



Annual activities of the
FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE (FRI)
ELGO - DIMITRA
2024

Thessaloniki 2025

HELLENIC AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION
DIMITRA

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH

FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE



ACTIVITIES 2024

THESSALONIKI 2025

Edition editing

Magdalini Pleniou
Ermioni Malliarou
Nikos Markos
Stefanos Stefanidis
Savas Kazantzidis

Photos: S . Kazantzidis, M. Pleniou

Table of contents

Edition editing/Table of contents.....	1
Note from the Director of the Forest Research Institute.....	3
The Forest Research Institute.....	5
The mission of the Forest Research Institute.....	6
Administration bodies.....	6
Staff of the Forest Research Institute.....	7
Financial report.....	11
Research projects.....	12
Sources of funding for implemented projects.....	13
The farm of the Forest Research Institute.....	14
Scientific Publications.....	15
Publications in scientific journals and conference proceedings.....	15
Participation in journal editorial boards and paper reviews.....	16
The research activity of the Forest Research Institute.....	17
Organization of conferences, workshops & scientific meetings.....	19
Participation in Boards of Directors, Scientific Councils of organizations & Scientific Societies.....	20
Educational Activity.....	22
Advisory & examination committees.....	22
Proposals to postgraduate studies programs.....	23
Training for geotechnicians, cultivators and farmers.....	23
Education of students in the context of internship.....	23
Presentation and dissemination of the work of the FRI.....	24

Note from the Director of the Forest Research Institute

The mission of the Forest Research Institute is to conduct scientific research on the sustainable management of forests, forest ecosystems and pastures (meadows), the qualitative and quantitative improvement of the production of products and services in them and the protection of the natural environment for the benefit of Society.

In the above context, during 2024, the Institute's contribution to both Science and Society continued with research actions (new or continuing from previous years), collaboration with bodies (state and private) and publication of research results.

Despite the many changes in the organization and management of our Organization and the turmoil they initially caused, our Institute continued to implement its research work without interruption. In the research sector, in 2024, at least 26 projects (continuing from previous years or new projects) were being implemented at the Forest Research Institute in at least 35 areas in Greece. Their total budget was approximately 1,360,000 € and their main sources of funding were from agency assignments as well as from programs (mainly competitive).

In the field of publicizing and promoting the Institute's research work, at least 27 articles were published in international scientific journals. At the same time, the Institute's researchers participated in twelve (12) international and seven (7) national conferences, presenting the results of their research projects to the scientific public (23 and 14 announcements, respectively). In addition, at least three (3) researchers participated in editorial boards of international scientific journals of four (4) publishing houses and six (6) in organizational and scientific committees of six (6) international and national conferences. Moreover, at least twelve (12) researchers and four (4) associates of our Institute participated in workshops, conferences and lectures in Greece and abroad.

In addition to the above, seven (7) researchers participated in at least ten (10) international and national scientific committees and councils of scientific bodies, working groups. Additionally, the researchers provided advisory work to State agencies as well as to committees of the country's universities.

In 2024, the design of our Institute's new website began, an ongoing activity in which almost all the staff participated.

All the above was achieved thanks to the consistency and hard work of the researchers, the collaborating scientists, as well as the multifaceted support of the non-research staff (administrative and scientific), without whose contribution little could have been implemented.

