



MEMBERSHIP CONDITIONS FOR FOREST TERRITORIES JOINING THE FUNGI FRIENDLY FOREST® NETWORK



Contents:

1. Fungi-Friendly-Forest® concept and objectives
2. Fungi-Friendly-Forest® members and membership process
3. Fungi-Friendly-Forest® evaluation and rating
4. Fungi-Friendly-Forest® membership commitments
 - 4.1. Sustainable management of mycological resources
 - 4.2. Sustainable enhancement of mycological resources
 - 4.3. Generation and sharing of knowledge regarding mycological resources
5. Benefits of Fungi-Friendly-Forest® membership
 - 5.1. MycoForum®: Forum for innovation, development and sector-wide structure
 - 5.2. Online platform for exchanging knowledge and generating citizen science
 - 5.3. EMI service portfolio
6. Fungi-Friendly-Forest® commitments. Summary table.

1.- Fungi Friendly Forest® concept and objectives

Fungi-Friendly-Forest® is a mark of quality created by the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation “European Mycological Institute” (AECT-EMI) to recognise the commitment of forestry territories to sustainable management, enhancement and research regarding their mycological resources in light of these main challenges:

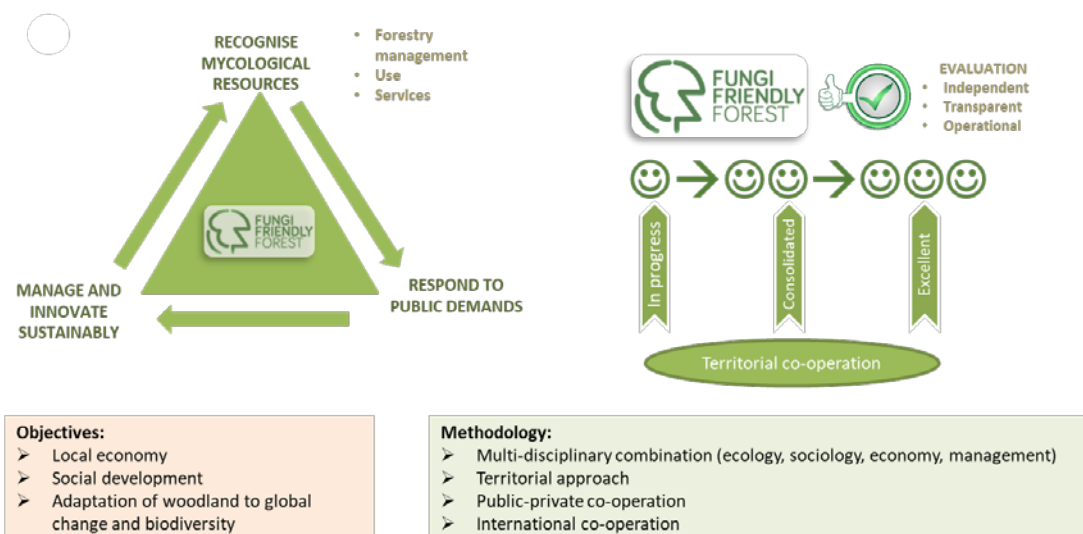
- How to showcase the ecological functions of fungi in adapting to climate change in woodlands and the conservation of biodiversity;
- How to manage territories in a multi-functional manner to preserve mycological resources and their social, tourist and agri-food functions; and
- How to prevent conflict in the use of forestry areas.

Joining the Fungi-Friendly-Forest® network fosters the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge and innovation between territories, as well as the support of public-private agents interested in the transitions required for the mycological resources of forest to be used in a responsible manner as a driver of rural development.

Belonging to this network similarly allows for the international promotion of territories and innovative co-operation between public-private agents in order to develop quality mycological produce and services capable of attracting urban-dwellers into the rural environment.

The enhancement process of the territories/mycological parks is based on the principles of independence, transparency, operability and co-operation.

Table 1: Network of territories/mycological parks: description of process



2.- Fungi Friendly Forest® members and membership process

Owners or managers of public or private mycological forest parks/territories can form part of the Fungi Friendly Forest® network, as well as individuals or groups who are interested in managing mycological resources and adhering to the commitments established in these terms and conditions.

Requests for membership should be addressed to the EMI Assembly by the legal representative of the interested mycological park/territory and involve the payment of a 500 euro p.a. administration fee for the ongoing development of this co-operation network (as agreed by the 9th EMI Assembly on 16 March 2020). This fee is revised annually, and can be updated upon the decision of the EMI Assembly.

3.- Fungi Friendly Forest® evaluation and rating

Although the mark of quality is an attempt to initiate processes of continuous improvement in the forest mycological parks/territories participating in the network, it is essential to establish some initial indicators of commitment for each territory, as well as call on a specialised and independent scientific and technical committee to evaluate and rate their progress, and also advise and accompany each territory on their path to improvement.

The scientific and technical committee will be established by the EMI in each forest territory in line with criteria of independence, transparency and operability in order to annually assess the progress of the commitment indicators.

