

Important accomplishments, work and initiatives

Baltic Environmental Forum
Lithuania

Activity

report

2017



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LIFE MAGNI DUCATUS ACROLA

2016-2023

Lithuania and Belarus

www.meldine.lt/en



Protecting the Aquatic Warbler

THE NEW PROJECT PROTECTING THE AQUATIC WARBLER THAT STARTED IN 2016 HAS GREATLY MOVED FORWARD IN 2017.

In the Lithuanian project territories we started habitat restoration work. Special equipment removed bushes, shrubs, and reeds. Even through tough weather, our previous experience allowed us to quickly mobilize our efforts and clean out 110 ha.

In Dreverna we acquired an abandoned farm, that will soon become a Biomass reprocessing facility where grasses from the aquatic warbler habitats will be utilized.

Just as much intensity was devoted to preparation: we prepared a project evaluation and monitoring program, started collecting scientific literature on the territories and their state, planned environmental management for the territories, discussed them with the farmers, created a preliminary Šyša and Sausgalvis polder water level regulation study, and prepared for the translocation of the aquatic warblers.

We were able to gather a dependable scientific advisory board. This board was made up of representatives from the international aquatic warbler protection group, Poland's bird conservation group, Cambridge and Greifswald universities. We met with these experts to discuss the methodology for aquatic warbler translocation. We received a great amount of advice and recommendations.

BELARUS

This project is one of the few that is being financed by the European Union's LIFE program that does work outside of EU borders, and the first in Belarus. Naturally, we came across certain administrative obstacles, for example, in Belarus the project had to be registered in several different ministries. The prolonged process was successfully finished at the end of the year.

At the end of 2017 we received a letter from the European Commission, in which our first aquatic warbler protection project "Baltic Aquatic Warbler" and its results were very well evaluated.

" <...> I am also pleased to learn that the project has been successfully implemented; even exceeding the project outputs planned in the Grant Agreement for the restoration and communication activities. Thank you for submitting a good and comprehensive After-LIFE Conservation Plan, covering all aspects of after-LIFE management and monitoring. The Plan confirms that project beneficiaries have taken the responsibility for following up the activities started in the project. <...>"

Jean-Claude MERCIOL, the Head of LIFE Programme Unit

Warbler

We gathered an aquatic warbler volunteer team which helped us inform the Nemunas delta farmers about warblers nesting in their fields, make deals with them, monitor plant growth, and conduct other tasks.

We organized a traditional aquatic warbler welcome party. We published a project pamphlet, publications about 2 project territories, a second edition of the aquatic warbler book for kids, and translations into Russian and English languages.



Special flags were awarded to farmers that agreed to protect the aquatic warblers living in their fields



CREATION OF MECHANISMS TO SECURE GOOD QUALITY OF OPEN HABITATS IN NEMUNAS DELTA REGIONAL PARK 2014-2017 Lithuania

In 2017 we successfully completed this initiative. We distributed 38 short publications about protected bird species, unique objectives, conscientious farming, and we also organized a project result presentation in the Nemunas delta.

www.bef.lt

38 publications

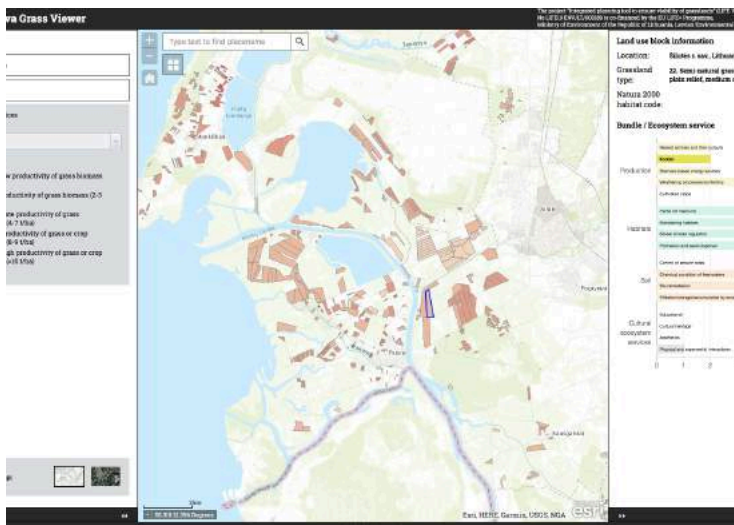
read them
here

(in
Lithuanian)



www.vivagrass.eu

The project team spent the whole year actively working on the fundamental project goals – perfecting integrated planning resources. The resources functionality was supplemented and renewed, new data was collected. At the moment a test part of the resource is publicly available, and can be used to see how the grassland ecosystem services were evaluated in example project territories. We are soon planning to renew data, and evaluate all Lithuanian territory grassland plots.



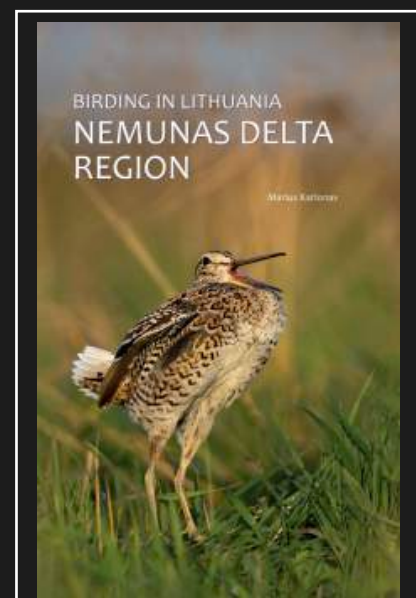
In May of 2017 the project organized the third international seminar on ecosystem services called “COSTING THE EARTH.” The seminar was held in Tallin, Estonia. Its participants presented their own country’s examples and discussed how to use concepts of ecosystem services in practical decision-making. Experts from about 100 different fields participated in the seminar.



Birdwatching guide



In an effort to give people an opportunity to better know the specific grassland ecosystem services – the ability to birdwatch – and to increase environmental tourism, along with the project partner Šilutės community administration we released the first Lithuanian birdwatching guide “Birdwatching guide in the Nemunas Delta region.” The book was extremely popular as soon as it was



An important part of the project – publicizing the project’s work and presenting concepts of ecosystem services to the public. This was done in organized visitor days in project territories in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. We were especially glad that an especially large number of individuals gathered during Lithuanian visitor days. Just in Ventės Ragas alone, the fall bird farewell party had about 150 participants, who also played interactive ecosystem services understanding and evaluation games.



BALTIC rePAIR - STAGE 1
2017
Lithuania and Sweden

In 2017 the Baltic Environmental Forum participated in the first stage of preparing requests for the “BALTIC rePAIR” project. The project goal is to repeat and apply the successful Tullstorp initiative (an initiative for Swedish farmers to bring back river flow and wetlands) model in other southern Swedish territories and in the four Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. This project would initiate 4-5 new farmer associations which would all work on wetland restoration and lowering nutrient runoff into the Baltic sea,



DESIRE

2017-2018

Lithuania, Poland, and Germany

In 2017 the Baltic Environmental Forum began to work on the SEED money project “Sustainable wetland control system creation in restoring peat-bogs and using their biomass in the Nemunas delta basin communities, aiming to better water quality in the Baltic sea.” Since this is a planning project, its main goal is to create a full report of its ideas and request for its completion. Our idea is to restore peat-bogs and their ability to filter runoff and sequester nutrients before they reach the Nemunas river or its tributaries. The restored peat-bogs and hydrological conditions ability to lower nutrient runoff into waterways will be boosted with mowing and removal of biomass that has sequestered nutrients. This type of wetland agriculture is termed paludiculture. These peat-bogs and new hydrological conditions would work as a wetland buffer zone, and the mowed biomass could be used for construction purposes or biofuel.

NONHAZCITY

2016-2019

Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Germany and Sweden



www.nonhazcity.eu

SAFER PRODUCTS – CLEAN

PROJECT "INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS FOR MINIMIZING EMISSIONS OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES FROM URBAN AREAS IN THE BALTIC SEA" (NONHAZCITY) financed by the program "Interreg Baltic Sea Region," started last year and is taking off in 2017.