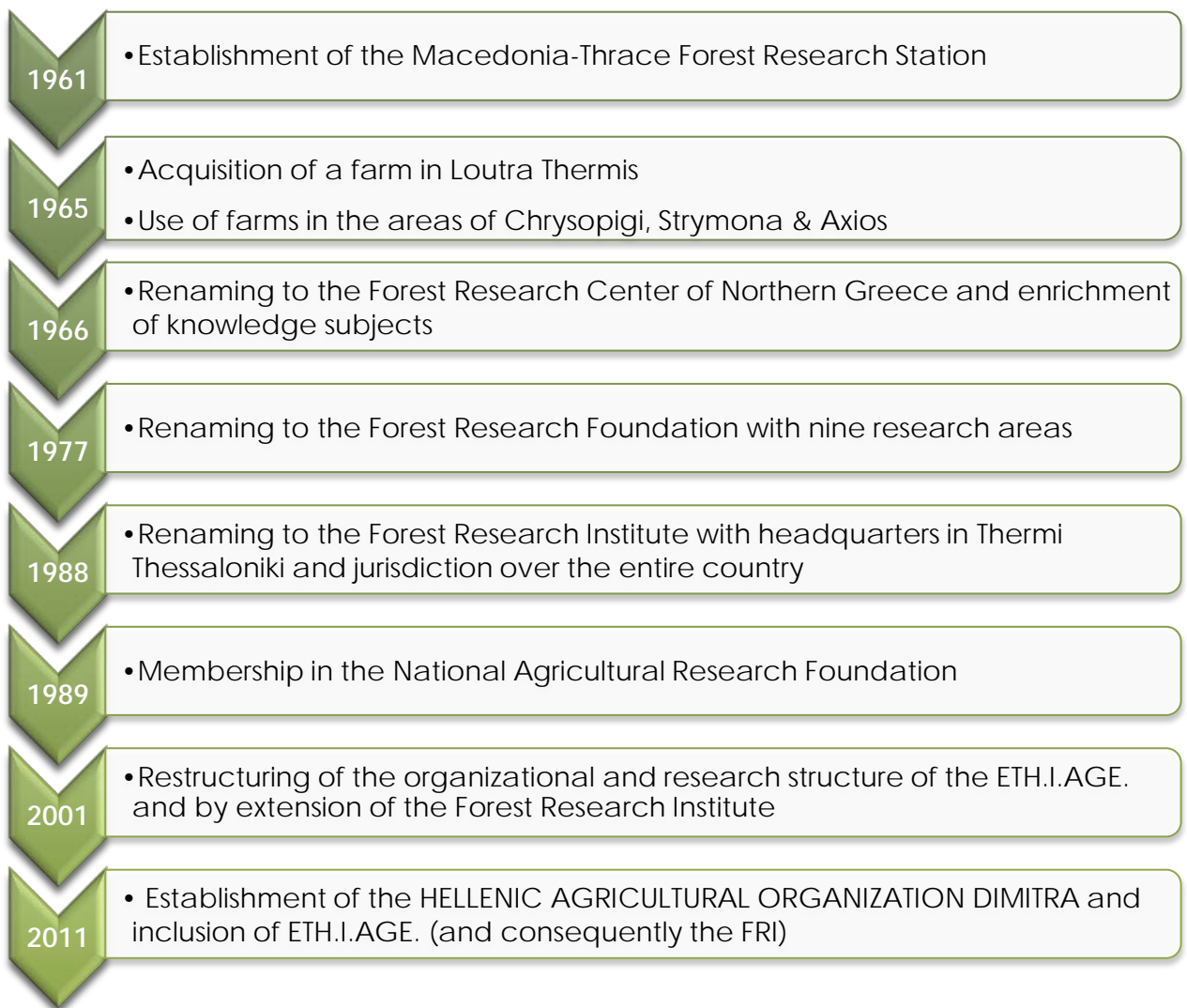
I appreciate that all the staff of the FRI participated actively and responsibly in the activities for the implementation of the FRI's goals and the achievements prove it.

I hope that the collective effort and cooperation between us will continue in 2026 so that the goals of the FRI come even closer.

Dr. Savas Kazantzidis
Director of the FRI

The Forest Research Institute

The Forest Research Institute (FRI) was founded in 1961 and initially operated as *the Macedonia-Thrace Forest Research Station*. The objects in which it was active were the cultivation and production of improved poplar clones as well as the ecology and improvement of mountain pastures. Until its current form, the Institute evolved many times and has gone through numerous turning points until 2011, when a new Organization was established under the name HELLENIC AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION DIMITRA, to which it is affiliated.



The mission of the Forest Research Institute

The mission of the Forest Research Institute is to conduct scientific research on the sustainable management of forests, forest ecosystems and pastures (meadows), the qualitative and quantitative improvement of the production of products and services in them and the protection of the natural environment for the benefit of Society.

Administration bodies

The administrative and operating bodies of the FRI in the year 2024 consisted of the following staff:

DIRECTOR

Dr. **Savas Kazantzidis**, Research Director

FRI SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

Dr. **Konstantinos Ioannou**, Senior Researcher (Chairman)

Dr. **Ilias Karmiris**, Senior Researcher

Dr. **Christos Astaras**, Research Director

Dr. **Dimitrios Fotakis**, Senior Researcher

Dr. **Theano Samara**, Senior Researcher

Mr. **Evangelos Chavales**, Representative of Regular Non-Research Staff

Mr. **Dionisios Gaitanis**, Secretary

Staff of the Forest Research Institute

The staff of the Institute consists of research, scientific and technical personnel (Figures 1 and 2). In addition, the Institute is staffed by employees of the Administrative Support Unit of our Organization (MODY). In addition to the permanent staff, the Institute also employs external collaborators in the institute's research programs (Figure 3).

