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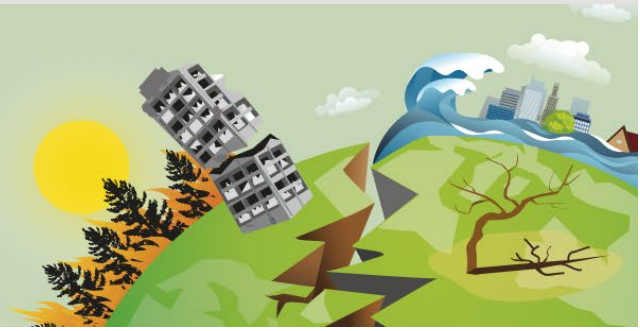
GFDRR Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

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TAFF

Technical Assistance Financing Facility for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness

Component 1: Country-specific technical assistance



Last update: September 2026

Bulgaria:

Wildfire Prevention, Early Detection and Response, Investment Planning and Awareness

Overview

Grant Size	€600,000
Duration	July 2026 – July 2028
Key hazard(s)	Wildfires
Key word(s)	Risk prevention, prioritisation of measures, early detection and monitoring, risk preparedness, damage and loss assessment, community engagement, awareness and risk communication

Context

Bulgaria faces high forest fire risk and has seen longer fire seasons due to a combination of human related activities and climate change. On average, the country records about several hundred forest fires annually, affecting around 5,000 to 10,000 hectares, with extreme years affecting over 30,000 hectares (WWF 2025; EFFIS 2026). Although Bulgaria has established institutional responsibilities regarding prevention and response, the current system remains fragmented and there are gaps in the prioritization of coordinated investment, early detection coverage, and risk-based planning measures. It is estimated that around 90 percent of forest fires are the result of human activities, such as illegal practices, negligence, or agricultural burning, demonstrating an increased need for community engagement and education regarding fire risk preparedness.

This project will engage several lead agencies related to forest fire prevention, preparedness, and response, including the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Executive Forest Agency (EFA), and the Directorate-General for Fire Safety and Civil Protection (DG FSCP) under the Ministry of Interior. The DG FSCP functions as Bulgaria's primary agency for fire safety, emergency rescue, disaster risk reduction, civil protection coordination, and related training — operating at both the national and local levels. EFA is Bulgaria's primary state authority for the governance, protection, and sustainable management of the country's forests and nature parks. EFA operates through regional forest directorates, forest seed control stations, forest protection stations, and nature parks directorates across the country.

Objective

The objective of the project is to strengthen Bulgaria's capability for forest fire early detection, prevention, and preparedness, in line with international best practices. This project aims to address some of the key challenges identified by focusing on the following key areas: (i) fire early detection and monitoring systems; (ii) integrated investment frameworks; (iii) methodology for forest fire damage evaluation; (iv) public awareness approaches; and (v) capacity support and knowledge transfer. In this way, the project will provide analytical, institutional, and operational technical assistance to competent authorities to move from fragmented, project-based solutions toward a coherent, evidence-based and investment-ready national approach to forest fire risk management.

Key Activities and Expected Results

The project includes five key elements.

First, under 'Optimization of Forest Fire Early Detection and Monitoring Systems', recommendations will be identified, in line with an analytical assessment of current systems, to improve the cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and coordination of forest fire early detection systems, as well as alignment with European Union (EU) and international good practices. For example, fire monitoring systems in EU Member States with similar geographic and climatic characteristics, will be reviewed. Assessments to optimize existing infrastructure, as well as options for greater integration with the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) will be conducted. Operational recommendations will be proposed to the competent authorities to improve national forest fire and prevention measures, as well as deepen collaboration with other EU Member States.

Second, under 'Integrated Investment Planning for Forest Fire Prevention and Response in Agriculture and Forestry', a review of legally regulated prevention and response measures will be undertaken. Corresponding suggestions for an integrated investment plan and improvements to current forest fire risk assessment methodologies encourage the development of an investment-ready, integrated framework for prioritizing and financing forest fire measures.

Third, under 'Forest Fire Damage Assessment Toolkit', using a review and analytics of international methodologies for forest fire damage assessment, technical recommendations will be prepared for a damage assessment toolkit fitting Bulgaria's context. The development of a practical damage assessment toolkit could help align Bulgaria with international methodological best practices by shifting their national fire risk assessment and response approach from reactionary to proactive.

Fourth, under 'Public Awareness and Behavioural Change for Forest Fire Prevention', support will be provided to encourage a structured, empirically based approach to raising public awareness and addressing the human factor as the primary cause of forest fires. This will be done by review of examples of effective campaigns and assessing demographic data to improve engagement across various populations.

Fifth, under 'Validation, Capacity Support, and Knowledge Transfer', activities will be conducted to strengthen institutional coordination, ensure ownership of results, and support capacity building. These activities may include workshops, knowledge exchanges, consultations, as well as targeted knowledge and training.

In terms of expected results, they are intended to provide the Government of Bulgaria, DG FSCP, EFA, and relevant stakeholders with the institutional, analytical, and operational technical assistance necessary to strengthen the pre-existing forest fire prevention and response framework. Suggested implementation of an integrated investment plan would support long-term financing options for upgraded infrastructure. The implementation of community engagement pilot programs would aim to enhance citizenry awareness about forest fires and risk preparedness.

Sustainability and Coordination

The findings and outputs of the project will be disseminated among stakeholders in Bulgaria. The dissemination of diagnostic reports, knowledge toolkits, and improved fire risk assessment methodologies to the competent authorities in Bulgaria is intended to support inter-agency communication and facilitate a systemic transition to an investment-ready, climate-informed national approach to fire prevention and preparedness.

Coordination between agencies and key stakeholders can be enhanced through increased knowledge transmission with other EU Member States and further aligning with EU-benchmarked best practices and organizations, such as EFFIS. The suggested incorporation of universal design standards in the development of a national awareness and communication framework can aim to contribute a fully accessible system to persons with disabilities. It is essential that all related agencies and government actors strengthen coordinative ties to maintain inter-agency cohesion.

Contacts

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