Once assessed, the scientific and technical committee will rate the forest territory using the following scale:

- ☺ Fungi Friendly Forest®: Mycological park/territory in progress.
- ☺☺ Fungi Friendly Forest®: Consolidated mycological park/territory.
- ☺☺☺ Fungi Friendly Forest®: Excellent mycological park/territory.

The EMI Assembly will also have the power to withdraw the use of the Fungi Friendly Forest® quality mark from any territory which, having been evaluated and notified, does not follow up on the recommendations by the Scientific and Technical Committee within a reasonable time period also established by the Assembly.

Section 4 outlines the indicators that territories must comply with in order to be rated according to their degree of excellence (☺, ☺☺ or ☺☺☺). Initially, at least 80% of these criteria must be complied with in order to be rated within one of the three defined categories.

The EMI Assembly shall review the Fungi Friendly Forest® quality commitment criteria in the future should two thirds of the mycological parks/territories in the network request so, in order to continue upgrading the process.

4.- Fungi Friendly Forest® membership commitments

4.-1 Sustainable management of mycological resources

This commitment involves the resolution of two main aspects: a) orderly management of mushroom collecting; and b) progressive application of mycoforestry criteria in forestry management.

Depending on the mycological park/territory's degree of excellence (☺, ☺☺ or ☺☺☺) the following commitment indicators must have been observed:

a) Orderly collecting management: the mycological park/territory has a control system for collecting that must cover, at the least, the following indicators:

- ☺ Specific conditions established for collecting.
- ☺ Recognised collecting area.
- ☺ Recognised number of mushroom pickers.
- ☺ Specific species for collecting.
- ☺ Established signage.
- ☺☺ Recognised potential production of the territory.
- ☺☺ Control system and monitoring in operation.
- ☺☺ Recognised maximum number of mushroom pickers.
- ☺☺ Recognised number of mushroom pickers, and their type and origin.
- ☺☺ Recognised amounts of principal species collected.
- ☺☺ Mycological use plan in operation.
- ☺☺☺ Online production information system in operation.
- ☺☺☺ Online system for controlling collecting access in operation.
- ☺☺☺ Permanent mycological reserve areas.

b) Mycoforestry: there is a quantifiable commitment by owners and forestry managers of the mycological park/territory for the progressive integration of mycological resources into forestry management based on the following indicators:

- 😊 Process initiated with the agreement of owners and managers.
- 😊 Mycoforestry training of owners and managers in progress.
- 😊😊 Forestry management plan includes mycoforestry criteria.
- 😊😊😊 Forestry management includes mycoforestry criteria.

4.-2 Sustainable enhancement of mycological resources

This commitment involves the resolution of two main aspects: a) orderly management of mycotourism; b) quality and assurance of local agri-food mycological resources; and c) territorial marketing.

a) Mycotourism: the mycological park/territory reconciles collecting by the local population with collecting by mycotourists and organizes agents in the territory to provide the following indicators:

- 😊 Recreational collecting by mycotourists is allowed.
- 😊 Local agents working in the area receive mycotourism training.
- 😊😊 Online information system specifically for mycotourists.
- 😊😊 Permanent infrastructures for mycotourists.
- 😊😊 Local myco-gastronomic produce is on offer in the area.
- 😊😊😊 Provision of mycological guide services.
- 😊😊😊 Infrastructure for tourists is adapted to climate change.
- 😊😊😊 Restaurants offer special mycological cuisine.
- 😊😊😊 Mycological products are included within the local offer for tourists.

b) Development of local mycological agri-food: the mycological park/territory commits to the development of traceability/quality/assurance of the local mycological resources as agri-food, organising agents in the territory to provide the following indicators:

- 😊 Mycological agri-food training for local agents working in the area.
- 😊 Local marketing of mycological products collected locally or from other territories in the Fungi Friendly Forest® network.
- 😊😊 Recognised prices and amounts sold.
- 😊😊 Processing of mycological products collected locally or from other territories in the Fungi Friendly Forest® network.
- 😊😊😊 Traceability system for local mycological resources
- 😊😊😊 Quality assurances of local mycological resources.

c) Territorial marketing: the mycological park/territory commits to implementing marketing actions to enhance the attractiveness of the territory by organising agents to provide the following indicators:

- 😊 Marketing training for local agents working in the area.
- 😊 Local mycological events organised.
- 😊😊 Marketing and communication plan in operation.
- 😊😊😊 Website and social networks for promotion and marketing in operation.
- 😊😊😊 Regional and national mycological events organised.
- 😊😊😊😊 International mycological events organised.

4.3.- Generation and sharing of knowledge regarding mycological resources

This commitment entails dedicating resources to the generation of scientific knowledge on the territory's mycological resources, as well as the exchange of information and good practices between territories in the Fungi Friendly Forest® network. Depending on the mycological park/territory's degree of excellence (😊, 😊😊 or 😊😊😊) the following commitment indicators must have been observed:

- 😊 Preliminary analysis of the mycological potential of the territory.
- 😊 Participation in knowledge-sharing events (Mycoforum).
- 😊😊 Definitive analysis of mycological potential.
- 😊😊 Mycological inventory system implemented.
- 😊😊😊 Inventory databases shared with the Fungi Friendly Forest® network.
- 😊😊😊 Collecting and mycotourism databases shared with the Fungi Friendly Forest® network.
- 😊😊😊😊 Mycological research plots in operation.
- 😊😊😊😊 Active research projects in the territory.
- 😊😊😊😊 Online citizen science website in operation.
- 😊😊😊😊 Organisation of knowledge-sharing events (Mycoforum).