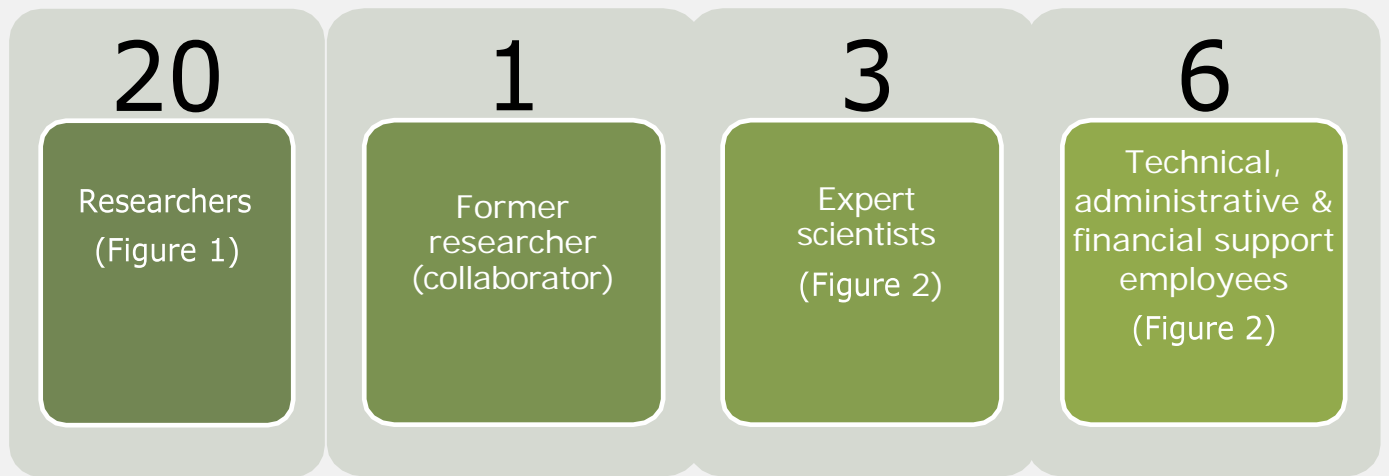


Figure 1. Researchers of Forest Research Institute (figure from FRI website www.fri.gr.)

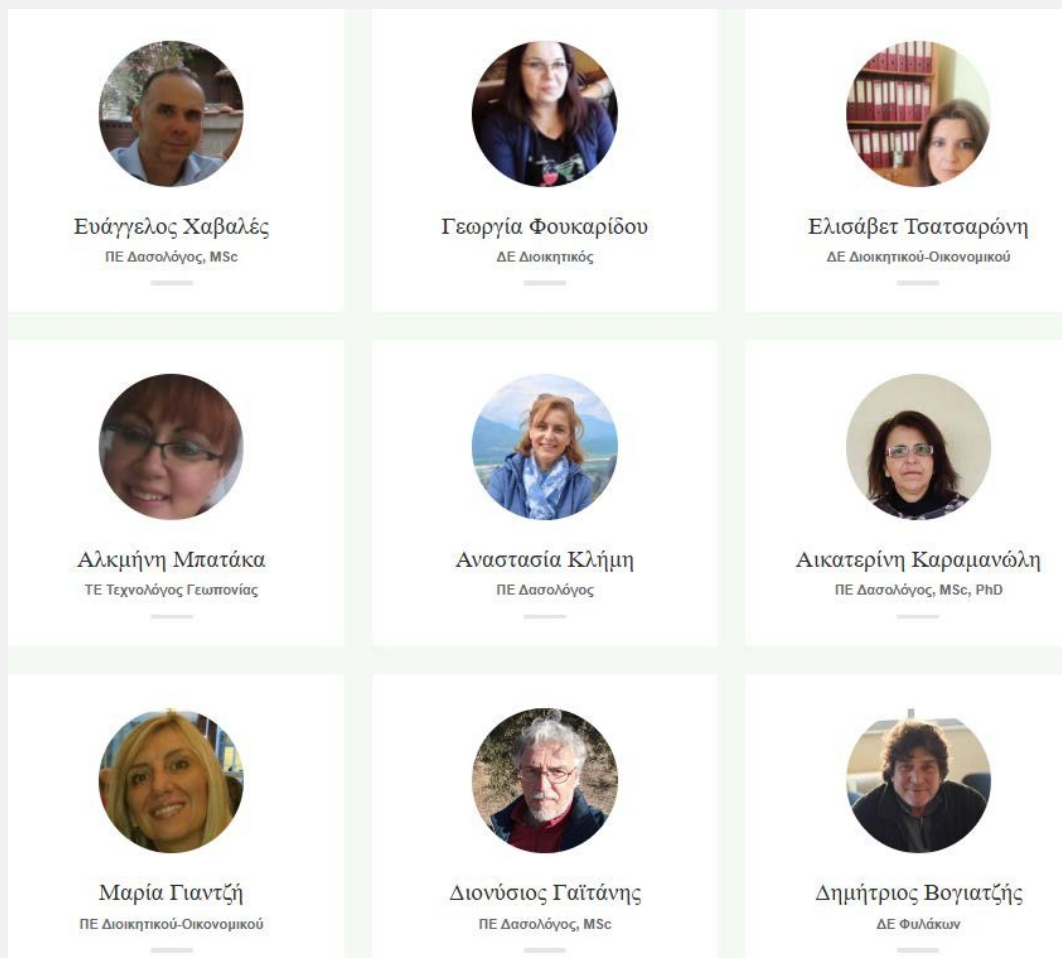


Figure 2. The non-research staff (administrative and specialist scientists) of Forest Research Institute (figure from FRI website www.fri.gr).