In 2017 "NonHazCity" partners and various local administrations, as well as organization representatives that work with chemical compounds attended an international seminar in Turk, where advice and recommendations were given and the obstacles of working with chemicals were discussed.

In one year the project page Pagalvok.lt had even 23 Lithuanian articles about various subjects. These articles describe dangerous chemical substances and how to avoid them, and extend invitations to organized events. The project was also actively present on the social webpage "Facebook." The page "Pagalvok, ka perki" ("Think before buying") reached more than 800 people in 2017 and received attention from media channels.

The project connects 18 partners from the Baltic sea region. In local administrations participating from Lithuania – Kaunas and Šilalė, intensive work began. The project was presented in both regional celebrations.

One of the most important project tasks in 2017 – finishing analysis of runoff samples obtained at the start of the project. Results shows the chemical substance situation in various local areas. Tests showed that dangerous chemical substances, such as bisphenol A and phthalates, are in almost all samples. The sources of pollution are not just the organizations and companies but also residents – a significant amount of dangerous chemicals come from residential areas.

Evaluating the research conducted led to a variety of new actions, that aim to reduce dangerous chemical substances in the local administration's regions participating in the project. We started conducting training for local administrators and companies, as well as private businesses. An especially large interest came from hair stylists and other beauty fore these



NER CITY!

During sessions were held a special publication was created – directory for stylists – in which specialists describe all necessary information about hazardous chemical substances and how to avoid them. Preparation of a new magazine “Green City” was started, which will inform about living without hazardous chemical substances, and will be released in the beginning of next year.

Companies are not just offered training – they are also invited to directly participate in the project. Companies that agreed to collaborate will each receive specialist consultations. The possibilities to collaborate are being explored with companies and contacts created last year.



**Think before
you buy**



"FUTURE LEADERS: FUTURPRENEURS"
2016-2018
Lithuania



In 2017 the conscientious business project "Futurpreneurs" took off. The Baltic Environmental Forum created responsible and conscientious business training for future startups in Poland, and created twenty ideas for conscientious business for a practical Lithuania. We are waiting for more developed conscientious business ideas in 2018.

www.futurepreneurs.eu



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www.ssmtp.eu



Substitution of hazardous che

IN 2017 ANOTHER CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE PROJECT TOOK OFF: “BALTIC PILOT CASES ON REDUCTION OF EMISSIONS BY SUBSTITUTION OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS AND RESOURCE EFFICIENCY” (LIFE FIT FOR REACH)

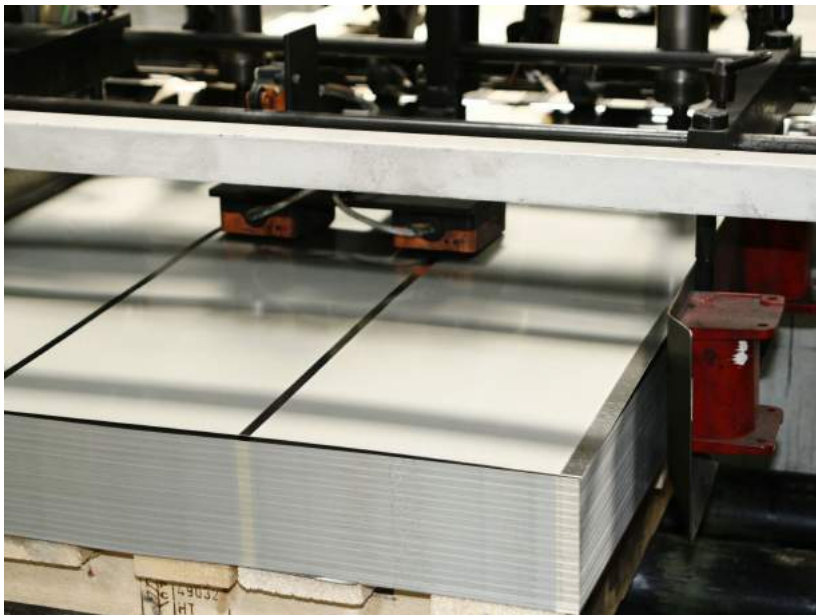
The project incorporates several dozen companies in the three countries wanting to find alternatives to dangerous and potentially dangerous chemical substances. In 2017 in Lithuania no less than 20 different companies decided to participate in the project.

Some companies have already utilized financial support offered by the project and have tried alternative chemical substances or switched to new equipment that helps reduce or eliminate the amount of hazardous chemical substances being used. For example, for a company that creates chemical products for home use BEF and its partner's specialists helped change the composition of cleaning products and eliminate the use of hazardous chemicals.

Working on the project in 2017, training for several companies was organized addressing the control of chemical substances. Seminars were organized for collaborating companies and other institutions' professionals – labor safety, chemical substance specialists, etc.

In 2018 we plan to continue training sessions for companies, in which we will also discuss how to effectively control chemical substances.

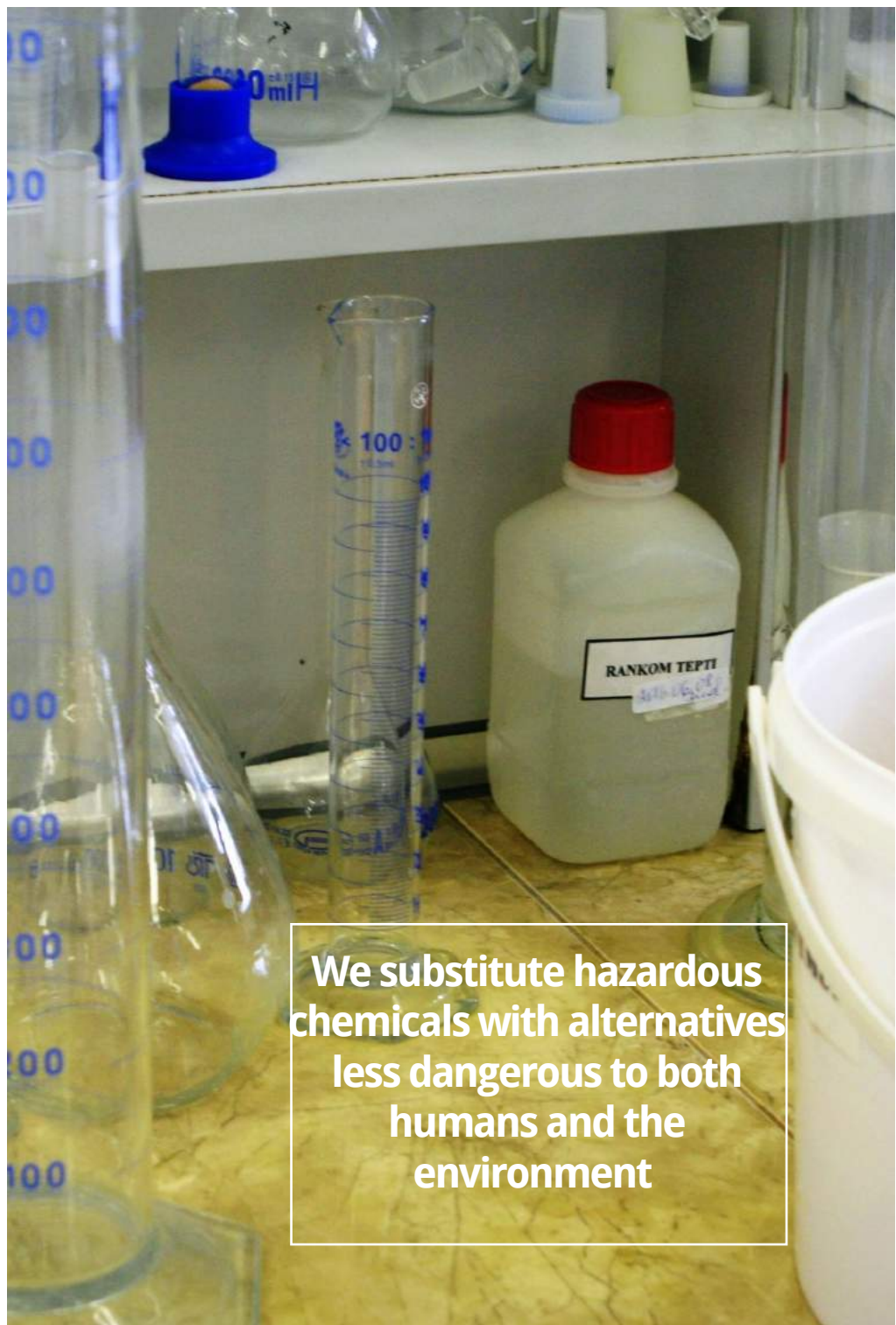
The project page fitreach.eu has added resources: pertinent articles, successful alternative chemical changes for hazardous substances stories, information useful for companies, like chemical inventory examples or online tool “SubSelect” to help compare chemical substances and their effects.



