

Cluster Forest for Society
Lesy pre spoločnosť - Ліси для суспільства
Annual report 2020

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, 2020: 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 2020

The cluster's activities were affected by the COVID 19 disease and the subsequent pandemic, which resulted in a home office regime, restrictions on the movement of people and the implementation of cluster activities to promote tourism, information exchange and counseling between cluster members.

- The nationwide Forestry Days event, held annually in Zvolen in April, prepared by the National Forest Centre was postponed to September 2020. Due to strict hygienic measures and the ban on mass events, the format of Forestry Days was changed. The event was presented in the form of an exhibition on the topic "Forests and Biodiversity". The theme was a continuation of the idea of International Forest Day on March 21, 2020 and brought forests and biodiversity closer by the subtitle "Too rare for us to lose them". The exhibition was opened on September 4, 2020 for invited guests in The Museum of Forestry and Wood Technology – Forests of the Slovak Republik, State Enterprise in Zvolen. Among the invited guests were also representatives of the Cluster Forest members: Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd., PRO POPULO Poprad, Ltd., LESMEDIUM SK, Ltd. The partners discussed about further project cooperation and exchange of experiences. The exhibition was open to the public from September 5 to October 18, 2020.
- Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd. in cooperation with the National Forest Centre have organized a day for seniors from Spišská Belá on 20 August 2020. Forest pedagogues have presented forest pedagogy activities for 40 seniors in the area of Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd.
- Municipal Forests of Košice, s.c. communicated with public during the period more intensively through social networks (facebook) due to strict pandemic restrictions. There were prepared various competitions for motivation people to visit the forests and gain the knowledge. Educational trails with information boards, which were implemented within the FORSOC project (Horný Bankov Educational Trails - chapel, Lúčky, Furča - promenade), were often visited by public.

- **Cooperation of cluster members within the project activity:**

- Within the project “Roads to healthy forests: resilient, adaptive, diverse and sustainable forests in cross-border region of Ukraine and Slovakia”, HUSKROUA/1701/LIP/009 a contract was signed by the members of the LES Cluster: Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd. (project partner) and the National Forestry Centre. According to the contract, National Forest Centre will provide organizational and technical publicity of the project by producing leaflets in Slovak and Ukrainian, 3 roll-up banners for each Slovak partner, 2 professional articles published in forestry magazines and 21 educational boards informing about the impact of climate change on forests in the Tatra National Park. 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.
- In the period of 2020 year was developed project under Rural Development Program of the Slovak Republic 2014-2020 for measure 1 - Knowledge transfer and information actions, sub-measure 1.1 - Support for vocational training and skills acquisition. The project is named *Vocational training in the field of biodiversity, environmental measures and rural tourism on the example of modular forest pedagogy activities* and it is aimed on strengthening the knowledge base in the field of forest pedagogy focused on biodiversity, environmental measures in forestry and rural tourism. The project was developed and submitted by the National Forest Centre and if it is approved, the active participation of other cluster members is expected.

- **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 from National forest Centre has prepared methodological material for realization of programs for pupils on the occasion of the International Forest Day in March 2020. The theme for 2020 was "Forests and Biodiversity" and aimed to draw attention to the societal issues related to this topic. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic in this period, the programs were implemented only in the online space.

- Within the project supported by Slovak Research and development Agency, named *Forest Pedagogy and Education for Sustainable Development in Pre-Primary and Primary Education* were prepared educational programs for primary school pupils and kindergarten children, divided into 4 topics, focusing on forest and forestry activities. 1189 children from selected schools in Slovakia participated in the programs during 2020 year. The aim was to verify the 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. Another activity of the project was the seminar *Forest Pedagogy in the Conditions of a Kindergarten*, which took place in the Poloniny National Park on 24 -25 September 2020. Forest pedagogues from National Forest Centre actively participated in the seminar by presenting forest pedagogy activities to 70 kindergarten teachers from all over Slovakia. 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.
- In the period from March till September 2020, the first educational course of the accredited program "*Learning about the Forest - environmental education for pre-primary education on the forest example*" was held in Zvolen. 17 kindergarten teachers completed course from all over Slovakia . Another course was opened in October 2020 and it will continue until 2021. The project was established at the National Forestry Center and it is aimed at deepening the knowledge and strengthening skills of pedagogical staff in environmental education through forest pedagogy. The educational program is accredited by the Ministry of Education and the Slovak Republic.

The number of cluster members was 21 at the end of 2020 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.

Annex 1

Cluster Action plan for 2021

- Cooperation during the event „Forestry days“ 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 2021 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.
- 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. Activities are planned in favorable conditions of improved situation in connection with the COVID 19 disease.