Figure 3. The external collaborating scientists in the research programs of the Forest Research Institute (figure from FRI website, www.fri.gr).

RESEARCH STAFF

Full name	Research Topic	Telephone extension	e-mail
Avtzis Dimitrios	Forest Entomology	213	dimitrios.avtzis@elgo.gr
Astaras Christos	Wild Fauna	204	christos.astaras@elgo.gr
Gallis Christos	Forest Utilization – Forest Environment and Human Health	215	cgallis@elgo.gr
Ioannou Konstantinos	Forest Informatics & Applications in Forest Policy	225	ioanko@elgo.gr
Kazantzidis Savas	Wild Animal Management (Director of FRI)	214	savkaz@elgo.gr
Karmiris Ilias	Rangeland Ecology and Management - Animal Species Interactions and Grazing Management	241	iliask@elgo.gr
Koulelis Panagiotis	Forest Management	218	pkoulelis@elgo.gr
Malliarou Ermioni	Conservation and management of forest genetic resources	205	emalliarou@elgo.gr
Markos Nikolaos	Forest Climatology – Interactions of Forest Ecosystems and Climate Change	237	nmarkos@elgo.gr
Xystrakis Fotios	Forest Phytosociology	236	fotios.xystrakis@elgo.gr
Pleniou Magdalini	Forest Fires	240	mpleniou@elgo.gr
Samara Theano	Silviculture and Ecology of Forest Ecosystems – Urban Forestry	205	theasam@elgo.gr
Spanos Ioannis	Silviculture – Forest Ecology	218	ispanos@elgo.gr
Spanos Konstantinos	Forest Genetics – Genetic Breeding of Forest Species & Biotechnology	202	kspanos@elgo.gr
Spyroglou Gavriil	Forest growth and yield, Management of forest ecosystems	233	spyroglou@elgo.gr
Stefanidis Stefanos	Forest Hydrology	204	sstefanidis@elgo.gr
Topalidou Eleni	Forest Pathology	216	etopal@elgo.gr
Tsiourlis Georgios	Forest Ecology – Ecology of Mediterranean Ecosystems	245	gmtsiou@elgo.gr
Fotakis Dimitrios	Spatial Planning of Natural Resources	235	fotakis@elgo.gr
Fotelli Mariantzela	Forest Ecophysiology	238	fotelli@elgo.gr

COLLABORATING RESEARCHERS

Full name	Research Topic	e-mail
Papachristou Thomas	Ecology and management of rangeland resources	thomas.papachristou@elgo.gr

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL STAFF

Full name	Position	Telephone extension	e-mail
Gaitanis Dionisios	Forester M. Sc.	210	dgaitan@elgo.gr
Giantzi Maria	Administrative	226	giantzi@elgo.gr
Karamanoli Aikaterini	Forester Dr.	228	karamanoli@elgo.gr
Klimi Anastasia	Forester	227	klimi@elgo.gr
Chavales Evagelos	Forester M.Sc.	217	vageha@elgo.gr
Mpataka Alkmini	Agriculturist	203	alkminimp@elgo.gr
Vogiatzis Dimitrios	Security guard	250	
Φουκαρίδου Γεωργία	Administrative	254	foukaridou@elgo.gr

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Full name	Position
1 Stefanos Papaiordanidis	Forester
2 Charalampia Charalampidou	Forester
3 Despoina Migli	Forester
4 Aggelos Geroulanos	Informatics
5 Nikoleta Eleutheriadou	Forester
6 Nikoleta Simopoulou	Forester
7 Christos Damianidis	Forester
8 Natasa Kiorapostolou	Forester

Financial report

The main financial resources of the FRI come from the Ministry of Rural Development & Food through the funding to ELGO - DIMITRA, which concerns the **payroll** of the staff and the **operating expenses** of the unit.