Any company can substitute more or less their hazardous chemical substances to alternatives

Chemicals

In the future the page will be supplemented with the project's success stories of switching companies to using alternative chemical substances.



We substitute hazardous chemicals with alternatives less dangerous to both humans and the environment



www.bef.lt

A new project has been initiated that is pertinent not only to Lithuania but to the rest of the world as well. The project “Green public procurement of pharmaceuticals (GrePPP) of Interreg Baltic Sea Region”.

Pharmacological products that make their way into the environment are becoming a huge global issue that is drawing more and more attention from national and international communities. One of the main goals is to create more globally conscientious buying and purchasing systems. Sustainable Public Procurement of Pharmaceuticals criteria stipulate that local, national and global have to increase sustainable and conscientious product evaluations and lower the amount of discarded pollutants. However, there is a lack of coordination and collaboration amongst institutions, interested parties, and initiatives. The project GrePPP aims to take the first steps in the Baltic sea region to fulfill this criteria and create a platform for collaboration for any interested parties in the field of sustainable pharmaceuticals. This platform will also formulate the criteria that can help analyze the effects on water quality in a way that fits EU regulations.

Analysis



In the first part of the project, an analysis of the purchasing of sustainable pharmacological products situation in Lithuania was conducted, and the groups of interest as well as need for further action will be discussed.



Green public procurement is a very important sector. Until now we applied too few ecological criteria on purchasing.





Along with Estonian responsible business consultants from "SUSTINERE" we organized a meeting for interested countries about company business responsibilities and stability at UAB Coca-Cola HBC Lietuva. We interviewed the companies interested parties and presented our findings.

We also offered our consulting services for product safety evaluation UAB "Multimedia".

PROVIDED SERVICES



We provided consultation for the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development regarding the natural worth of large territories, and evaluation of the European Farm Expansion program.

We provided consultation for LIFE program request preparation. This project won the international contest and was determined as eligible for financial aid.

Volunteer initiatives



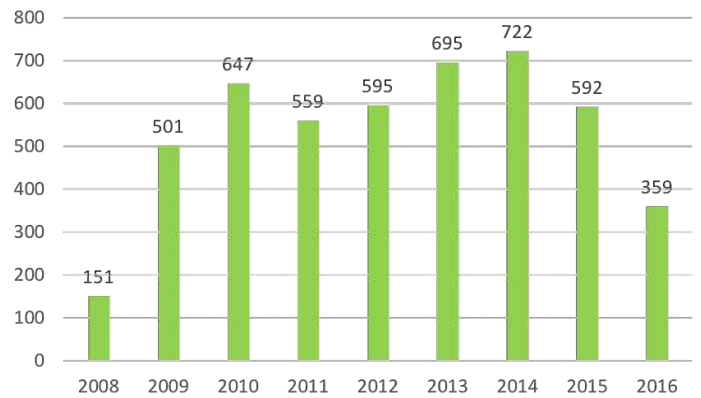
DVARČIONYS GRASSLAND

Now in 2017 it has been 9 years since we started taking care of Dvarčionys grassland, growing and full of life, on the outskirts of Vilnius. Like last year, one of the farmers helped us manage the fields. We also partnered with Vilnius University biodiversity masters students to organize an event for the public where we presented the grassland's interesting characteristics and their worth. During the "Culture Nights" students invited participants of the festival to visit the Dvarčionys grassland and get to know the culture of nature. During the event participants went on a hike while listening to

Dr. Valerijus Rašomavičius's tale about Dvarčionys grassland and learned about its plants and the different species growing there that are the reason we protect this grassland. After the hike participants could try herbal tea, braid wreaths, or learn to identify animal tracks. Finally everyone listened to stories of nature and people, stories about the flower crowns of St. Johns day, and watched the lights dance in the Dvarčionys grassland while sitting next to a campfire. A large number of those that attended spent the whole festival evening in Dvarčionys grassland and we hope they will return.



Number of notifications received



NOTIFY ABOUT HARMED NATURE

Thanks to the public, various organizations, BEF and volunteers, this initiative lasted for 9 years. Our organization invested funds into maintaining this initiative for a long time. However, in 2017 we decided that we can no longer contribute such a large amount of human effort and will end the initiative. We also encountered a variety of technical problems in 2017 – the initiative content control system was overrun by viruses. We would like to rejoice that over the 9 years the initiative was active, we received 4,819 reports. 1,784 of these reports were rejected due to incorrectly or insufficiently presented information.

We directed the authors of these reports to the correct institutions where they would receive answers. From the remaining 3,035 reports, we were able to solve 1644 (54%), which pleased those who submitted the reports, with the help of various institutions. We hope that ending the initiative will be an encouragement for others to be more involved in solving these problems directly rather than turning to a third party.



Volunteer initiatives

NATURE'S TREASURES TRAILS

For the third year in a row we managed various nature's treasure hunt courses in Žemaitija National Park and Verkiai Regional Park. In 2017 58 people participated in the Plokštine nature treasure trail. We did not count the number of visitors on the Verkiai course. Although visitors are still calling and inquiring about the course, it would be important to mention that it is losing popularity. Wanting to maintain large interest in these trails more time would need to be spent on publicity.

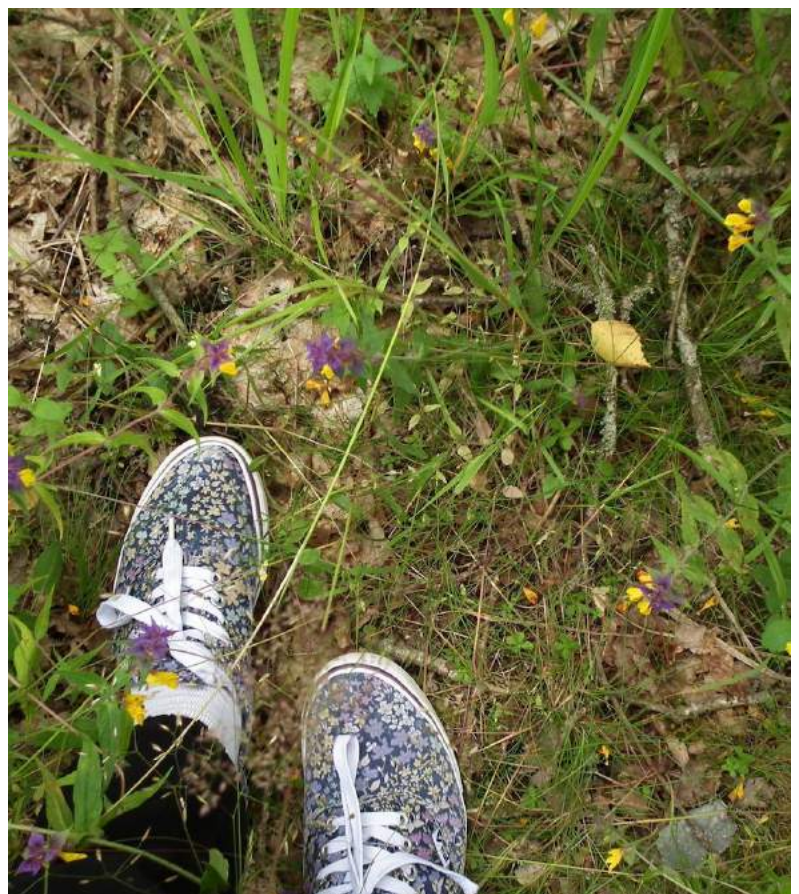
Perhaps renewing the trail would be effective, however, this is a volunteer task and at the moment we do not have resources for this. For now we are able to maintain and manage these trails and renew the information once. If you like participating in nature treasure hunt trails, we invite you to participate in its maintenance or with symbolic support.