5.- Benefits of Fungi-Friendly-Forest® membership

Membership of the Fungi Friendly Forest® network shows commitment to the principle of co-operation between mycological park/territory members. All actions are guided by the European Mycological Institute and its Scientific and Technical Committee of experts.

5.1.-MYCOFORUM®: Forum for innovation, development and sector-wide structure

Mycoforum® meets regularly in one of the member mycological parks/territories in order to facilitate the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge between the members linked to the EMI and promote the responsible use of mycological resources in forests as a driver of rural development. It endeavours to facilitate innovative co-operation between public-private agents involved based on quality mycological produce and services capable of attracting urban-dwellers into the rural environment.

Mycoforum® will also raise public awareness regarding: a) the ecological importance of fungi in woodland; b) the importance of considering fungi in forestry management (mycoforestry); c) the various local species that can be collected, where and how to pick them responsibly; d) the importance of quality control in ensuring food safety and preventing mislabelling; e) most suitable ways of preparing mushrooms at home to enjoy their qualities; f) mycotourism: mycological parks, local agri-food produce, fairs, workshop days, specialised restaurants, etc.

Mycoforum® is an annual event held in a different location each year in municipalities located within a mycological park/territory with attractive exhibition spaces that ensure public attend from urban areas and visit the countryside as well as maximum dissemination.

5.2.- Online platform for exchanging knowledge and generating citizen science

Fungi Friendly Forest® network members will have an online EMI platform for sharing knowledge and citizen science generated which will facilitate the progressive application of some of the proposed excellence indicators. This platform will be managed by the EMI with support from their scientific-technical committee.

5.3.- EMI service portfolio

The EMI consortium has a team of public-private experts at hand to provide quality services related to the management and enhancement of mycological resources. Fungi Friendly Forest® network members will have preferential access to this portfolio of services, which aim to respond to the indicators established in these conditions.

These services will be budgeted for individually in each case depending on the requirements of each park/territory, providing one-off advisory services to “turnkey” services.

6.- Fungi-Friendly-Forest® commitments summary table

MYCOLOGICAL PARKS/TERRITORIES COMMITMENTS		CATEGORIES AND INDICATORS		
		Fungi Friendly Forest® ☺ "In progress"	Fungi Friendly Forest® ☺☺ "Consolidated"	Fungi Friendly Forest® ☺☺☺ "Excellent"
Sustainable management of mycological resources	Orderly collecting management	Specific conditions established for collecting	Recognised potential production of the territory	Online production information system in operation
		Recognised collecting area	Control system and monitoring in operation	Online system for controlling collecting access in operation
		Recognised number of mushroom pickers	Recognised maximum number of mushroom pickers	Permanent mycological reserve areas
		Specific species for collecting	Recognised number of mushroom pickers, and their type and origin	
		Established signage	Recognised amounts of principal species collected	
			Mycological use plan in operation	
	Mycoforestry	Process initiated with the agreement of owners and managers	Forestry management plan includes mycoforestry criteria	Forestry management includes mycoforestry criteria
		Mycoforestry training of owners and managers in progress		
Sustainable enhancement of mycological resources	Mycotourism	Recreational collecting by mycotourists is allowed	Online information system specifically for mycotourists	Provision of mycological guide services
		Local agents working in the area receive mycotourism training	Permanent infrastructures for mycotourists	Infrastructure for tourists is adapted to climate change
			Local myco-gastronomic produce is on offer in the area	Restaurants offer special mycological cuisine
				Mycological products are included within the local offer for tourists
	Development of local mycological agri-food	Mycological agri-food training for local agents working in the area	Recognised prices and amounts sold	Traceability system for local mycological resources
		Local marketing of mycological products collected locally or from other territories in the Fungi Friendly Forest® network	Processing of mycological products collected locally or from other territories in the Fungi Friendly Forest® network	Quality assurances of local mycological resources
	Territorial marketing	Marketing training for local agents working in the area	Marketing and communication plan in operation	International mycological events organised
		Local mycological events organised.	Website and social networks for promotion and marketing in operation	
			Regional and national mycological events organised	
	Generation and sharing of knowledge regarding mycological resources.		Preliminary analysis of the mycological potential of the territory	Definitive analysis of mycological potential
		Participation in knowledge-sharing events (Mycoforum)	Mycological inventory system implemented	Active research projects in the territory
			Inventory databases shared with the Fungi Friendly Forest® network	Online citizen science website in operation
			Collecting and mycotourism databases shared with the Fungi Friendly Forest® network	Organisation of knowledge-sharing events (Mycoforum)