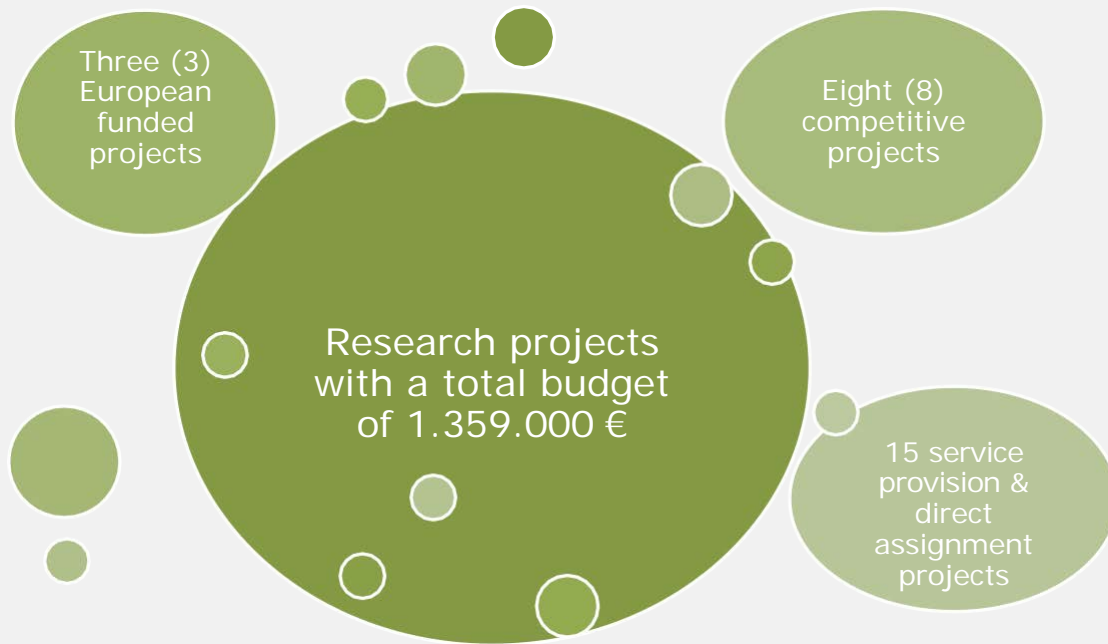
The operating expenses per expense category as well as the corresponding revenues of the unit are analyzed in the table below.

Operating Expenses	
Electricity invoices	14.082€
Heating fuels	6.188€
Cleanliness	7.144€
Other provisions	13.782€
Fixed equipment maintenances	1.898€
Consumables	4.565€
Telecommunications invoices	5.277€
Travel expenses	4.394€
Postage expenses	244€
Traffic fees	1.335€
Miscellaneous expenses	254€
Total	59.163 €

Covering operating expenses	
Annual unit budget	16.925 €
Development & Support of Scientific Projects	57.449 €
Service Provision	1.883 €
Total	76.257 €

Research projects

In 2024, the planned work of the research programs implemented in the FRI continued and a large part of their data has already been processed (laboratory and statistical analyses) while their results have been included in the interim or final progress reports.

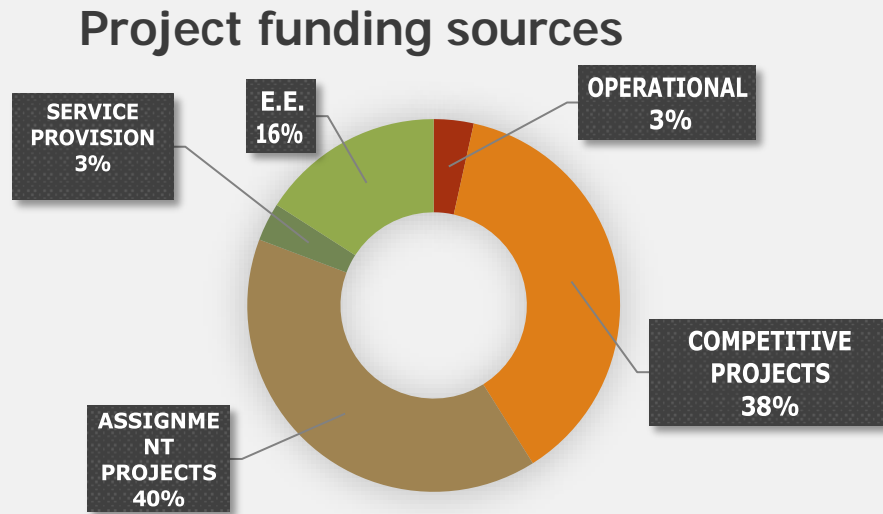


Three competitive projects with a total budget of €743,000 were implemented in FRI are directly funded by European funds. In addition, three (3) projects with a total budget of 330,000€ were being implemented, which are part of Action II of measure 16.1-16.5 of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, which are related to the protection, promotion and conservation of biodiversity.

