

West Balkan **NFFIS & Eco-DRR** Newsletter

Project on Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Reduction through National Forest Fire Information System (NFFIS) and Eco-DRR

Mar 2021 - Feb 2026

Project on Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Reduction through National Forest Fire Information System (NFFIS) and Eco-DRR (the Project)

The purpose of the Project is to strengthen the capacity of government officials in the prevention and mitigation of forest fires and other natural disasters through the establishment of NFFIS and Eco-DRR.

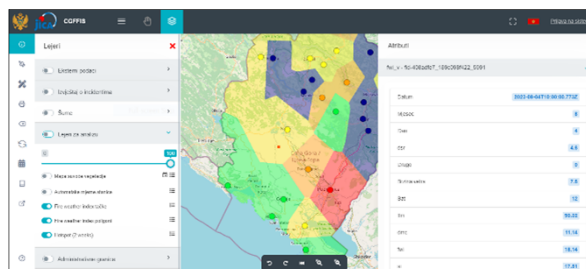
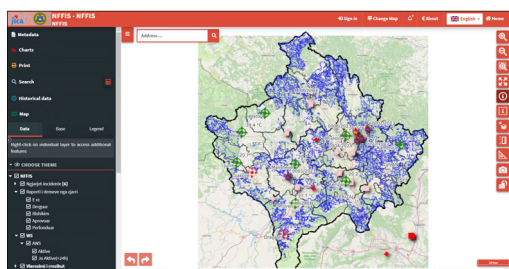


NFFIS Ver1 launched!

It has been smooth sailing in Kosovo and Montenegro in developing an application for the National Forest Fire Information System (NFFIS) — with Version 1.1 successfully completed!

In fact, the Project had expected to complete the application in August, but the schedule was accelerated because the counterparts wanted to operate the system when fires occur the most: in the summer. Operation and maintenance manuals were prepared and training conducted for government officials who will use the system, and they began recording actually occurring fires with it in July and August.

Moving forward, the NFFIS will contribute to disaster risk reduction in both countries with the mitigation forest fires.



NFFISver1
(Left: Kosovo,
Right: Montenegro)

Avalanche prevention forest and state of afforestation in Restelice

The Project is promoting activities to exhibit an avalanche prevention forest on the target slope in Restelice Village, Kosovo.

In the spring, the Project completed auxiliary work — wooden (tripod) frames and iron fences -to mitigate snow glides that cause damage to planted seedlings. In addition, nearly 9,000 planted spruce, beech, and other seedlings were surveyed and as a result a survival rate of over 90% was confirmed for all tree species. The Project will plant about 20,000 new seedlings this autumn for further improvement of the avalanche protection function on the target slope .

In July, when the snow had completely melted, the Project invited the FAO and other donors, who had provided seedlings free of charge, the Embassy of Japan, and the JICA Balkan Office to visit the site.

Participants commented that their understanding of Eco-DRR activities had deepened and that the daily lack of exercise was resolved.



Ulcinj coastal forest



There is a need to preserve for posterity the coastal forests of Ulcinj in southern Montenegro — and to do this, to develop the management capacity of stakeholders by raising environmental awareness and through tree planting.

A field survey was conducted by experts in Montenegro, upon which the Project identified sites for tree planting and planting methods. Starting last year in November and through April of this year, around 4,000 trees were planted, with a survival rate of 80% confirmed as of July.

With regard to management going forward, the Project is preparing to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that includes all stakeholders to enable a sustainable management system and activity plan, taking into account the challenges of the current management system

Regarding irrigation for plants, with the cooperation of the local fire department, a fire truck was used for watering the planted trees .



Planted pine tree
(*Pine Halepensis*)



Watering by fire truck



A video summarizing activities in 2022 has been uploaded to the project's YouTube page. (English)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z33ZeB8pS0Y>

Conducting regional seminars

Regional seminars were held in both Kosovo and Montenegro — in December 2022 and March 2023, respectively. These seminars aimed to report on the results of activities and share the challenges each country faces.

Dr. Stevko Stefanoski of the Crisis Management Center (CMS) in North Macedonia, who was the project manager of an earlier project that established the Macedonian Forest Fire Information System (MKFFIS), also provided advice as needed based on his own experience.

Participants visited an avalanche protection forest in Kosovo where it had already snowed. There, they checked on the construction of auxiliary work — wooden (tripod) frames and iron fences — and on seedlings that had been planted.

In Montenegro, a visit was made to a coastal forest, where participants likewise checked on the condition of planted seedlings, as well as the effects of strong coastal winds. The visit deepened their understanding of Eco-DRR.



Summary of Activities

Kosovo/Montenegro Output 1

Completion of NFFIS ver1.1 development
Conducted training for NFFIS operation
Start NFFIS operation

Kosovo Output 2

Additional construction of avalanche prevention forest
Site Selection of windbreak forest activity

Montenegro Output 2

Planted about 4,000 seedlings in coastal forests
Site selection of Post-Fire Vegetation Restoration.



Please follow us!

Project Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/WestBalkanNFFISandEcoDRRProject>



Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) -
Emergency Management Agency (EMA)



Ministry of Interior (MI) -
Rescue and Protection Directorate (RPD)



Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)