

Cluster Forest for Society
Lesy pre spoločnosť - Ліси для суспільства
Annual report 2019

I. Identification data:

Name in slovak: **Lesy pre spoločnosť**, abbreviated name: **LES**

in ukrainian: **Ліси для суспільства**, abbreviated name: **ЛІС**

Seat in Slovakia: Južná trieda 11, 040 01 Košice

in Ukraine: Shvabska 51a, 88000 Uzhhorod

Date of establishment: June 6, 2016 by signature of Cluster Charter

Number of Cluster members at December 31, 2017: 21 (Annex No. 1)

II. Cluster mission and objectives:

Cluster was founded as a part of the project No. CBC01013 Forests for Society - Forests Without Barriers, implemented through Norwegian Grants within the Cross-Border Cooperation Program. Cluster was founded by four project partners from Slovakia and two partners from Ukraine, who are members of the Cluster Board, as well.

Cluster is an association of equivalent members based on the mutual trust and cooperation.

The main objective of the cluster is to improve the development of cross-border cooperation within the Slovak-Ukrainian region and the promotion of sustainable development, tourism and the interpretation of natural values through intensive information exchange and counseling. Cluster enables to improve the potential of individual members and to promote common procedures in the development of the Slovak-Ukrainian region. It establishes a network of cooperating entities operating in concerned areas in order to create mutual cooperation among members of the cluster, supports and develops the cross-border cooperation of the Slovak-Ukrainian region among the members of the cluster, ensures information exchange, increases the potential of individual members in the field of development of regions and tourism through cluster membership. Membership in the cluster is free of charge.

III. Cluster Board

The members of the Cluster Board are the founding members of the cluster as follows:

National Forest Centre

T. G. Masaryka 22, 960 92 Zvolen, Slovakia

In representation: Ing. Milan Sarvaš, PhD. – Chairman of the Cluster Board

Forza, Agency for Sustainable Development of Carpathian Region

Shvabska 51a, 88000 Uzhhorod, Ukraine

In representation: Lesya Loyko – Vice-Chairman of the Cluster Board

Municipal Forests Košice, s.c.

Južná trieda 11, 040 01 Košice, Slovakia

In representation: Ing. Miroslav Tököly

Pro Populo Poprad, Ltd.

Obrancov mieru 329, 059 34 Spišská Teplica, Slovakia

In representation: Ing. Peter Petrik

Secondary Forestry School Prešov

Kollárova 10, 080 01, Prešov, Slovakia

In representation: Ing Miroslav Fuchs, PhD.

Slovak Disability Council

Heydukova 25, 811 08, Bratislava, Slovakia

In representation: Mgr. Tibor Köböl

National Nature Park "Zacharovanny kray"

Zakarpatská obl., Iršavskij reg., Ilnitsya, Partizanska ul., 90130, Ukraine

In representation: Vasil Fennich

IV. Cluster activity during the period of January – December 2019

The cluster activity followed the previous period on the base of individual cluster members cooperation through exchange information and advice in order to support tourism in the relevant border region through an intensive exchange of information and advice.

- In April 2019, the event Forestry Days took place in Zvolen. Representatives of partner organizations of cluster members from Slovakia and Ukraine - FORZA Agency have participated at the event. The Forest Days is a national event organized every year by National Forest Centre to promote forestry and the work of foresters. The partners had opportunity to discuss of further project cooperation and exchange of experiences during the event. The planned Regional Forest Days in Košice, organized by the Municipal Forests of Košice, s.c., was cancelled because of bad weather.
- In May 2019, 9th and 23rd, the third year activity of program. „To the Forest with Forester” has took place for 150 primary school pupils and kindergartens from Spišská Belá town and its surroundings, in cooperation with members of the cluster - National Forest Centre and Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd. The activity is very popular among children and teachers.
- Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd. in cooperation with the National Forest Centre have organized a day for seniors from Spišská Belá on 27 August 2019. Forest pedagogues have presented forest pedagogy activities for 40 seniors in the area of Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd.
- National Forest Centre prepared the seminar within the project *Information Days - Preservation of Forest Biodiversity on the forest pedagogy activities example*. The seminar took place in Oščadnica, in December 2019 and the main goal was to present the issues of forest ecosystem biodiversity preservation under the influence of climate change. During the excursion, the participants visited Kysuce Research area of spruce trees and Museum of Kysuce Forest. The event was attended by representatives of members of the cluster - National Forest Centre, Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd., Municipal Forests of Košice, s.c., Municipal Forests Poprad, Ltd., PRO POPULO Poprad, Ltd.
- The Forest Pedagogy Symposium was held in December 2019 and it took place in Oščadnica. It was aimed on exchange of experience on forest pedagogy application in