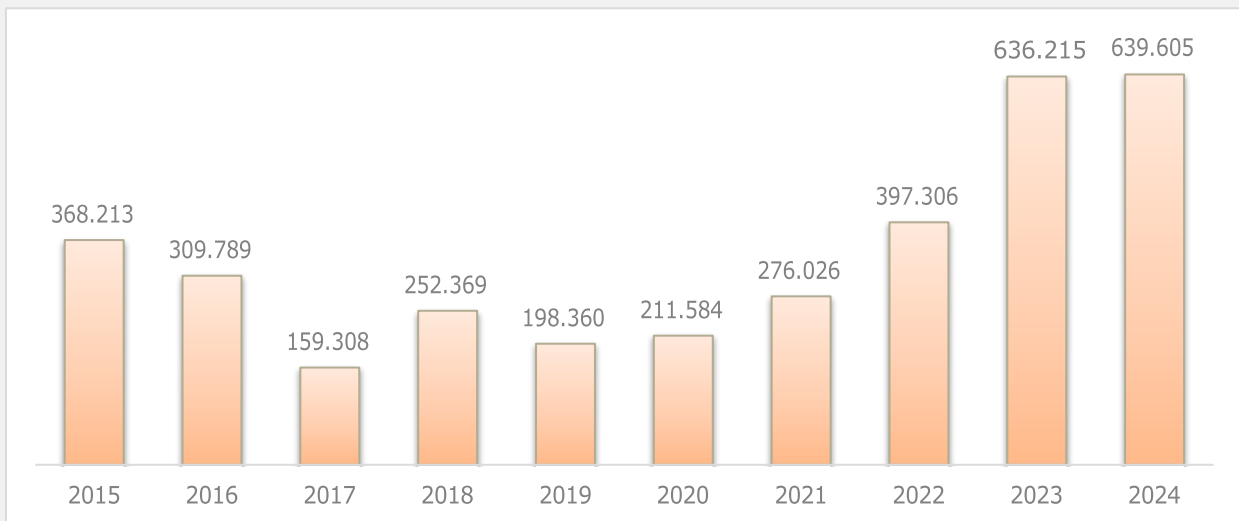
FRI researchers participate in research projects of third parties as well as in actions related to networking and communication between scientists. In the above context, seven (7) researchers participated in ten (10) networking actions (COST, IMPEL, HORIZON-MISS).

Sources of funding for implemented projects

The most important source of research funding at the FRI, in 2024, came from projects (competitive, commissioned) revealing the scientific potential of the unit. The total funding for research projects for the year 2024 amounted to **€639,605**. The distribution of funding in the project categories is shown in the graph below.



Revenues from the research activity of the FRI show a steady upward trend during the last five years, as can be seen in the following graph.



The farm of the Forest Research Institute

Special mention should be given to the research activities carried out on the FRI farm in Loutra Thermi (Vasilika) Thessaloniki, covering an area of 30 ha.

During 2024, measurements of growth characteristics of forest and other species (*Quercus suber*, *Pawlownia spp.*, *Fraxinus spp.*) continued on the permanent experimental plots of the farm. Research activities were carried out, which concerned the recording of climate data from the permanent meteorological station installed on it as well as the collection of data on the presence and abundance of fauna species (birds, mammals, insects), measurements related to the physiology of forest tree and shrub species as well as the carbon footprint.

The FRI farm in Chrysopigi, Serres (50 ha) was not utilized.



Scientific Publications

Publications in scientific journals and conference proceedings

The contribution of the FRI to serving state services and bodies through advisory work and to the formation of environmental awareness among the country's citizens and a modern understanding of the exploitation of natural terrestrial ecosystems and the conservation of endangered animal and plant organisms is a critical function. However, one of the most important measurable products of our unit is considered the research publication.

The activity of FRI Researchers has led to the publication of a significant number of papers in prestigious international & national journals. Moreover, the participation of FRI researchers in international and national conferences contributed to the dissemination of scientific information resulting from the implemented projects.



27 in international scientific journals with impact factor

7 in proceedings of international and national conferences



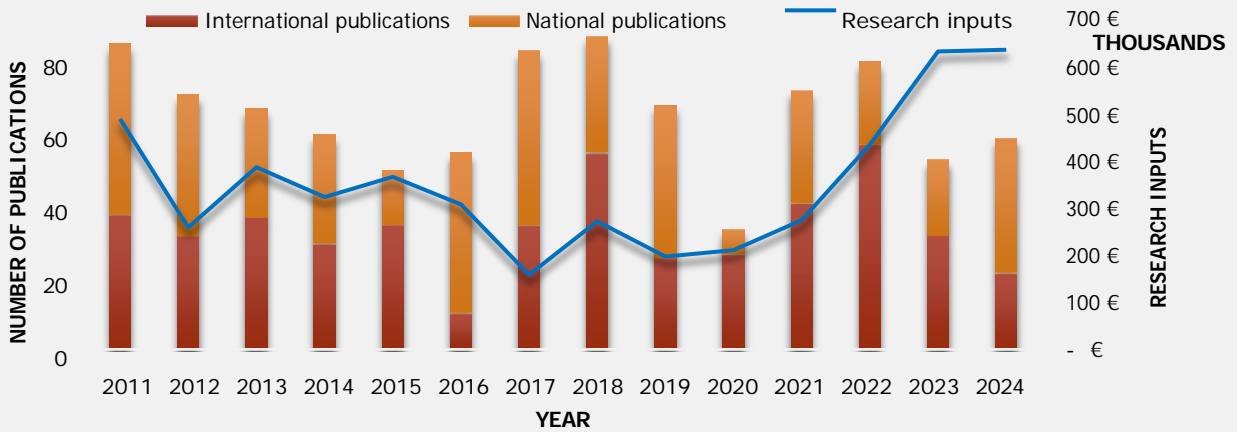
30 in international and national conference abstract volumes

2 final project reports



An important parameter for the evaluation of research activity is the relationship between the number of publications and funding. In recent years, after the establishment of ELGO DIMITRA, both the number of publications and funding have increased on average.

