

Regional needs towards fire resilient landscapes in the Western Balkans

Working group 3: Sustainable Forest Management

Concluding remarks

Prishtina, 03 – 05 June 2026

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Main Purpose of the WG

Mainstreaming landscape fire management approach in the WB6 climate commitments, and Green Deal priorities



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Key Barriers/Gaps

Policy and Governance

- LFM is not formally recognized in many national laws, strategies, and regulations.
- Weak coordination among forestry, agriculture, environment, civil protection, and other stakeholders.
- Lack of dedicated legislation and governance mechanisms for landscape fire management.
- Absence of official and harmonized landscape fire statistics.
- Limited cross-border coordination and cooperation.



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Key Barriers/Gaps

Predominant Suppression-Oriented Approach

- Fire management still largely focused on suppression.
- Prevention measures receive less political attention and investment.

Limited Political Recognition

- Fire and climate risks not sufficiently reflected in policy priorities.
- Need for stronger government engagement and advocacy.

Financial and Capacity Constraints

- Insufficient funding for prevention activities.
- Limited human resources and technical capacities.
- Low attractiveness of forestry professions.

Key Barriers/Gaps

Risk Assessment and Planning

- Absence of landscape fire risk maps.
- Absence of national fuel classifications and fuel maps.
- Limited application of silvicultural measures for fuel reduction and landscape resilience

Early Warning and Prevention Systems

- Absence of national early warning systems.
- Limited use of modern fire prediction and monitoring tools.

Awareness and Education

- Insufficient public awareness of climate change impacts on landscape fires.
- Absence of national landscape fire awareness campaigns.

Key Barriers/Gaps

Rural Depopulation

- Land abandonment increases fire risks.
- Declining rural populations reduce landscape management activities and the accumulation of fuel.
- Limited incentives for sustainable land use

Cross-Border Challenges

- Inadequate regional coordination mechanisms.
- Different governance structures across countries.
- Lack of harmonized approaches and cooperation frameworks.



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Key Assets/Opportunities

Existing Regional Momentum

- Growing recognition of LFM as a strategic approach across WB.
- LFMWB Programme providing a regional platform focused on prevention.
- Multiple international initiatives active in the region (World Bank, JICA, EU-supported actions).

Policy and Strategic Developments

- New forest laws and forest strategies under development.
- Integration of LFM principles into national strategies (e.g., Montenegro).
- Inclusion of LFM in climate and emergency planning processes (e.g., Albania).



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Key Assets/Opportunities

Alignment with EU Priorities

- EU policy shift from fire suppression toward prevention.
- Integrated forest management becoming a priority within EU discussions.
- Strong alignment with:
 - EU Green Deal
 - Climate adaptation policies
 - LULUCF commitments
 - Biodiversity and rural development objectives

Regional Knowledge Base

- LFM country reports, Gap analyses, Strategies, and Policy guidelines already developed through LFMWB.
- Strong science-practice-policy interface established through LFMWB.



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Ways Forward

The Working Group Recognizes that:

- ✓ **Landscape Fire Management** is a strategic cross-sectoral approach to addressing climate and wildfire risks.
- ✓ **Prevention, preparedness, and post-fire restoration** must be strengthened.
- ✓ **Fire and climate-resilient landscapes** require sustainable land use and forest management.
- ✓ Effective LFM depends on **stronger coordination** among the forestry, agriculture, environment, and civil protection sectors.
- ✓ Active participation of **local communities and land users** is essential.
- ✓ **LFM science-practice-policy** cooperation must be strengthened through a participatory approach.
- ✓ **Cross-border cooperation** is critical for addressing shared fire risks.
- ✓ **LFM** should be integrated into relevant **policies, strategies and funding mechanisms** at national and regional levels.



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