

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.

Regional Seminar

In North Macedonia, which borders Kosovo to the south, the Macedonian Forest Fire Information System (MKFFIS) was developed in 2014 with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The system is being used for forest fire management while being expanded. In addition, a JICA successor project started in 2017, in which Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) models are under development at three sites.

A regional seminar was held in North Macedonia with the participation of 11 government officers from Kosovo, 13 government officers from Montenegro, and a total of about 40 people including others, with the main purpose of learning from the experience of MKFFIS development and operation and Eco-DRR model development.

On the first day, after the introduction of the MKFFIS by a North Macedonian government officer, a group discussion was held. The participants discussed the data to be installed in the National Forest Fire Information System (NFFIS) to be developed in Kosovo and Montenegro. On the second day, a visit was made to observe the Eco-DRR model (forest conservation & planting) on site.

Participants commented that, by understanding the MKFFIS and Eco-DRR, they had a more concrete image of the activities that they need to focus on for the development of the NFFIS and Eco-DRR.



Regional Cooperation (Kosovo-Montenegro-North Macedonia)

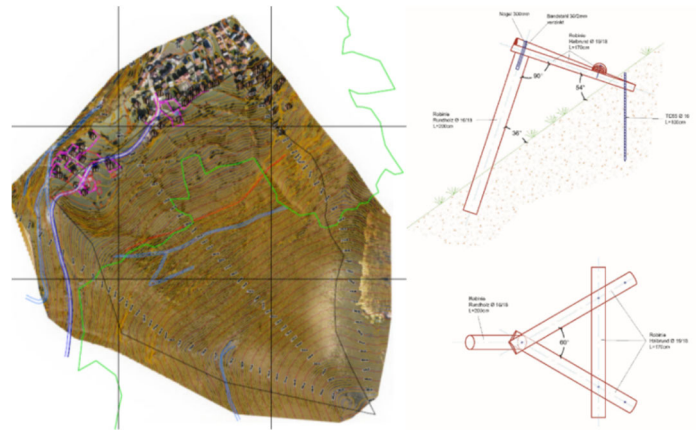


Before summarizing the definitions and concepts of the NFFIS to be developed in Kosovo and Montenegro, it is necessary to create guidelines that include the definitions of disasters. Both countries have held several meetings between counterparts (CPs) to receive advice from Dr. Stevko Stefanoski of the Crisis Management Center (CMC), who played a central role in the development of the MKFFIS in North Macedonia. In addition, the representatives of Kosovo and Montenegro have signed a Record of Discussion (RD) that states that information will be actively shared on the NFFIS and Eco-DRR. It is expected that regional cooperation will be continued in the future.

Eco-DRR Approach for Avalanche Prevention

The Project includes an activity to demonstrate the Eco-DRR approach — avalanche prevention forests in the context of the avalanche disaster that occurred in February 2012 in Restelice Village, Municipality of Dragash, causing 10 deaths. The Project selected this slope as the target of the Project's activity, considering the results of field surveys and discussions with the CPs held last year. In October 2021, the Project carried out a drone survey of the target slope and obtained topographic data to design avalanche prevention forests and aerial photos to confirm the vegetation cover.

Although planting work will be conducted by the Project to prevent the occurrence of avalanches, it is unlikely that young trees will be effective enough for prevention. Therefore, we are considering a design in which wooden tripods would be installed to supplement the prevention effect until the trees mature. The details of the design will be finalized through discussion with the CPs during the next trip.



Topographic map of the target slope in Restelice Village, created from drone survey data (left)

Conceptual drawing of the wooden tripods (cited from an avalanche report by Austria) (right)

Second Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC)

The Second Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) Meeting was held for Kosovo on 7 December 2021, under the chairmanship of Mr. Alush Beqiri, Prevention Department Director, Emergency Management Agency. For Montenegro, it was held on 15 December 2021 as a web conference, under the chairmanship of Mr. Ljuban Tmusic, Head of Department for Civil Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction of the Rescue and Protection Directorate. Each JCC meeting included a representative from JICA headquarters, the JICA Balkan Office, and the JICA Expert Team. At each JCC meeting, an outline of the Project activities that were implemented in 2021 was presented, questions were exchanged, and discussions held. Further, plans for the Project in 2022 were approved.



← Kosovo



→ Montenegro

Summary of Activities

Kosovo Output 1

- Completion of the methodology (guideline)
- Discussion of NFFIS system contents
- Review of NFFIS layers

Kosovo Output 2

- Design of avalanche prevention forest
- Study of contents of windbreak forest activities

Montenegro Output 1

- Discussion of NFFIS system contents
- Review of NFFIS layers

Montenegro Output 2

- Field survey of coastal forest
- Discussion of public awareness activities

The Project website is now open!
Please take a look.



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 Corporation Agency (JICA)