



MOROCCO

U.S. Forest Service International Programs

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The U.S. Forest Service provides support to the Moroccan High Commission on Water, Forests, and Combating Desertification by sharing technical expertise on sustainable reforestation, rangeland management, and forest fire management activities.

Activities are 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; future plans aim to train dozens more in the coming months.

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OVERVIEW

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 improved reforestation efforts, rangeland and wildfire management programs. 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 reforestation efforts are focused on improving tree nursery management practices while aiming to ensure greater survival rates of planted seedlings. By advising the High Commission on opportunities for improvement within existing seed centers and tree nurseries, the U.S. Forest Service is helping improve success rates and thereby reduce costs for reforestation efforts.

The 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 as they develop a range school in collaboration with a local grazing association. This school will pilot rotational grazing concepts that aim to improve soil and plant health while also allowing for improved livestock production.

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 training, hands-on work sessions, and study tours as a national forest fire response center and corresponding operating procedures are developed.



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

