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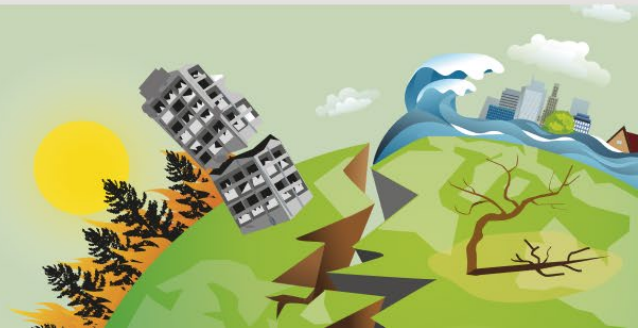
GFDRR Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

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TAFF

Technical Assistance Financing Facility for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness

Component 1: Country-Specific technical assistance



Last updated: September 2026

Albania:

Strengthening Albania's Fire Risk Management and Search and Rescue Capacity

Overview

Grant Size	€500,000
Duration	September 2024 – December 2026
Key hazard(s)	Wildfires
Key word(s)	Rescue capacity; rescue services; fire protection, prioritisation of measures

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 2024 alone, wildfires burned a total of 49,189 ha of land (EU Joint Research Center) and the National Civil Protection Agency in Albania reports 62,943 hectares of burnt land in 2025. 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. Albania's fire and rescue system is operating in an environment that has changed more quickly than the system itself**.** For example, 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 project was 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 project combined technical analysis, institutional engagement, and knowledge sharing to support evidence-based decision-making. The results of this technical assistance were intended to inform future investments in Albania to support the Government of Albania in building a more modern, risk-informed, and coordinated fire protection system.

Key Activities and Expected Results

The project comprised three activities:

First, under 'Institutional and capacity review of fire protection and rescue services (FP&RS)', existing capacities were reviewed against international best practices to identify potential capacity strengthening, policy, and investment needs to improve the delivery of firefighting services in the country

Second, under 'Road map for strengthening fire protection and rescue services', a summary of recommendations was developed based on Albanian demography, the geographic distribution of damage and loss risks due to fires, and a consultation process with municipalities. The roadmap prioritises resources and interventions at the local level regarding infrastructure and equipment, and it supports the identification of needs for training in firefighting and search and rescue. The proposed methodology was piloted for select municipalities.

Third, under 'Strengthening wildfire risk management', activities including review of forest fire risk assessment and mapping, analysis of current mechanisms to fight wildfires, a review of institutional coordination and community engagement mechanisms, and development of recommendations for increasing Albania's capacity to combat wildfires.

Outputs: Key outputs include a comprehensive institutional and capacity review of Albania's Fire Protection and Rescue Service, a national roadmap for strengthening fire protection and rescue capacities, a risk-informed resource planning methodology, technical guidance for infrastructure and equipment standardization, and recommendations to strengthen wildfire preparedness and operational readiness.

- World Bank. 2026. *Summary report. Link.*
- World Bank. 2026. *Validation workshop (May 2026) – Summary report*. Link.
- UCPM Knowledge Network article (August 13, 2026): 'Building a more resilient fire and rescue service in Albania.' Link.
- World Bank. 2026. *Technical report of a national baseline assessment and investment roadmap for the fire protection and rescue sector*.
- World Bank. 2026. *Technical report a municipal risk-based Fire Resource Planning Methodology*.
- World Bank. 2026. *Technical report on wildfire analysis and action plan.*
- World Bank. 2026. *Technical report on standards for fire stations and equipment.*

In terms of results, the project provided an evidence and knowledge base for the identification, prioritisation, and preparation of modernizing the Albania's fire and rescue system. Beyond producing technical studies, the project helped to establish a common framework for institutional reform, investment prioritization, and long-term capacity development. By bringing together national authorities, municipalities, development partners, and technical experts, the project supports a shared vision for strengthening Albania's resilience to fires and other emergencies while contributing to future World Bank investment planning in the sector. The recommendations for standards for fire stations and equipment support more consistent service delivery across municipalities in Albania and potentially across the Western Balkans region. In short, the project will support more coordinated investment and enable Albania to build a safer, more reliable, and financially sustainable fire and rescue capability that can respond effectively to wildfires and other emergencies.

Sustainability and Coordination

This project was 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. Overall, the activities benefit from the knowledge being generated through collaborations between government actors, the World Bank, and the UCPM.

Contacts

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