



# TAFF

Technical Assistance Financing Facility for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness

Project brief



Last updated: September 30, 2024

## Albania – Strengthening Albania’s Fire Risk Management and Search and Rescue Capacity

### Overview

Grant Size	€500,000
Duration	September 2024 – August 2026
Relevant DRG	Anticipate; Alert; Secure
Key hazard(s)	
Key word(s)	Rescue capacity; Rescue services; Fire protection

### Context

Wildfire and general fire risk is a growing concern in Albania with heat stress increasing due to climate change. Albania is at high and continuous risk of forest fires, especially in the dry summer season June-September. According to World Bank estimates, 23 per cent of crop area in the country is already under medium to high wildfire risk with 10 municipalities having the highest level of exposure. In 2021 alone, 329 wildfires were recorded, burning a total of 31,275 ha of land. Data from [Global Forest Watch](#) shows that fires in Albania are the second leading cause of forest area loss in the country. From 2001 to 2023, the country lost 19.8 kha of tree cover from fires and 26.7 kha from all other drivers of loss. In Albania firefighting and rescue services are the responsibility of municipalities, which carry the mandate of first responders on all incidents posing a danger to the population or environment. While equipment at local levels has been upgraded over the past years, municipalities still lack the capacity and institutional structures to effectively fulfil their mandate to prevent and mitigate incidents. This leads to the need for intervention by the National Civil Protection Agency (NCPA) for even small and medium incidents. To address Albania’s limited capabilities in extinguishing fires, the country’s fire response capacity, infrastructure (e.g., fire stations), technology, and equipment for tracking and extinguishing fires require urgent strengthening.

### Objective

The objective of the grant is to support the government of Albania in strengthening its fire risk management and search and rescue capacity, thereby improving its ability to respond effectively and efficiently to general fires, wildfires, and emergencies. The results of this technical assistance will inform a proposed investment project in Albania on fire risk management.

## Key Activities and Expected Results

### COMPONENT 1

#### Institutional and capacity review of fire protection and rescue services (FP&RS)

This component will review the existing FP&RS capacity in Albania against international best practices to identify potential capacity strengthening, policy, and investment needs to improve the delivery of firefighting services in the country.

### COMPONENT 2

#### Road map for strengthening fire protection and rescue services

A road map will be developed based on Albanian demography, the geographic distribution of damage and loss risks due to fires, and a consultation process with municipalities. The road map will prioritise resources and interventions at the local level regarding infrastructure and equipment, and it will support the identification of needs for training in firefighting and search and rescue.

### COMPONENT 3

#### Strengthening wildfire risk management

This component aims to strengthen wildfire fire risk management in Albania with activities covering forest fire risk assessment and mapping, analysis of current mechanisms to fight wildfires, a review of institutional coordination and community engagement mechanisms, and recommendations for increasing Albania's capacity to combat wildfires.

## Government Counterpart(s)

Ministry of Interior; National Civil Protection Agency; Officials of national and local entities.

## Sustainability and Coordination

This project is part of a broader collaboration between the World Bank, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), and the government of Albania to strengthen the country's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The objective of the grant is to support the government in strengthening its fire risk management capacity. The grant will serve as a basis for the identification, prioritization, and preparation of activities under a proposed World Bank Investment Project Financing (IPF) on fire risk management with the Ministry of Interior. Overall, the activities will benefit from the knowledge being generated through collaborations between government actors, the World Bank, and the UCPM.

## Contacts

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**Counterparts:** Ministry of Interior: Arben Cara, General Director for FPRS, Florenc Qosja, Advisor in the Cabinet of the Minister

## About TAFF

The **Technical Assistance Financing Facility for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (TAFF)** is a partnership between the European Commission through its Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), the World Bank, and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) to strengthen the disaster risk knowledge and management capabilities of countries participating in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). The TAFF provides technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of civil protection and other relevant competent authorities under the UCPM to scale up investments in disaster and climate resilience.

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