We hope that being in nature, personal experience and building a relationship with nature will become more and more relevant, as this connection keeps getting weaker. Because of this we try to put more effort into cultivating that connection.

FESTIVAL IN NATURE "VIDUR GIRIŲ"

Unfortunately in 2017 we ended our three year tradition and did not organize the nature festival "Vidur girių" (Mid forest). Last year's experience showed that minimal volunteering for organization of this event was not sufficient, that a very large amount of time needs to be dedicated, which we could not find this year. The Dzukija National Park organized a smaller event on their own. We hope that in 2018 we will again be able to invite you to enjoy Dzukija's beautiful nature and experience many



Volunteer initiatives

CREATIVE CONSERVATION OR HEATHER BEER SAVES GROUSES (CACARUKUS)

This is yet another volunteer initiative or a way to solve conservation problems creatively. In September in the Musteika polygon beer brewery “Dundulis” and men from BEF set out to collect heather flowers. “Dundulis” brews a holiday heather beer, in very small seasonal batches, which require a lot of dedicated hand work. Among the heather in the Musteika polygon is the largest grouse breeding ground in Lithuania. Wanting to maintain this breeding ground for grouses and their mating rituals, the heather field needs to be renewed and maintained by regular mowing and grazing on small areas and removing the mowed heather. For the Dzūkija National Park, which oversees

this grouse breeding ground, maintaining these heather fields is a problem – the heather can’t be used for hay for farmers or kindling for the local people. The beer brewery’s use of this heather is truly a good solution. This year was just a small trial in the area, but if annually a part of the fields is picked, this unique habitat will be protected. After “grazing” in the grouse heather field, the men returned to Musteika, cooked up some mushrooms they found (thanks to park ranger Valdas, who gave them several boletus he had found!) and all shared their impressions of the farmland, and the nature surrounding it. The men also collected wormwood and milfoil – both plants useful for brewing beer.



LECTURES FOR FUTURE NATURALISTS

In 2017 we began teaching future environmental science specialists and biodiversity masters students at Vilnius University, in the life sciences department. Throughout the whole semester students completed practical assignments, and the culmination of the course was the event in Dvarčionys grassland. The students evaluated the environmental science communications course as one of the best in the whole semester.



It is amazing to see so much enthusiasm and growth. I am incredibly happy to be able to share my knowledge and experience with young generation of naturalists. I hope that effective communication can help solve many environmental problems.

Rita Griniene



Volunteer initiatives

CAMPAIGN "100 DAYS FOR NATURE" TO CELEBRATE THE LITHUANIAN CENTENNIAL



For 100 days we encouraged nature-loving citizens to share their personal stories about the environment's worth, the meaning of protecting the environment, and how to give it a voice on our special campaign Facebook page. We did this hoping that personal connections and experiences in these narratives will help others find their own relationship with nature, and we would all be able to celebrate the Lithuanian centennial as conscious citizens of a harmonious Lithuania

Duration – 100 days: November 8th, 2017 through February 16th, 2018

Campaign results in numbers:

100 stories

70 authors of stories

750 likes

780 followers

Views **107,015**

Shares: **479**

Likes: **1856**

Comments: **56**


[Watch](#)

Insights

The most popular stories were from naturalists or those working in conservation. Although everyone said that no one reads long stories, the longest stories were the most popular.

We might be releasing a book of these stories. If you want to contribute – reach out.

[Contact](#)



The start of the campaign was marked by hanging speakers of nature in the strategic places of capital the capital city Vilnius

Illustrations from TOP stories



| FALSE INFORMATION IN THE MEDIA

At the end of 2017 several articles were released that spread false information and lowered our organization's reputation. We presented comprehensive information that was ignored by the media sources, who continued to spread this false information and come to conclusions that lacked factual support.

An important fact is that this interest in our organization began not when our previous colleague K. Navickas became the head of the Ministry of the Environment, but after a year when he began reform on forests. The journalist V. Kvedaras, previously charged with slander, became particularly interested in our organization's work. He wrote several articles – filled with twisted facts, lies, and unbelievable interpretations. A few other journalist's articles also appeared, repeating the false information.

Later came an onslaught of complaints from the afore mentioned journalist and several politicians directed to various institutions, even to the prime minister. The connection between K. Navickas and BEF was examined by the public procurement office (which found that we are operating legally), VTEK, state governmental ethics commission (determined that the minister did not violate any political ethical rules), members of the Parliament (among them Linas Balsys, who even consulted the state inspection, a private judicial entity) and the Parliament anti-corruption commission. Groups that were connected to the reform on forests also turned to the Parliament Environment protection committee, and Parliament member Kazys Starkevičius consulted the Ministry of the Economy.

The state governmental ethics commission determined that BEF director Ž. Morkvėnas violated the private interest declaration law in governmental service. The commission determined that Ž. Morkvėnas, as a NGO director, should be treated similarly as someone working in governmental service. This means that directors of all Lithuanian non-governmental organizations that receive support from the government need to declare their interests as participants in governmental service. If this is the case, then practically all Lithuanian NGOs are violating this law. This impacts a very large number of individuals, so understanding the absurdity of the situation and assuming that VTEK did not accurately interpret the conditions of the law, we took this matter to court where it is currently being discussed.

It would be important to mention that our main work is financed through various projects. These projects we initiate ourselves. With our own perspective on environmental problems and ideas, how to solve them, we create practical initiatives for our region. The specialists working in our organization do get a salary. This is the way it was before K. Navickas became a minister, and continues to be this way. Nothing has changed – we continue to plan projects and complete them. We don't think that we should stop our work because our previous colleague has become minister.

There are four LIFE program projects in various stages that are being publically discussed (although we also participate in projects supported by other financial sources) – the communication project "Nature is LIFE", project "Optimizing the management of Natura2000 network in Lithuania", the Aquatic warbler protection projects: "LIFE MagniDucatusAcrola" and "The Baltic Aquatic Warbler".

It is important to pay attention to the fact that the European Commission evaluates LIFE program projects, - or more specifically, the Commission's delegated international experts. They award the projects points and the projects with the highest number of points are given financial aid. In other words, there is an international competition between projects, in which the European Commission decides the winners. No Lithuanian politicians have any influence on this decision. In the first stage of the request for financial aid the project's concept is presented to the Ministry of the Environment for partial project support (25-35%.) in the case of success in the international contest. Part of these concepts remain uncompleted to their final request in the European Commission, a part lose the international contest, and only a few projects are successful in getting aid. After getting financial aid there is still about half a year of contract signing (sometimes the European Commission asks for additional material, corrections for the budget.) It is important to note that the project budget is planned very meticulously – there is a clear indication of the sum, what it is used for. Later spending is audited by an outside auditor and checked another time by the European Commission. It is also important to note that the process for creating a project aid request is long and could last several years.

Up to K. Navickas becoming minister we had already completed/were working on 7 LIFE program projects. The project "Baltic Aquatic Warbler" was already finished. Among the projects that were in process, the other Aquatic warbler project "LIFE MagniDucatusAcrola" was also being discussed publicly. It had already won the competition, a part of the Ministry of the Environment's financial aid was given, and work on it had begun.

Another project – "Nature is life" – was being prepared (now we know that this project lacked a few points needed to win in the European Commission competition). We came to the Ministry of the Environment for aid, as we have many times in the past, a part of project protocol, in presenting the project concept. Later, along with 11 partners we presented our request to the European Commission. Naturally, during the time of preparing the request the budget, number of partners, and part of the work changed. V. Kvedaras questioned these small variations, but had no desire to look at the usual process of project request preparation.