practice among forest pedagogues from the whole Slovakia. symposium. The event is organized annually by the National Forest Centre and there were participated also members of the cluster - Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd., Municipal Forests of Košice, s.c., Municipal Forests Poprad, Ltd., PRO POPULO Poprad, s.r.o.

- FORZA representative participated in the FORUM of best practices in environment protection in Kyiv in June 2019.
- FORZA representative held a seminar on forestry for foresters-practitioners representing different regions of Ukraine (chief foresters and leading forestry engineers) on the basis of the Ukrainian Center for Advanced Training of Foresters "Ukrcentrkadrylis" in Boyarka in June 12, 2019.
- Forza NGO has set up an information stand on forestry in the forest of the Northern part of the Botanical Garden of Uzhhorod National University, which is used for practical trainings and workshops for the university students of the forestry faculty.
- Cooperation of cluster members within the project activity:
 The project “Roads to healthy forests: resilient, adaptive, diverse and sustainable forests in cross-border region of Ukraine and Slovakia”, HUSKROUA/1701/LIP/009 has started in December 2019. The representative of the leading partner of the project - Uzhhorod State Forest Enterprise in Ukraine - a member of the Forest Cluster, signed an agreement on 16 December 2019 in Budapest on the beginning of the project. The project is implemented during the coming 3 years within the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 and co-financed by the European Union with the main objective to increase stability and adaptability of Carpathian forest ecosystems to climate change impacts in Slovak-Ukrainian cross border region. There are 2 more project partners – members of the Forest Cluster - FORZA Agency from Ukraine and Municipal Forests Spišská Belá, Ltd. From Slovakia, involved in the project. The priority of the program being met is the sustainable use of the environment in cross-border areas - the conservation of natural resources, measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and river pollution.
- National Forest Centre uses the results of the FORSOC project in its educational activities, which are focused on forest pedagogy and raising awareness of forestry:
 - Forest pedagogues has organised 19 events at all for various target groups on the occasion of the International Forest Day in March 2019. The culmination was on March 21, when the workshop Forests and Education for Secondary School

Students was held at the Secondary Vocational School of Forestry in Banská Štiavnica.

- The National Forest Centre participates as a partner in the project entitled supported by Slovak Research and development Agency, named *Forest Pedagogy and Education for Sustainable Development in Pre-Primary and Primary Education*. The project coordinator is the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra and the aim is to design, implement and verify a model of forest pedagogy methodology in primary and pre-primary education, to find its place and application in the school and out-of-school context. Individual project programs began to be implemented in kindergartens in December 2019.
- Forest pedagogy for preschool age is also applied in the project "Learning about the forest - environmental education for pre-primary education on the forest example". The project was developed by experts of the National Forest Centre and its goal is to deepen the knowledge and strengthen the skills of pedagogical staff in the field of environmental education on the forest example using experiential learning of forest pedagogy. The educational program is accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.
- The members of the cluster in Ukraine, under the leadership of the FORZA Agency, disseminated the knowledge, skills and experience gained within the FORSOC project through their activities. They have promoted the importance of the forest for society, its sustainable use, knowledge of animals and plants in various forms during different events:
 - In March 2019 in the State enterprise "Tyachiv Forestry" in Neresnytsia village FORZA Agency held a seminar on forest pedagogy for specialists of state forest enterprises of the regional department forestry and hunting, who lead school forestries all around Transcarpathia.
 - FORZA Agency as well as the visitors continuously use the green classroom created in the Botanical Garden of Uzhhorod for environmental education.
 - FORZA Agency annually checks the status of the info-stands for the hiking route Kamyantsa- Plishka established within the FORSOC project.
 - National Nature Park Zacharovanny kray also applied the principles of forest pedagogy in the education of young people, in order to increase awareness of forests and environmental protection, in this period.

