

Landscape Fire Management in the Western Balkans

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Due to a changing climate and unsustainable land use practices, landscape fires have been on the rise in the Western Balkans, while fire management remains generally weak and not adapted for mounting challenges. This initiative will improve capacities in landscape fire management through regional cooperation and strengthen policy and action at national level by articulating the region with multilateral efforts and Swiss know-how and expertise. Local communities, most concerned by landscape fires, will be an integral part of the initiative's approach to facilitate the establishment of long-term strategies for resilient landscapes.

Country/region	Topic	Period	Budget
Global	Climate change and environment Forestry policy Biodiversity Environmental policy Disaster risk reduction DRR	01.09.2019 - 31.12.2025	CHF 4'085'000

[The project in brief](#)

Background

The frequency and scale of landscape fires have been on the rise across the globe over the past two decades, and this trend is expected to continue. The Western Balkan region is no exception in this regard, and the six countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia – are particularly vulnerable to the impact of landscape fires, notably due to political, institutional and organisational weaknesses. In particular, this group of smaller states lack a much-needed regional cooperation to tackle cross-border fires, and exposure to global efforts and standards to develop comprehensive approaches to this hazard. Traditional fire management methods – often still focussing on fire suppression – are bound to evolve towards an integrated landscape fire management approach that addresses the broader issues exacerbating the risk of fires such as competing land uses, pressures on forest ecosystems and rural abandonment.

Objectives

Increased resilience of Western Balkan forests and landscapes against fires benefit the people who depend on these landscapes for their livelihoods and socioeconomic development

The present initiative aims at facilitating multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and action to promote integrated LFM, which will increase the resilience of society and the environment, serve the economy, and in particular the lives and livelihoods of remote rural populations in fire-prone areas in the Western Balkans.

Target groups

- Public management in charge of landscape/fire management in the six Western Balkan countries
- national stakeholders (associations, NGO, farmers, forest and pasture owners)
- Selected rural population groups (geographical areas to be defined in 2021)

Medium-term outcomes

Outcome 1: Better Cooperation

A lasting regional network is established and contributes to cross-boundary knowledge exchange and cooperation in landscape fire management

Outcome 2: Better Capacities

Strengthened capacities on broader landscape fire management approaches allow for an effective cross-sectoral collaboration at multiple levels

Outcome 3: Better Policies

Revised policies and strategies on landscape fire management are in place to support sustainable landscape management at local, national and regional levels

Results**Expected results:**

- Country Focal Points contributing to the initiative are established within national institutions dedicated to forest/landscape fire management
- A regional cooperation mechanism, facilitated by the Regional Fire Monitoring Centre in Skopje, is established and active
- Cooperation between the Western Balkan region and relevant international stakeholders/ initiatives is established and active
- Policy guidelines for landscape fire management are prepared at regional level
- Based on national circumstances, landscape fire management policy and strategy developed and integrated into climate action strategies
- Experience gained and knowledge exchanged with Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and Mediterranean region through the engagement of the Global Fire Monitoring Centre
- Collaborations between Swiss Competence Centers and the regional network have taken place

Results from previous phases:

- The identification and commitment of dedicated national institutions has been confirmed and secured.
- The systematic collaboration of the Regional and Global Fire Monitoring Centres has been established.
- A comprehensive draft strategic programme document was elaborated.
- A stakeholder analysis at regional and international levels was conducted.

Directorate/federal office responsible SDC

Credit area Development cooperation

Project partners**Contract partner**

Foreign academic and research organisation

Private sector

Swiss Academic and Research Institution

- Other Swiss academic and research institutions
- Foreign private sector South/East
- Research Organisation of South East

Coordination with other projects and actors

- Regional Fire Monitoring Center
- Global Fire Monitoring Center
- National governments and stakeholders
- SDC COOF in the Western Balkans, in particular SDC - COOF North Macedonia
- SDC Humanitarian Aid domain
- FAO, UNECE, IUCN
- Swiss institutions and cantonal forest services: HAFL, FOEN, WSL, Canton Ticino

Budget

Current phase Swiss budget CHF 4'085'000 Swiss
disbursement to date CHF 657'671

Further technical details**Sector according to the OECD
Development Assistance Committee
categorisation**FORESTRY
GENERAL ENVIRONMENT
PROTECTION
DISASTER PREVENTION
AND PREPAREDNESS

**Sub-Sector according to the OECD
Development Assistance Committee
categorisation**Forestry policy

Environmental policy and
administrative management

Bio-diversity

Disaster prevention and
preparedness

Cross-cutting topicsThe project promotes
biodiversity.
The project also supports
partner organisation
improvements

Aid TypeMandate with fiduciary funds
Mandate without fiduciary fund

Project number

7F10341

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