Recently a lot of questions have been raised about the long-term project "Optimizing the management of Natura 2000 network in Lithuania ", won in the beginning of 2018. This project concept was started in the beginning of 2016, when the Environmental Project Management Agency (EPMA) invited us along with a few other active conservation NGOs to discuss the possibility of creating this project. At that time K. Navickas did not even plan on becoming minister. Since then we have been actively participating in expanding this project concept, offering ideas, preparing the request. In this way we became a partner of this project. Choosing the project partners is not a contest to the government or a way to gain public financial service – there are no contests, just selection of partners based on their experience and ideas.

Our impact on the environment

Every person and organization has some kind of impact on the environment. We encourage you to assess and try to lower your impact.

To better understand how much this is...

- This amount of CO2 would fit in 12.8 million "CocaCola" cans.
- This amount is breathed out by a 91 year old man throughout his life, if he burned 2500 calories per day.
- This many tons are released in a year by 12 cars in Lithuania.
- This much CO2 would be absorbed by 3 hectares of wetland per year (equivalent to 4 soccer fields).

In 2017 we restored 110 hectares of wetland. So we more than compensated for our impact on the environment!

Impact



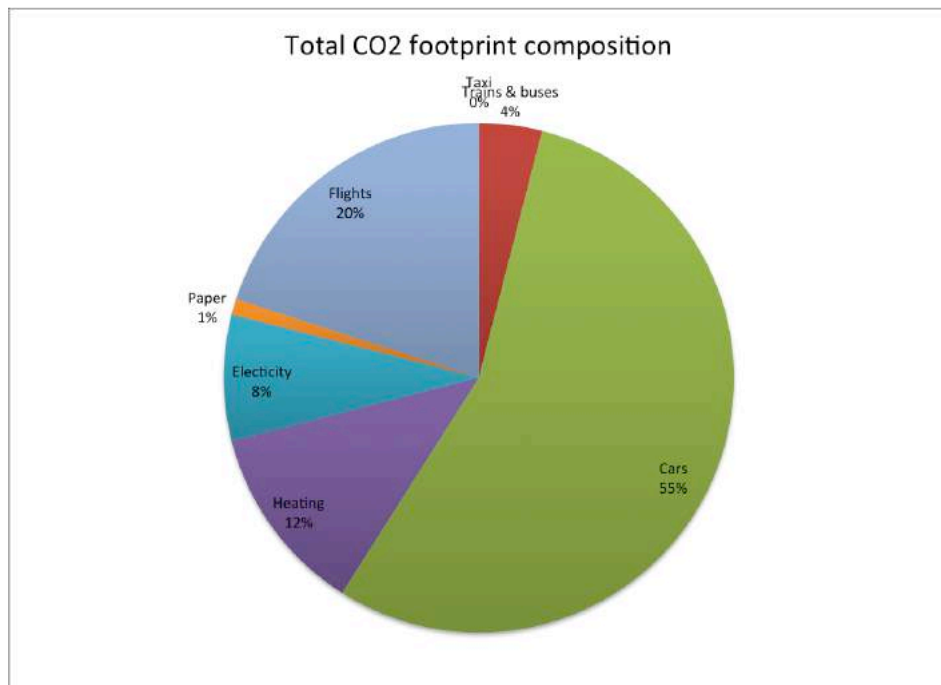
This is the seventh year that we analyze our organization's impact on the environment. We describe this impact in CO2 emissions, and evaluate our contribution to the greenhouse effect and how much waste we produce.

28 Tons

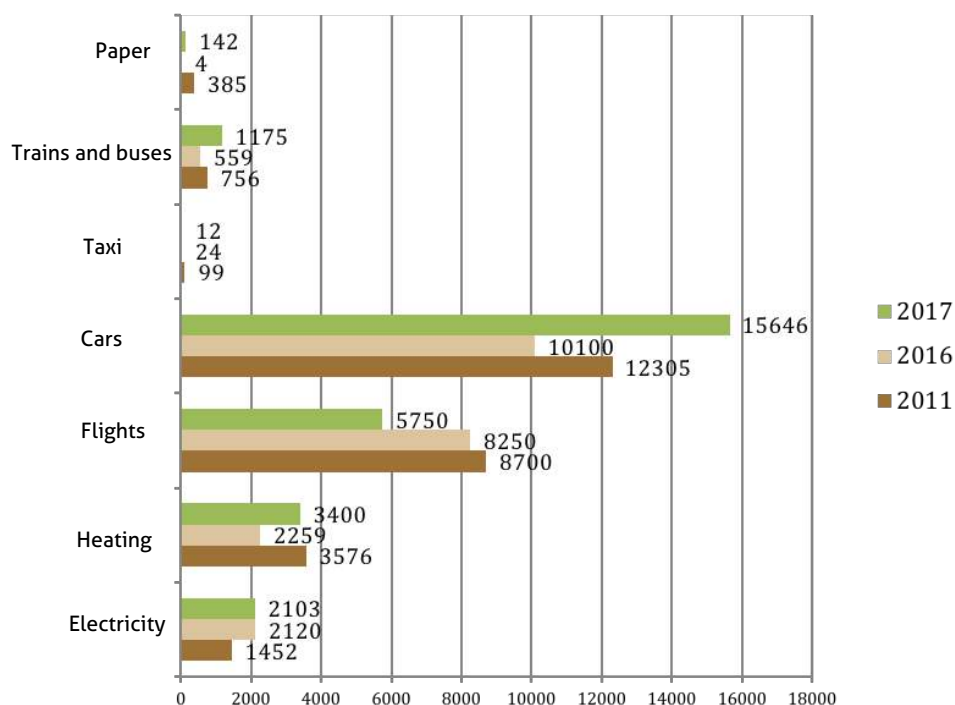
In 2017 we produced 28 tons of CO2. This is 20% more than the previous year. This is likely because in our team we had 25% more people working, and had more international trips.

It is worth mentioning, that our waste production in 2017 significantly decreased.

In 2017 we needed to travel an unusual amount – we had many meetings and educational events in Lithuania and Belarus, we started monitorings, and foreign experts came to us for meetings. Because of this (compared to 2016) the CO2 emissions from travel by car increased 150%. However, we're happy that this year, compared to 2016, the team travelled less by plane and chose more environmentally friendly means of transport – buses and trains, and also travelled less by taxis. In 2017 the amount of electricity used was slightly less than in 2016. We're very happy about the fact that, from January of 2017, all of the energy used in the office comes from renewable sources. Since in 2017 the winter was colder, almost a third more of our CO2 emissions went to heating.



Consumption of resources by amount of CO2, kg



Waste

In 2017 we threw out one fifth less nonrecyclable waste than we did in 2016. On average, one employee at the office generated about 9.3 kg of nonrecyclable waste per year. Keeping in mind that we have 25% more employees at the office, compared to 2016, this amount decreased by more than half! Since in 2017 we did not organize any large tidying efforts, our paper waste decreased by 78%. We decreased our plastic waste by 16%, and our glass waste this year was extremely low, only 2kg, decreasing by 94% from last year. Such a drastic change could in part be because a large amount of our glass waste was exchanged for money at recycling centers.

