

# 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 the NFFIS and Eco-DRR.



## Regional Seminar 2025



From May 12th to 15th, 2025, the Project held a regional seminar in Prizren, Kosovo, bringing together key stakeholders and experts from five Western Balkan countries: Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aim of this event was to strengthen regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and ecosystem-based approaches.

During the four-day seminar, participants engaged in a series of presentations, discussions, and site visits designed to promote the sharing of knowledge and best practices across national borders. Delegations from Montenegro and Kosovo showcased the achievements made over the past four years of the Project. These included the development and application of the National Forest Fire Information System (NFFIS) and the Montenegro Forest Fire Information System (MEFFIS), post-fire forest restoration efforts, and innovative ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) initiatives. These examples highlighted how the integration of technology and nature-based solutions can enhance disaster resilience.

Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are newer participants in this regional collaboration. They provided updates on their progress and outlined the ongoing challenges they face in building institutional capacity, improving forest fire monitoring, and implementing nature-based DRR measures. In addition, during their presentation, representatives from North Macedonia provided a summary of the various projects carried out across the Western Balkans under the framework of the Western Balkans Cooperation Initiative. Further, they also highlighted the progress made by a national project implemented in North Macedonia and ongoing since its launch in 2012. Their presentation emphasized regional cooperation, common challenges, and the initiative's long-term impact on development, with particular focus on North Macedonia's sustained efforts and achievements over more than a decade of project implementation. All told, the seminar served as an open platform for dialogue, fostering valuable exchanges of ideas, strategies, and lessons learned; moreover, it reinforced the importance of regional solidarity in addressing shared environmental and climate-related risks.

A highlight of the seminar was a visit to the mountain village of Restelice in southern Kosovo, where participants observed the avalanche prevention forest established through the Project. This site visit provided a tangible example of Eco-DRR in action — demonstrating how afforestation and auxiliary works can reduce natural hazard risks while contributing to long-term environmental sustainability.

The seminar concluded with a shared commitment from participants to continue fostering cooperation, technical exchange, and joint learning to build more resilient communities across the Western Balkans.



Group photo of seminar participants



Regional seminar - Day II



Visit to Restelice

## NFFIS/MEFFIS expansion - Regional FWI



Kosovo and Montenegro have been intensively working to expand the NFFIS and MEFFIS systems and improve the quality data they yield. Therefore, the Project has facilitated preparations for a meeting between each country's hydrometeorological institute to enhance cooperation and share cross-border data. Kosovo and Montenegro have cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for other projects; another MoU was signed at the Prizren Regional Seminar. Both countries agreed to work together to improve the quality of the NFFIS and generate a Regional Fire Weather Index (FWI), which will increase fire prevention efficiency. The MoU was signed by Ms. Dusica BRNOVIC, Director of the Institute of Hydrometeorology and Seismology (IHS) of Montenegro, and Mr. Armend AGUSHI, Director of the Kosovo Hydrometeorological Institute (KHMI).



Signing of MoU by the Directors of the IHS and KHMI

In the near future, a joint meeting of both institutes will be organized. This will involve the Montenegro Rescue and Protection Directorate (RPD), the Kosovo Emergency Management Agency (EMA), lead organizations of the Project, and the system developers, and will be held to determine technical details for data sharing and further cooperation towards improving the systems in both countries.

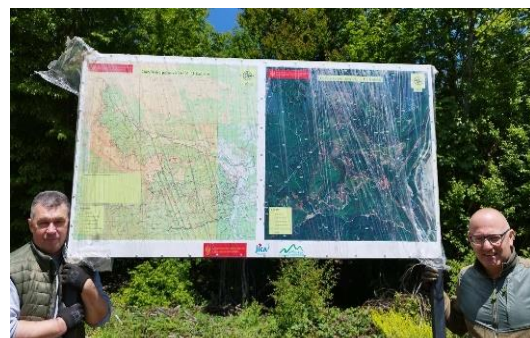
## PR activities in Kolasin



In Kolasin, the Project carried out Post-Fire Vegetation Restoration (PFVR) activities aimed at rehabilitating areas affected by wildfires. These activities included the planting of seedlings, measures to control soil erosion, assisted natural regeneration (ANR), and soil scarification.

Since the Project ends in February 2026, it will not be feasible for the Project to continue monitoring after that date. Therefore, it has been decided to transfer the monitoring to the Kolasin branch office of the Forest and Hunting Grounds Management Administration (FHGMA), which is a Project stakeholder and has jurisdiction over the area where the PFVR activities were carried out. In this regard, having clear and comprehensive process documentation is crucial for a smooth transition. Accordingly, a handover document has been prepared for the purpose of enabling the FHGMA to conduct appropriate and efficient monitoring in the future, and to supplement the Standard Operating Procedures. Furthermore, the handover document discusses the methodology for evaluating activities and thus can serve as a reference for establishing a PFVR technical system in the future.

Besides these activities, as part of its ongoing efforts to promote DRR and environmental awareness, the Project has recently completed the installation of five new information boards on Ociba Hill.



PFVR information boards

## Summary of activities

### Kosovo Output 1

- NFFIS expansion (ongoing)

### Montenegro Output 1

- MEFFIS enhancement (ongoing)

### Kosovo Output 2

- Monitoring of avalanche prevention forest
- Conducted windbreak forest activities

### Montenegro Output 2

- PR activities in Kolasin



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