

Cluster Forest for Society
Lesy pre spoločnosť - Ліси для суспільства
Annual report 2021

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, 2021: 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 2021

The cluster's activities were affected by the continuing unfavorable society-wide situation in connection with the COVID 19 disease, and the implementation of the cluster's activities in support of tourism, exchange of information and counseling between cluster members was adapted to the situation.

- The National Forestry Days event, organized by the National Forestry Center, moved from Zvolen downtown to nature in 2021 and was opened on 30 August 2021 in the Kysihýbel Forestry Arboretum in the presence of invited guests, including representatives of the LES Cluster: Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd., PRO POPULO Poprad, Ltd., LESMEDIUM SK, Ltd. 15th year of the event highlighted forests as a positive environment and an ideal place to support mental and physical health. During the event, the partners discussed about further project cooperation and exchange of experiences.
- Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd. in cooperation with the National Forest Centre have organized a forest walk for 40 seniors from Spišská Belá on 16 August 2021. The topic was "The Road to Knowledge and Healing and Medicinal Herbs" as part of the nationwide Forest Days 2021 event on 16 August 2021.
- Municipal Forests of Košice, s.c. has organized activities of forest pedagogy due to the more favorable situation in connection with the disease COVID 19, during 2021 year: in total 13 activities, which were attended by about 300 pupils of primary schools. Some events took place in the area with interactive objects, developed within the FORSOC project. One example for all: the forest walk was organized on 27 september for 16 pupils with autism from Košice in the area of Horný Bankov-Lúčky, where the interactive objects where used.
- The mobile application named "ZVEDAVO" was developed by Deutsche Telecom with cooperation of the Municipal Forests of Košice, s.c. in the area of the educational trail FURČA, built within FORSOC project. It was put into operation in November 2021 and its topic is interests from nature and forest. It also draws data from the information boards of the trail.
- **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", no. HUSKROUA / 1701 / LIP / 009 cross-border cooperation of the HUSKROUA ENI 2014-2020 program, representatives of the FOREST Cluster from National Forest Centre and Municipal Forests of Spišská Belá, Ltd. have participated in a joint field meeting of the project from 6 till 8 october 2021 in Ukraine. The meeting was organized by the FORZA Agency

from Ukraine (member of the LES Cluster) with the Uzhhorod Forest Enterprise (cluster member) and the goal was to get acquainted with the practical knowledge and methods of Ukrainian foresters in forest management and their principles in adapting forests to climate change in Ukraine. The participants of the meeting visited areas of the Uzhhorod Forest Administration, Ludvikiv Forest Administration, Shevchenko Forest Administration and Vyhod Forest Administration.

- **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:
 - International Forest Day 2021 focused on the topic of reforestation - the path to recovery and well-being. On this occasion, forest pedagogues from the National Forest Centre prepared a Call and methodological material for forest pedagogues of the whole Slovakia to participate in the campaign through various activities. In the period from 15 to 21 March 2021, 5 workshops were held in the online space in order to draw attention to the importance of the forest for society, attended by 130 secondary school students from Zvolen and Banská Bystrica district under the leadership of forest pedagogues from National Forest Centre.
 - 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. The activities of the project in 2021 included a nationwide professional seminar for pre-primary teachers under the name: *Forest pedagogy in the conditions of a kindergarten*, which took place on 9-10 September 2021 in Betliar. During the seminar, forest teachers from National forest Centre presented forest pedagogy activities to 60 participants from all over Slovakia.
 - Within the project "Learning about the forest - environmental education for pre-primary education on the forest example", was completed second training program, attended by 24 pre-primary teachers from all over Slovakia, on 19 February 2021. The third program for 19 participants took place in the period of May to September 2021. Due to the situation, the training took place in online space. The project was developed at 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 and experience gained within the FORSOC project** through their activities. They have promoted the importance of the forest for society, its sustainable use in various forms during different events:
 - On 13.05.2021 field excursion of 24 schoolchildren of 4th grade from Lanchyn school took place to Carpathian National Nature Park. In interactive and adventurous form the pupils learned about the main forest species and animals of Carpathian forests, conducted experiments with “creating a flood”, prepared posters of the green future of their community.
 - On 23.05.2021 educational excursions for a mixed group of 15 youngsters from Uzhhorod schools and Classical Gymnasium of 9-11 grades took place in Dubrynychy of Uzhhorod district. Role of trees and green zones in the urban environment in adapting to climate change impacts, the importance of biodiversity were discussed with the youngsters. There were prepared forest pedagogy activities in the forest.
 - On 9.06.2021 forestry excursion for 27 pupils of 7th and 10th grades of 3 schools from Banyliv community took place to the nearby forest. Tree species growing in the Carpathian region, features of certain trees, what their wood is used for, what do the tree rings can tell us about the conditions of the environment where the tree grew biodiversity, how to measure a tree were the subject of interactive forest excursion. Activities were planned in order to present basic knowledge about the forest with regard to the age of the participants.
 - On 15-16.12.2021 in Uzhhorod was conducted the training dedicated to the "Forestry practices in the context of climate change – implementation of close to nature forestry in Zakarpattia" topic. During the theoretical part the basic concepts of close to nature forestry were presented - principles, methods and ways of application in different forest types and its environmental benefits. The practical part took place at the demonstration forest plot in a 120-year-old hornbeam-oak forest stand plantation, in the northern part of the Forest managed by the Botanical Garden of Uzhhorod National University, and beech-hornbeam-oak forest stand of State Enterprise “Uzhhorod Forest Enterprise”. The practical exercise was dedicated to defining the state of the forest stand and future shape, as well as acquisition of practical skills in identifying trees for felling based on close to nature forestry approach. 25 participants from 10 forestry enterprises of Zakarpattia that work on the positions of engineers, lead engineers, assistant forester, forest master from 10 forestry enterprises Zakarpattia took part in the training.

The number of cluster members was 21 at the end of 2021 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 2022

- 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 2022 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 the context of improving the pandemic situation related to COVID 19.