

Co-NatureGuard: New Cross-Border Project to Strengthen Wildfire Prevention in the Black Sea Basin

A new international initiative aimed at strengthening wildfire prevention and protecting valuable natural ecosystems in the Black Sea region has officially started under the 2nd call for proposals of the Interreg VI-B NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme 2021-2027.

The project **“Co-NatureGuard – Cooperation for Wildfires Prevention and Nature Preservation in Protected Areas of the Black Sea Basin” (Ref: BSB00780)** brings together institutions responsible for forest management, civil protection, and nature conservation from **Türkiye, Bulgaria, Greece and Georgia**.

The project will be implemented over a **26-month period, between the dates 26.02.2026 – 25.04.2028** and focuses on improving monitoring, prevention and coordinated response to forest fires in protected natural areas across the Black Sea Basin.

Protected natural areas in these partner countries such as national parks and reserves are particularly vulnerable due to limited monitoring technologies and insufficient coordination between institutions responsible for nature protection and emergency response.

The **Co-NatureGuard project** addresses these challenges through cross-border cooperation and the introduction of modern technologies and joint management approaches.

The project is implemented by five partner institutions:

- Republic of Türkiye General Directorate of Forestry Istanbul Regional Directorate (Lead Partner)- Türkiye
- Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks 1st Regional Directorate in Istanbul – Türkiye
- Burgas Regional Forestry Directorate – Bulgaria
- Decentralised Administration of Macedonia–Thrace – Greece
- Agency of Protected Areas of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture – Georgia

During the Project duration and after the end of the Project the partners will cooperate for realization of the following strategic actions:

- Development of **comprehensive wildfire risk analyses** for protected areas in the region
- Introduction of **advanced monitoring technologies** including thermal drones, mobile fire-observation towers and sensor-based early warning systems
- Establishment of **joint communication channels and data exchange mechanisms** between forestry, civil protection and nature protection institutions
- Organisation of **international training sessions and joint exercises** to improve preparedness and coordination in wildfire response
- Strengthening cooperation between institutions responsible for managing protected areas in the Black Sea Basin

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The project will support the protection, especially from wild fires of **more than 75 protected natural areas** across the participating countries and contribute to safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems in the region.

By improving monitoring systems, strengthening institutional cooperation and enhancing technical capacity, the project aims to significantly improve wildfire prevention and management across the region.

The total budget of the project is **1,665,494.72 EUR**, of which **1,498,945.23 EUR (90%) is provided by the European Union through the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme.**

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