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN 2017

Duration	Total budget*	Financed by	Project name	Partners/ executors	Projects webpage
2014-2018	2 751 426 €	EU LIFE+ Programme and project partners	Integrated planning tool to ensure viability of grasslands (LIFE Viva Grass)	Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania (Coordinating Beneficiary), Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia, University of Latvia, Municipality of Cesis, SOVITES Farm, Baltic Environmental Forum Estonia, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Municipality of Lääne- Saare, Farm Kurese, Pavilniai and Verkiai Regional Park, Dubysa Regional Park, Silute District Municipality, JSC Hnit-Baltic, Institute for Environmental Solutions.	http://vivagrass.eu
2014-2017	322 352 €	European Economic Area (EEA) Grants and the project partners	Creation of mechanisms to secure good quality of open habitats in Nemunas delta regional park	BEF Lithuania (Project coordinator), Nemunas delta regional park, Bioforsk.	https://bef.lt/index.php?id=117&L=0
2015-2020	4 458 762 €	LIFE programme and project partners	Baltic pilot cases on reduction of emissions by substitution of hazardous chemicals and resource efficiency (LIFE FitForREACH)	Baltic Environmental Forum, Estonia (Project coordinator), Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania, Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia, KTU Institute of Environmental, Engineering (APINI), Center of Environmental Policy, UAB Marijampolės pieno konservai, JSC Vakarų Metalgama, REACH helpdesk in Latvia, REACH helpdesk in Estonia, Hendrikson & Ko OÜ, Ecodesign competence centre, TENACHEM, Ltd., Henkel Makroflex AS, Epokate OÜ, Mayeri Industries AS.	www.fitreach.eu
		European Regional Development Fund, Interreg Baltic Sea Region and project partners	management solutions for minimizing emissions of hazardous substances from urban areas in the Baltic Sea (NonHazCity)	Västerås, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Pärnu City Government, Pärnu Water, Baltic Environmental Forum Estonia, Riga City, Baltic Environmental Forum Latvia, University of Gdańsk, Municipality of Gdańsk, Gdańsk Water Utilities, Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania, Klaipėda regional environmental department, Kaunas District Municipality, Šilalė District Municipality, Institute of Applied Ecology, Baltic Environmental Forum Germany.	
2016-2023	4 097 038 €	EU LIFE Programme, Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania and project partners	Stepping stones towards ensuring long-term favorable conservation status of Aquatic warbler in Lithuania (LIFE MagniDucatusAcrola)	Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania (Project coordinator), Kretinga State Forest Enterprise, Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve Directorate, State Scientific and Production Amalgamation "Scientific and Practical Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus for Biological resources".	https://meldine.lt/en/
2016-2017	104 866 €	Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union	Futurepreneurs	Sunrise Valley Science and Technology Park, Vilnius University, Baltic environmental Forum Lithuania, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, VU Business School, Enterprise Lithuania, MITA - Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology, Startup.lt, Lithuanian innovation center, Civitta, Pure Birds, Swedbank, Knowledge economical forum.	https://bef.lt/index.php?id=141&L=0

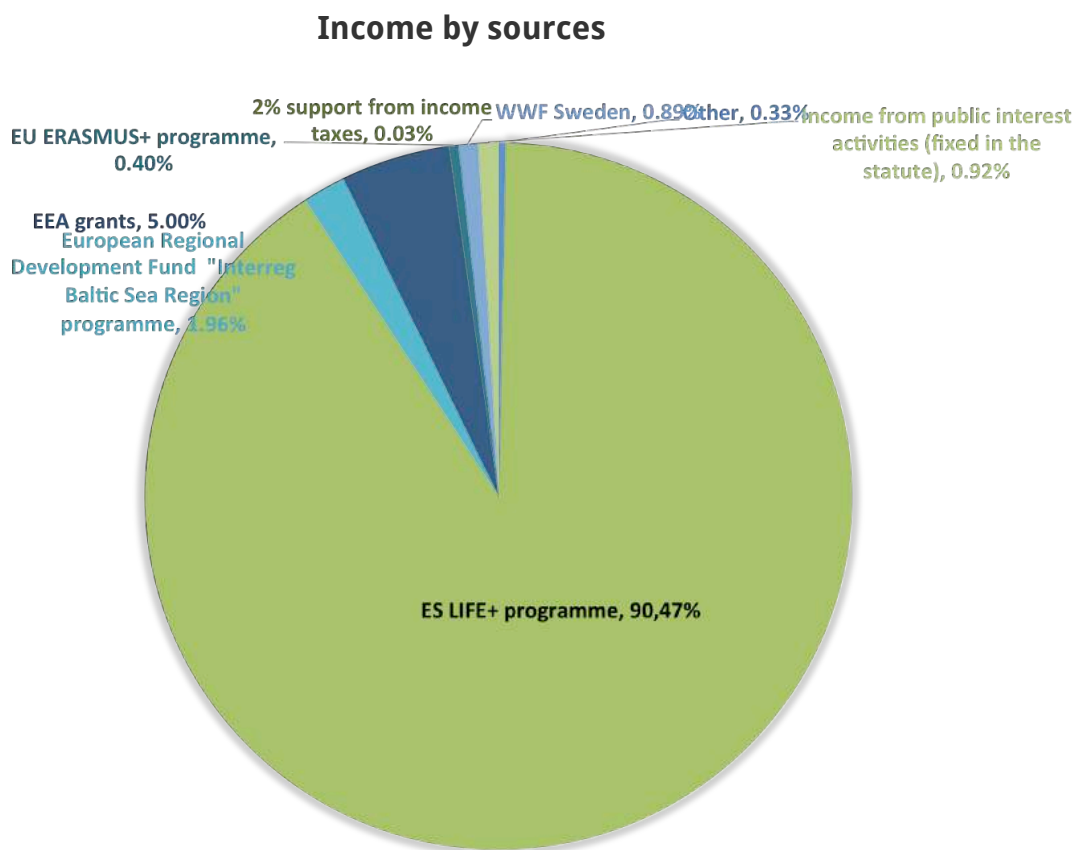
Duration	Common budget*	Financed by	Project name	Partners/ executors	Projects webpage
2017-2018	6 250 €	European Union European Regional Development Fund, Interreg Baltic Sea Region and project partners	Green Public Procurement of Pharmaceuticals of Interreg Baltic Sea Region (GrePPP)	Institute for Applied Ecology (Germany), Finnish Environment Institute and Baltic Environment Forum Lithuania.	https://bef.lt/index.php?id=153&L=0
2017-2018	10 701 €	European Union European Regional Development Fund, Interreg Baltic Sea Region and project partners	Development of Sustainable wetland management by Restoration and biomass utilisation of peatlands in the Neman river catchment to improve water quality of the Baltic Sea (DESIRE)	University of Greifswald, Polish Society for the Protection of Birds, Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania, Michael Succow foundation.	-
2017-	19 000 € (177 000 SEK)	WWF Sweden (Stiftelsen Varldsnaturfonden WWF)	Finding holistic solutions to the challenges of eutrophication through municipalities and private landowners (Baltic rePAIR)	Baltic environmental forum Lithuania, Sylven GmbH.	-

*** note that this column (total budget) contains the total budget of all the partners involved in the project**

Financial Report

Total income for 2017 year was 1 630 283 euro*. Part of this sum was related with Project expenses from 2016 and another part with Project expenses from 2017 and income from public interest activities.

***A remark.** According to the LR public organizations legislation, the activity report has to indicate the received income, and this amount does not match with the financial turnover in the balance sheet, because the turnover in the balance sheet is counted cumulatively.



