specific themes of interest to the practitioners (e.g., identification of tipping points).
- Practitioners underlined that it may be useful to consider exploiting COST networking tools to support the exchange of experiences in real fire scenarios (e.g., through STSMs).

3.4. WG4 session

WG4 session focused on connecting NERO to other fire-related projects/initiatives and defining a fire brief template to support the formation of a fire science communication team. Key conclusions drawn from the discussion are as follows:

- A synergies team was formed, comprising NERO members that currently participate to other fire-related projects. The role of the team shall be to connect NERO to the identified projects and establish collaborations for the benefit of the network. The team composition is as follows:

FirEURisk	Domingos Viegas
FIRE-RES	Jean-Baptiste Filippi
SILVANUS	Majlingova Andrea
TREEADS	Proposed by JP Monet; Kemal SARP ARSAVA, from RISE research Institute ksarsava@hotmail.com – needs to be contacted.
Fire-Logue	Theodore M. Giannaros
FLAME	Theodore M. Giannaros

FireLinks/Global partnership	Fire	Artemi Cerdà
EWED		Theodore
Capacity Building in Saxony, DE, SLO, HR, and CZ (fire management)		Lindon Pronto
FIREBOX		Davide Ascoli
CLIM4CAST		Tomislava Hojsak
NW-European Roundtable	Wildfire	Edwin Kok
FIREFLY (ANR-22-CE04-000)		Mélanie Rochoux
ONFIRE		Marco Turco

- Participants agreed that the fire brief template shall include basic information about ongoing, noteworthy wildfires across Europe. The key purpose of the brief shall be to communicate credible information to the media, in an effort to educate journalists and through them the public. There was agreement that the fire brief template shall not include any “operational information” but only information related to the science (type of wildfire, fuels, weather conditions, potential extreme fire behavior).
- The Action Vice Chair disagreed with the concept of communicating information to the media about active wildfires. The Action Chair stressed the importance of leveraging media to educating people and to combat the spread of fake news concerning wildfires. All agreed that it is important to communicate information carefully.
- No agreement was reached to form the Fire Science Communication Team. It was decided to follow up on this issue and move quickly to have the team set up and ready for the upcoming fire season.