However, in 2024, despite the continued upward trend in research funding, the number of international publications has decreased, while, on the contrary, the number of publications in national journals has increased (comparatively, over the last five years).



Participation in journal editorial boards and paper reviews

Nine FRI researchers participate as editorial board members in international scientific journals of four publishing houses.



Nine FRI researchers evaluated scientific publications in **35** scientific journals with and without Impact factor and/or in proceedings of national or international conferences.

The Research Activity of the Forest Research Institute

As can be seen from the map below, FRI researchers conduct research throughout the territory, covering a wide range of ecological conditions, with the aim of sustainable management of Greece's natural ecosystems.



These activities include studies in protected areas and water systems of northern Greece such as Kerkini lake, Vistonida lake, Volvi lake, Strymonas river and Axios river with an emphasis on habitat management and wildlife conservation (e.g. Dwarf Goose in Kerkini lake). At the same time, the Institute has a strong research presence in mountainous areas (Pieria Mountains, Vardousia, Gkiona, Agrafa) and in areas with forest ecosystems (such as Chalkidiki, Xanthi, Pella, northern Evia), where it focuses on the functioning of forests, the genetic breeding of species, the restoration of degraded areas and protection from fires and diseases. In addition, special actions include the operation of a network of meteorological stations in central Macedonia with the aim of monitoring forest areas.

At the same time, the Institute's activity is expanding to several European countries through active participation in numerous European programs.



Organization of conferences, workshops & scientific meetings

Aiming at the promotion of knowledge and the dissemination of its research activities and results, the FRI (co)organized and supported international conferences during the year 2024 and particularly interesting and important scientific events.

Three FRI researchers participated in the Organizing or the Scientific Committee of three international and national conferences in Greece and abroad.



Additionally, **six** FRI researchers organized workshops, workshops and lectures to disseminate the scientific achievements of their research projects. At the same time, **eight** FRI researchers participated as invited speakers in 21 workshops, sessions and lectures, online and in person, in Greece and abroad.

Participation in Boards of Directors, Scientific Councils of organizations & Scientific Societies

FRI researchers participate in regular committees of International and National Organizations, as well as in Boards of Directors of scientific societies and organizations, as well as in various committees and working groups.



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΑΣΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ
(ΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΣ & ΤΑΜΙΑΣ)



HELLENIC
RANGE & PASTURE
SOCIETY

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΛΙΒΑΔΟΠΟΝΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ
(ΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΣ, ΓΕΝ. ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΑΣ &
ΤΑΜΙΑΣ)

Eleven FRI researchers participate as regular or alternate members in the following committees, boards and working groups:

International

- WildTrack - Non-Invasive Wildlife Monitoring / WildTrack Specialist Group (WSG).
- WildLabs - Bioacoustics Horizon Scan Expert Panel.
- IUCN International Specialist Group on the Glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) and the Eurasian spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) - IUCN SSC - Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Specialist Group

National

- 4th WORKING GROUP Addressing the impacts of the climate crisis on animal production and beekeeping in the geographical area of the Regional Branch of Central Macedonia of GEOTEE.
- Coordinator of a working group of the Central Macedonia Regional Branch of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece (GEOT.EE) with the aim of managing the flooding phenomena exacerbated by the climate crisis in the geographical area of the Central Macedonia branch of GEOTEE.

- Member of the Advisory Committee for the reform of the existing Undergraduate Studies Program, with social partners of the Department of Forestry and Natural Environment Management of the University of Athens.
- 7th WORKING GROUP Addressing the impacts of the climate crisis on the management of forest lands and forest fires in the geographical area of the Central Macedonia Branch of GEOTEE (prefectures of Imathia, Thessaloniki, Kilkis, Pella, Pieria and Chalkidiki).
- Hellenic Center for Bird Ringing (<https://hbrcweb.wordpress.com/>).
- NATURA 2000 Committee.
- Central Advisory Committee for Wildlife Care Centers.

Five (5) FRI researchers were members of advisory committees, crisis committees as well as electoral bodies for the filling of positions of researchers and faculty members, both in Institutes of ELGO DIMITRA and in University Departments.