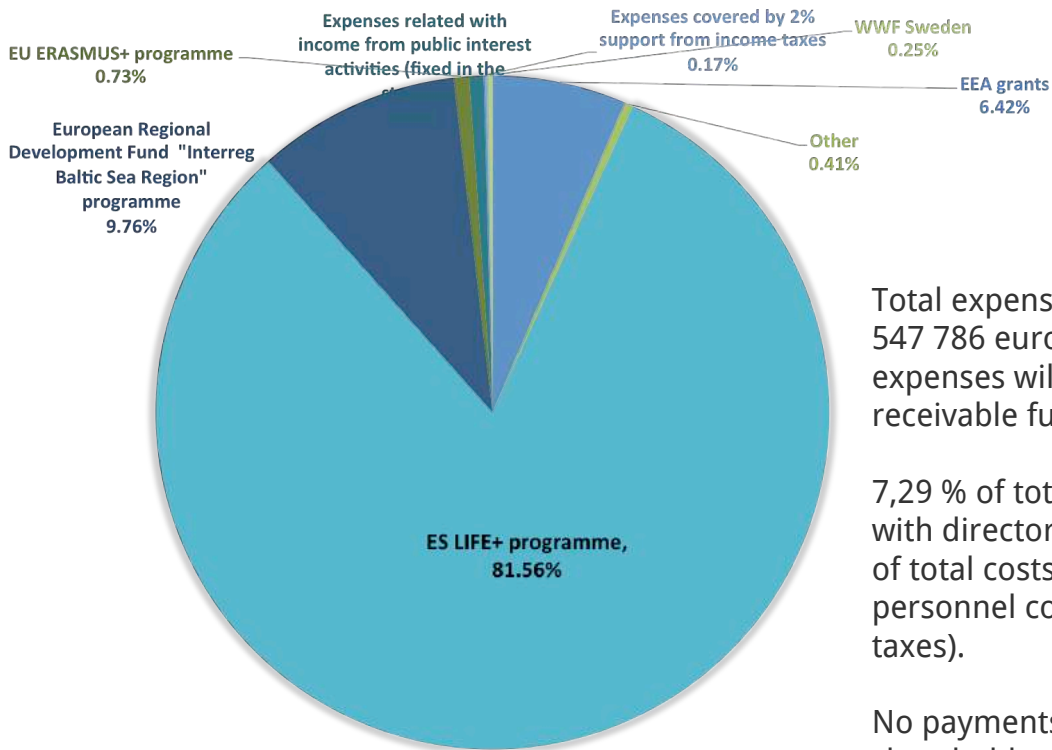
In diagram „Income by sources“ income from EU LIFE programme and EEA grants was calculated together with national co-funding sum, as Lithuania is committed to contribute to the implementation of projects funded by these programs. National co-funding income was 498 996 euro in 2017. It means 30,6 % from all income of the year.

Part of income from EU LIFE programme, EEA grants and WWF Sweden were distributed among Project partners, institutional part here was 58 %.

2% support from income taxes was 417 euro.

Thank you!

Expenses by sources



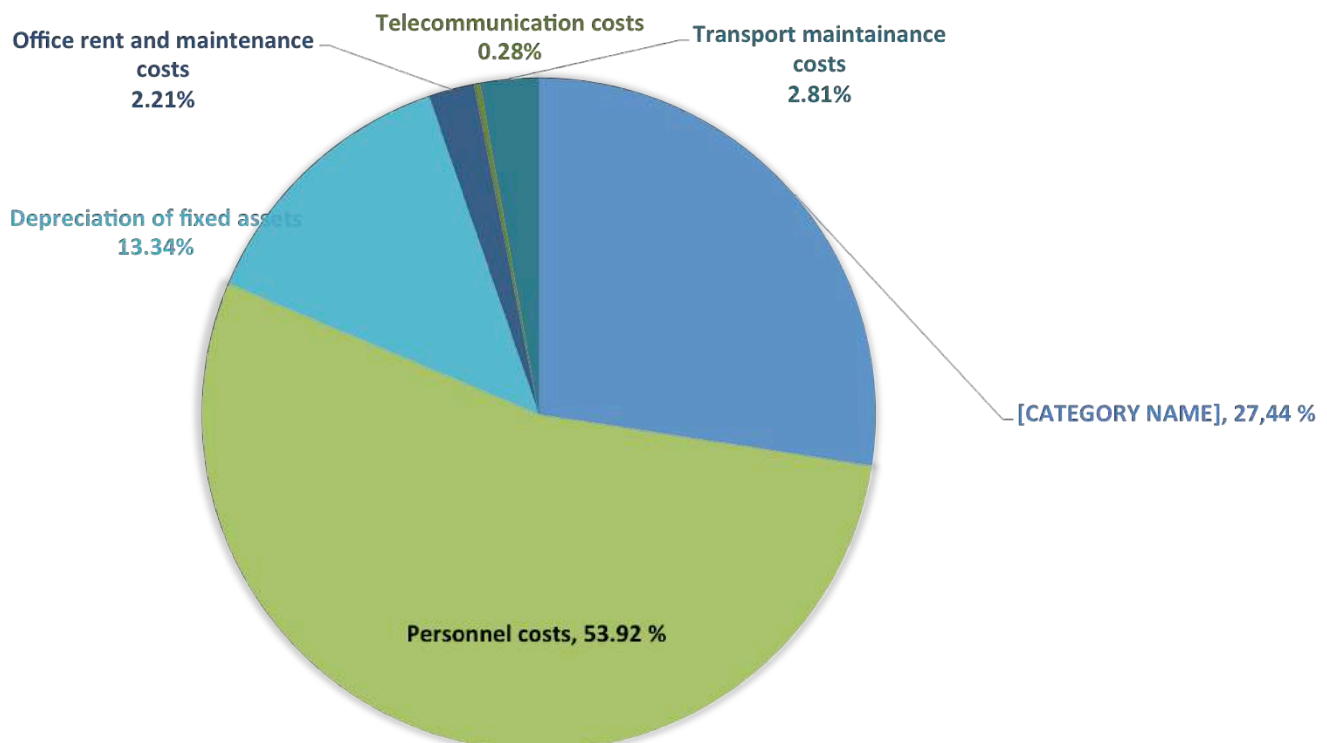
Total expenses for 2017 year was 547 786 euro. Part of these expenses will be funded from receivable funding income on 2018.

7,29 % of total costs were related with director salary and taxes. 54 % of total costs belong to annual personnel costs (with all related taxes).

No payments were made to shareholders on 2017.

Operational costs of the organization are directly related with projects administration and they are not separated.

Expenses by categories



Financial Report

Employees and shareholders

At the beginning of the year 15 employees worked in organization, 3 of them were part-time employees and 4 persons were on Maternity leave. At the end of the year 15 employees worked in organization, 5 of them were part-time employees and 5 persons were on Maternity leave.

In the beginning of 2017 shareholders structure has changed as one of the shareholders left the membership and transferred all his rights to existing one. The shareholders contribution is 1 539 euro (with the proportions 97%, 2% and 1 %). Because the organization is public (non-governmental) institution all of shareholders has one vote right (information about public organization shareholders can be found at the State Enterprise Centre of Registers).

Long-term asset

For long-term asset organization spent 168 900 euro in 2017 for the projects "Baltic pilot cases on reduction of emissions by substitution of hazardous chemicals and resource efficiency (LIFE FitForREACH)" and "Stepping stones towards ensuring long-term favorable conservation status of Aquatic warbler in Lithuania (LIFEMagniDucatusAcrola)" activities:

Asset	Financing program	Worth
Computers with supplements and projector	ES LIFE+ Programme	4.70%
High power mulcher for shredding of bushes, caterpillars attachment for wheel tractor, tracks for baler		61.75%
Farm (premises) for the pelleting facility		30.49%
Computer with supplements	Own funds	0.69%
Land for the pelleting facility premises		2.37%
Total		100.00%

Governmental Support and Taxes

In both the media, parliament, and other governmental institutions several of our EU projects are being discussed at the moment. It's important to note that all discussed projects are primarily (65-75%) financed by the EU LIFE programme directly, meaning the money does not go through the Lithuanian budget, and no one in Lithuania has any ability to decide where these funds go. With governmental financial support (25-35% of a project budget) Lithuania, like other EU countries, encourages environmental and conservation projects and supports projects that have won a Europe-wide competition.

EU LIFE projects – winners of a Europe-wide competition that are thoroughly supervised by representatives of the European Commission

We participate in a fair competition along with other project applicants from all over the EU in the LIFE programme call for proposals. The EU LIFE programme's independent experts decide on which projects will receive financial support based on the conservation practicality and solutions of the project, as well as their innovation.

We go forward with the projects only if we win these competitions. Governmental support (financing from the Ministry of the Environment) is given only when competitions are won.

The typical process of application preparation for the LIFE programme project:

1. The project concept is prepared, as well as the preliminary budget, and the initial request is presented to the Ministry of the Environment for financing (25-35% of the project budget) in case of winning the European competition.
2. The final project application with a detailed budget is prepared, financial support from the EU, Ministry of the Environment, and other sources are set. The application is presented to the European Commission for European projects proposals competition.

