



Press Release N ° 10

## A new smartphone App for the detection and monitoring of forest fires and their impact on the southern region of France.

(7/15/2015)

### An application for everybody

In association with the start-up [SIGNALERT](#), [the unit Mediterranean Ecosystems and Risks](#) (EMAX, in French) of National Institute for Science Research and Technology for Environment and Agriculture (IRSTEA, in French) located near Aix-en-Provence (France), has begun an operating test of a free smartphone application for crowd-mapping and citizen science: SIGNALERT, an app for environmental monitoring. The operation will focus on the monitoring of forest fires in the south of France throughout the summer and fall of 2015.

The SIGNALERT society has developed a smartphone application, downloadable from Google and Apple platforms, allowing everyone to exercise citizen oversight, reporting all types of natural events, including floods and avalanches, and their impacts.

The EMAX unit of IRSTEA, located in Tholonet, near Aix-en-Provence, partnered with the project by helping to develop the description questionnaire for forest fires.

For the user, the operation takes only a few moments to give vital information about the observed phenomenon and its effects. The user's smartphone app provides choices, and the user selects the one closest to what he observes. He can answer every question or he can pass and move to the next.

The interface is intuitive, and understandable for all users. There are two options for use: the messages can be broadcast immediately or they can be postponed until network coverage is available or the user has left the danger zone.

## A utility for everybody

To use this application allows the centralization of important information to better locate and describe natural phenomenons and their impact. These descriptions complement the measures of institutional networks and are designed to increase, with a slightly delayed time, the available information. Emergency response, if necessary, may be facilitated through the use of this app. The user can share his description of the phenomenon with other nearby users, and receives back information about the testimonies of other users nearby on a map; they can interact with each other via social networks as well. The application also offers advice on appropriate behaviour when facing danger.

Users will also find in the application useful information (good behavior and risks before, during and after an event) and can see what other users have been able to send nearby on a map; they can access advice for appropriate behavior and find links to official sites monitoring the situation or sending out alert messages.

The application is currently available in French and English, and will soon be available in Spanish; it works worldwide and allows for the description of low-intensity phenomena, as well as extreme events which are not found in French territory. While useful for the home country, it can also be used to help describe phenomena everywhere when travelling near or far from home.

The smartphone app has a paid version that offers the option to receive real-time alert notifications sent by the app from other nearby points of interest chosen by the user (home, vacation destinations...). For now, the monitoring operation covers a large part of the south of France, going over the edges of Spain and Italy, and covers Corsica, Sardinia, and the Balearic and Canary Islands.

With effective deployment, this application will enable the improvement of the knowledge, monitoring, management, and intervention of forest fires. A real-time analysis of alerts sent via the application can detect even a new fire from the first testimonies sent, which complements the existing monitoring systems in France and can even improve their performance.

Analysis of the alerts will determine whether the use of this dedicated application allows better characterizing dangerous phenomena. Reports with SIGNALERT can be forwarded on social networks for share with local or remote users, increasing the accuracy of what is shared on Twitter or facebook on disasters which is generally bearing a high degree of uncertainty.

Those citizens with or without the smartphone application can access an open webpage with other user's alerts via the following link:

<https://open.signalert.net/35896e8560d45b4adaa74672e473c447fa5e3cd3-961/fr>

This page available in English, Spanish and French displays alerts sent by the App users and provides also the intensity scales used to describe the impact of the observed event and behavior advices also available on the App.

The success and effectiveness of this monitoring application is based on the participation of everybody. We invite you to download the SIGNALERT APP (free application) and to use it whenever the opportunity presents itself for forest fires or one of the six other types of natural phenomenon's covered by the application.

Any organizations interested in obtaining or broadcasting alerts about other phenomena should contact SIGNALERT.

The smartphone application can be downloaded from AppleStore or GooglePlay (not compatible on Android tablet).



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