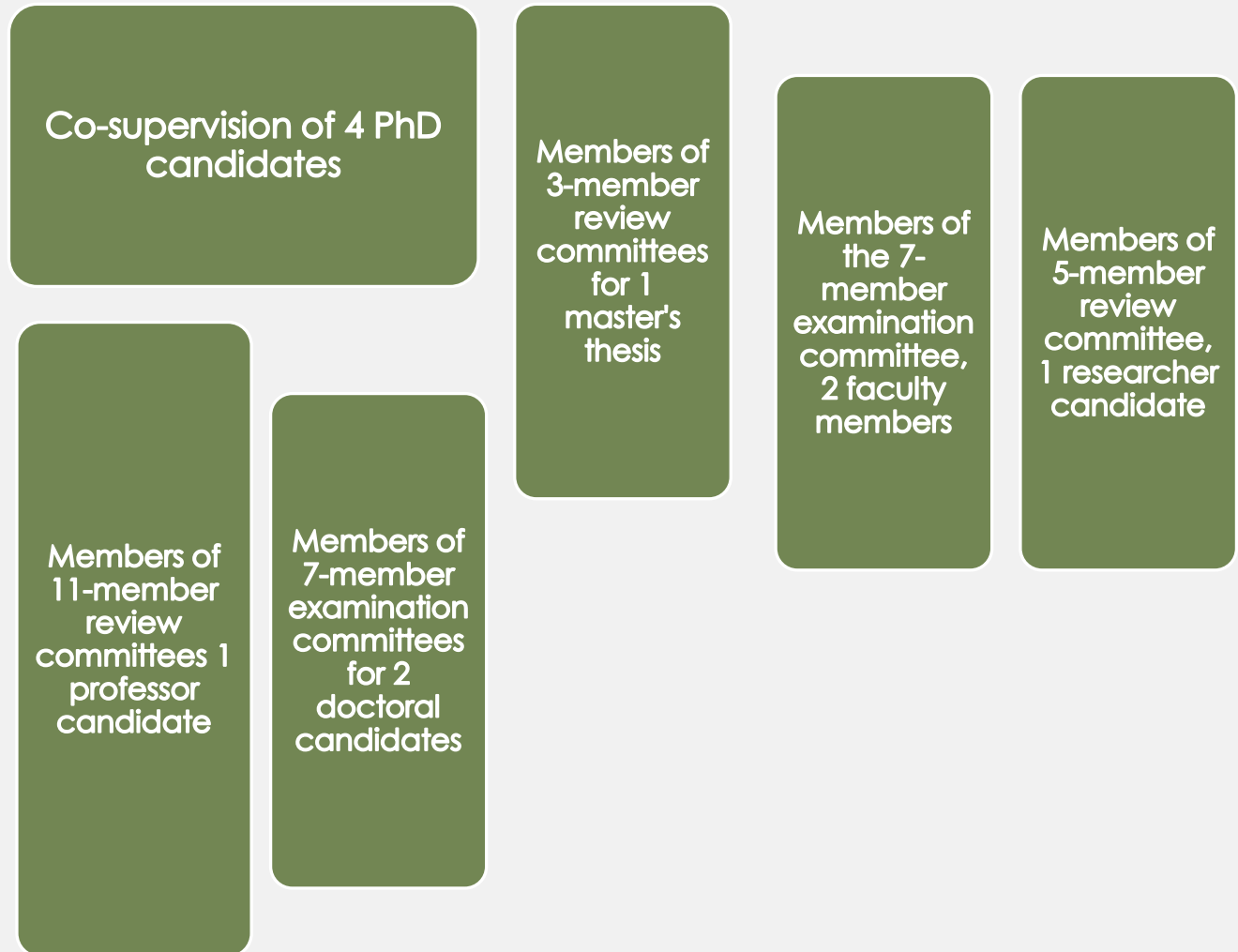


Educational Activity

The contribution of FRI researchers to the education of young scientists and professionals is also significant.

Advisory & examination committees

In 2024, **five (5)** FRI researchers participated as members in advisory and examination committees, in review committees of PhD candidates and postgraduate students.



Proposals to postgraduate studies programs

Three (3) FRI researchers participated as lecturers or co-teachers of courses in **six** Master's degree programs of three universities, namely the **International Hellenic University**, the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** and the **Democritus University of Thrace**.

Training for geotechnicians, cultivators and farmers

At the FRI farm and pilot farms (FRI experiments in areas of the Regional Administrative Regions of Serres, Thessaloniki, Grevena, Kozani & Pieria), geotechnicians, cultivators and producer groups were trained in the cultivation of Paulownia.

Education of students in the context of internship

Four (4) students from educational institutions in Greece were accepted to FRI for their internship.

- Department of Biology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- Department of Forestry and Natural Environment, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Furthermore, within the framework of wider collaborations, PhD candidates, undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as scientific collaborators utilized the equipment and facilities of the FRI.

Presentation and dissemination of the work of the FRI

The dissemination of research activity to society is a key objective of the FRI. In this context, interviews were given, popular science texts were written, and lectures were organized on current issues of protection and management of the natural environment as well as on the FRI's research activities.

In 2024, three environmental education visits - guided tours were held at the Forest Botanical Garden of the FRI. Approximately 100 public elementary school students were informed about the research activities of the FRI as well as the protection and management of the natural environment.