- National nature park "Skolivski Beskydy" put into operation the environmental and educational center of Krushelnytsky forestry, implemented a local development project "Pavliv Potik" aimed at improvement of recreation of residents of Skole, including creating of cycling and walking path by two sources of natural mineral water and prepared exhibition for the festival "Hunting fire" which received the highest award of the festival.
- Meetings of cluster members in Ukraine and Slovakia, aimed at promoting tourism, forest pedagogy and raising awareness of forestry in the region through the exchange of information and advice:
 - Cluster members, representatives of FORZA and UkrRIMF (Ukrainian Forestry Research Institute) participated in round tables organised by World Bank in Kyiv and Lviv to discuss the forestry issues to be covered in the Report on the Forest Sector of Ukraine prepared by the World Bank, and in particular related to the implementation of the close to nature forestry, forest education and other issues of forest sector development.
 - Cluster members, representatives of FORZA and UkrRIMF took part in the All-Ukrainian scientific-practical conference "State and prospects of nature management in modern conditions", which took place in Uzhhorod and presented to the participants of the conference "Practical aspects of strengthening the hydrological role of mountainous forestry territories" in May 2019
 - Cluster members, representatives of FORZA and UkrRIMF participated in the final conference "Partnership without Barriers" to present the results of the Cross-Border Cooperation Program HUSKROUA 2017-2013 and the collaboration projects with National Forest Centre as cluster member, which took place in March 2019 in Nyzhne Solotvino in Transcarpathia.
 - Meeting of representatives of National Forest Centre and Municipal Forests Spišská Belá, Ltd., took place in May 2019. The reason was preparation of forest pedagogy activities for children and seniors in order to further cooperation in the field of raising awareness of forestry in the region.
 - Seminar on the topic - 25 Years of Forest Management of the Spiš Diocese was held in June 2019, where the representatives of cluster members has participated - National Forest Centre, PRO POPULO Poprad, Ltd., LESMEDIUM SK, Ltd.

The number of cluster members was 21 at the end of 2019 year. The list is available at <http://www.forsoc.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Zoznam-%C4%8Dlenov-klastra-11.9.2018.pdf>

The cluster is open to new members whose active participation will be welcome and contribute to the development of the border region.

Cluster Action plan for 2020

- Cooperation during the event „Forestry day“ in the area of communication and public relations in Košice. Goal is to raise awareness of forestry and nature protection and promote tourism in the region.
- Promotion of the forest pedagogics approach among foresters and pedagogues of other regions of Ukraine.
- Participation of representatives of cluster members from Ukraine at the opening ceremony of Forestry Days 2020 in Zvolen, organized by the National Forest Centre.
- Participation at the program of forest pedagogy „To the Forest with Forester“ for primary school pupils from Spišská Belá town. Goal is to develop the region in the area of forest tourism.
- Forest pedagogy for seniors in the forest environment of the company Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd.
- Meetings of the cluster members and effective communication on the issues of tourism, forestry, public relations and looking for solutions, that will contribute for better development of the region.
- Development and submission of the project *Vocational training in biodiversity, environmental measures and rural tourism on the example of modular forest activities Education* within the Rural Development Program 2014 - 2020 of the Slovak Republic for measure 1 - Knowledge transfer and information actions, sub-measure 1.1 - Support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions. The project will aim on strengthening the knowledge base in the field of forest pedagogy focused on the topic of biodiversity, environmental measures in forestry and rural tourism. The project will be submitted by the National Forest Centre and, if it is approved, the active participation of other cluster members is expected.
- Cooperation of cluster members in the implementation of the project "Roads to healthy forests: resilient, adaptive, diverse and sustainable forests in the cross-border region of Ukraine and Slovakia".
- Searching for new opportunities for cooperation of cluster members, including cross-border cooperation.

Note. The emergency situation in connection with COVID 19 pandemics will affect the planned activities of the Cluster Forest members, which will be postponed as far as possible in autumn 2020.