

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)

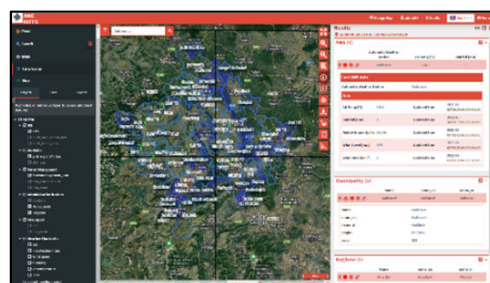
The purpose of the Project is to strengthen the capacity of government officials in the prevention and mitigation of forest fires and other natural disasters through the establishment of NFFIS and Eco-DRR.

NFFIS Development

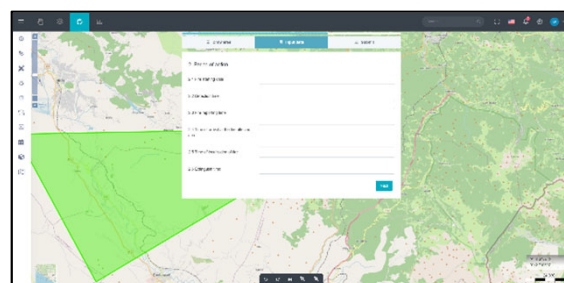
Steady progress is being made in the development of the NFFIS application and equipment procurement in Kosovo and Montenegro. The basic functions of NFFIS ver. 1.0 are almost completed and currently the Project is verifying these functions and optimizing the processing analysis function. As for the hardware, all of the equipment was purchased, delivered and installed in the server room after the completion of its construction. At present the Project is working on adjusting the external network connection. Going forward, with the aim of providing safe system operation, the Project will be conducting trials, fine tuning the system with feedback from the C/Ps, preparing the operation and maintenance manuals, and implementing training programs. The Project will continue discussions with the C/Ps and concerned organizations to establish guidelines for the continuous operation and maintenance of NFFIS.



The location of the capital and the project sites



NFFISver1
(Left: Kosovo,
Right: Montenegro)



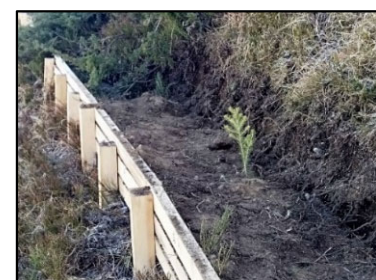
Avalanche prevention forest at Restelice



As mentioned in the previous volume, the Project is making progress on activities to exhibit an avalanche prevention forest on the target slope in Restelice Village, Kosovo.

Auxiliary work — using wooden (tripod) frames and iron fences — began in July last year to mitigate snow glides which cause damage to planted seedlings; planting work started in September. The Project has a cooperative relationship with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which is also active in Kosovo; the main planting species this year, spruce and beech, were provided at no charge from the FAO. The auxiliary and planting work was scheduled to be completed last year, but the remaining work was suspended because of an additional construction method — terracing work that further improves snow glide mitigation — and because it began to snow in mid-December. The work will resume after the snow melts next spring.

In early summer this year, the Project will check the survival rate of the planted seedlings and consider the necessity of supplemental planting. In addition, the Project will plant 20,000 new seedlings this fall for further improvement of the avalanche prevention function on the target slope. The Project aims to develop a forest with 1,000 trees/ha in the future so that the target slope is effective in preventing the occurrence of avalanches.



Above: Constructed auxiliary work (wooden frames)
Below: Spruce planted on top of the terracing work

Ulcinj Coastal forest

In Montenegro, there is a need to preserve the coastal forests of Ulcinj in the southern part of the country by developing the management capacity of stakeholders through public environmental awareness and tree planting. Beginning in September, public awareness activities and tree planting were conducted.

-September workshop: Government organizations, beach tenants, local residents, NGOs, and others participated in a workshop. Following explanations of the present conditions of and challenges faced by coastal forests, participants discussed and gave presentations on ideal coastal forests and activities to achieve this ideal.

-Environmental education in November: Targeting 20 students from junior high school which is nearest coastal forests, an introduction was given to climate change, the state of coastal forests and the functions thereof, and case studies of coastal forests in Japan, after which the participants discussed and gave presentations on what kind of activities can be carried out for sustainable coastal forest management.

-Tree planting (tree-planting ceremony) from November: Based on a field survey by local experts, the site and method of tree planting were determined and approximately 4,000 pine trees planted. A tree-planting ceremony was held at the start of tree planting and about 100 participants planted trees.

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



Above: The Workshop held in September

Below: Group photo from the tree-planting ceremony



Additional Eco-DRR Activities

New Eco-DRR activities have started in Kosovo and will start in Montenegro.



Kosovo: Windbreak Forest

In Istog, where damage from strong winds has been occurring, the Project will identify issues, develop a windbreak forest for landscape restoration, and raise public awareness.



Signboard toppled by strong winds



Montenegro: Post-Fire Vegetation Restoration

The Project will support the restoration of vegetation at forest fire sites that may cause a variety of secondary disasters and will establish firebreaks as necessary.



Vegetation before and after forest fire

Summary of Activities

Kosovo/Montenegro Output 1

- Completion of installation of NFFIS equipment
- Development of NFFIS ver. 1.0
- Data collection for NFFIS layers

Kosovo Output 2

- Construction of avalanche prevention forest and tree planting (about 9,000 seedlings)
- Start of additional Eco-DRR activity (windbreak forest)

Montenegro Output 2

- Public awareness activities about and tree planting (about 4,000 seedlings) of coastal forests
- Start of additional Eco-DRR activity (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)