After winning the European competition, contracts are signed, advance payments are transferred, and the project actions begins.

During the projects implementation we are yearly visited by EU programme's supervising representatives, who decide if the project activities is going according to the plan, if there are any digressions from the planned actions, and if there is a risk for the project to not be completed. They also visit the project territories, prepare reports and inform the European Commission after their visits. The project's expenditures are audited by an independent auditor.

The final financing amounts and payments are confirmed only after successfully completing the project. If the project is not completed and does not show the indicated results, beneficiaries have to recover the financial support back to the EU and the Ministry of the Environment.

Governmental Support and Taxes

Financial support from the Ministry of the Environment goes back to the governmental budget in the form of taxes

Below is the data from 2012-2017 received general financing from the Ministry of the Environment for LIFE programme projects.

Year	General financing from the Ministry of the Environment for LIFE program project, EUR
2012	232,294
2013	224,302
2014	136,779
2015	92,827
2016	245,422
2017	410,430

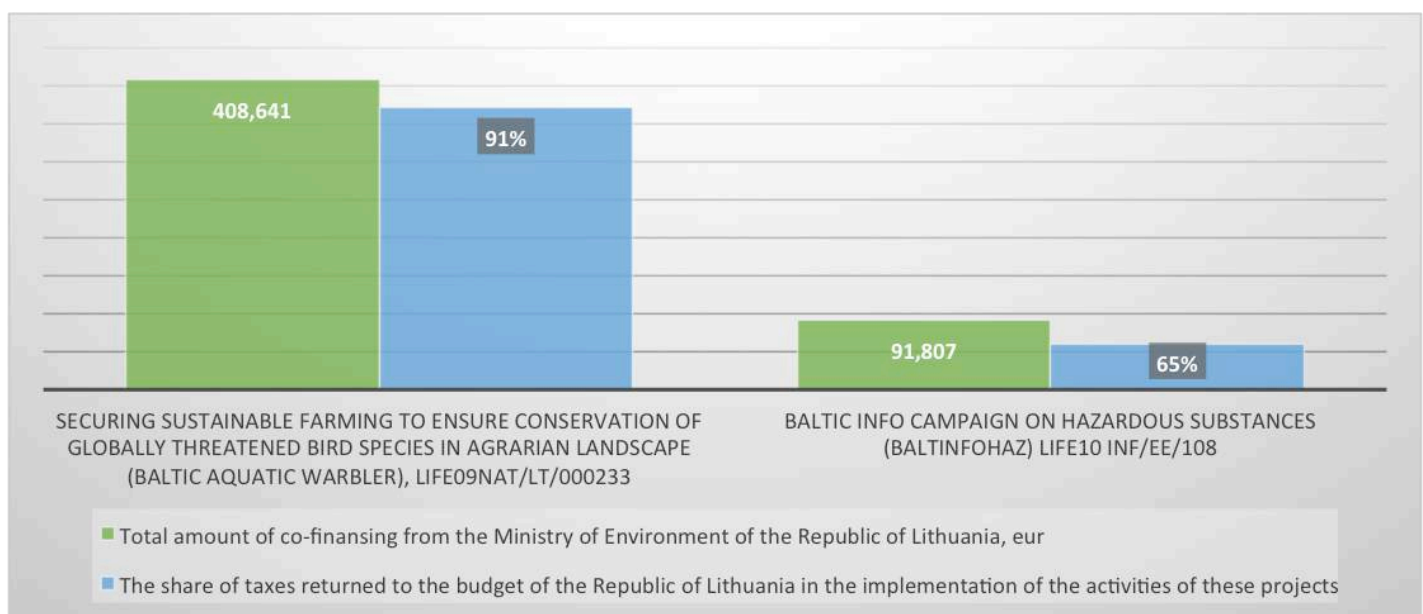
General financing support is given by the Ministry of the Environment according to the planned payment schedule. The first payments are larger and they are used for later years. In 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2017 we received project advance payments. At the end of 2017 we received the advance payment for the project "Stepping stones towards ensuring long-term favorable conservation status of Aquatic warbler in Lithuania (LIFEMagniDucatusAcrola)", which will be used in coming years. This project won the EU LIFE programme competition long before our colleague K. Navickas became the minister of the Ministry of the Environment (we sent the application to EU in October of 2015, received notification of winning in April of 2016, and K. Navickas became minister only in December of 2016). Clearly the general financing support from the Ministry of the Environment cannot be connected to K. Navickas and his responsibilities as a minister.

We are independent

Working with the projects, we not only create a workplace, buy services and resources from Lithuanian companies, but also pay taxes (social insurance, income taxes and VAT) **back to the governmental budget**. Taxes make up a significant amount of the financial support received from the Ministry of the Environment.

To illustrate this we present calculations with the figures showing two finished LIFE programme projects. Here we can see how much of the financing from the Ministry of the Environment were returned to governmental budget in the form of taxes.

It is important to mention that our organization is independent and not supported by any national or governmental institutions, we are an independent public organization, and we create our own project ideas and take full financial responsibility. Our work, procedures, and projects —that we have been doing since 2003 – are not influenced in any way by our colleague K. Navickas becoming minister at the Ministry of the Environment. Naturally, each year we gain more experience, and because of this we are able to take on larger and more expansive projects.



Raising - the young ng Lithuanian generation

We are proud to better our country's demographic situation!

In our small collective, made up of 15 employees, in 2017 we have:

3 colleagues on
paternity or
maternity leave

Congratulations
to the parents!

5 colleagues that
were on
maternity leave

3 children born
to colleagues!





Support - the Baltic Environmental Forum and our work

The Baltic Environmental Forum protects nature for people. Doing this together makes it somewhat easier.

Many of our initiatives, protecting nature and encouraging people's participation and experiences in nature, would not be possible without public support and donations. Help us maintain current ideas and create new ones.

Supporting our work you will be contributing to:

- Activities encouraging people to experience and get to know nature. Examples of this are festivals in nature like "Vidur girių", "Vidur vandenų", nature treasure hunt trails, etc.
- Conservation of the globally disappearing aquatic warbler.
- Informing the public about dangerous chemicals in products they use daily.

DONATE

You can also support a specific part of our work.

Our account number: LT98 7044 0600 0792 6435 (SEB bank)



Help us move
forward!



For Lithuanian citizens

Give 2% support



In 2017 from 2% support from income taxes we received 417 euros of support. We used these funds for our volunteer initiatives and for mowing the Dvarčionys grassland.

In 2018 this support will go towards festivals in nature, encouraging people to experience and get to know the natural world.

* * *

BEF team:



We work

to be
happy!



Moments from the team's everyday life



We enjoyed nature and our team's friendship during a mushroom picking trip in Musteika



Moments from the team's everyday life



**A new addition to the team:
lizard Ilčius**



**Barsa continues to create a
positive atmosphere in the
workplace**

We celebrated wetland day with group work in the Veisiejai Regional Park



During the lunch break we enjoyed Užupis' nature, fall's blessings, and celebrated colleagues's birthdays



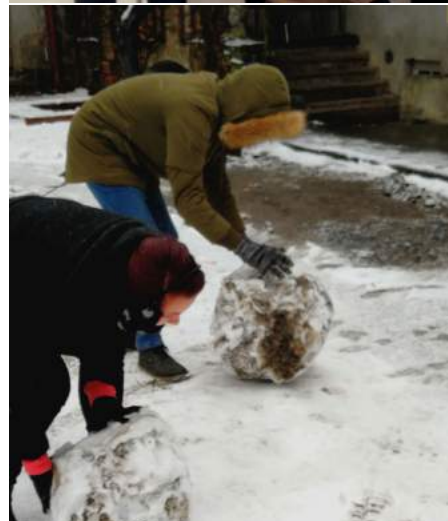
Moments from the team's everyday life



Organizing the office and decorating with Žymantas's wonderful pictures



Enjoyed winter and continued our tradition of donating blood



We celebrated Christmas by making pastries with cabbage and playing board games



Protecting nature together with people!



Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania, www.bef.lt, 2018

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www.bef.lt



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