



**BALTIC
ENVIRONMENTAL
FORUM LITHUANIA**

ACTIVITY REPORT 2020



PROTECTING NATURE TOGETHER WITH PEOPLE

WWW.BEF.LT

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PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED



Stepping stones towards ensuring long-term favorable conservation status of Aquatic warbler in Lithuania (LIFE MAGNI DUCATUS ACROLA)



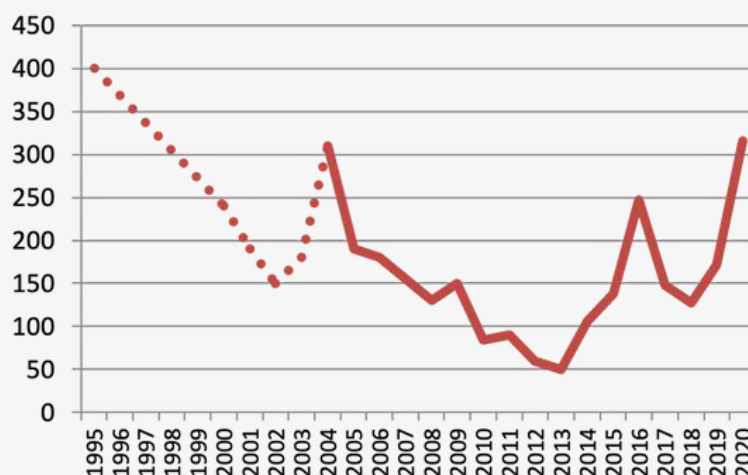
2016-2023
LITHUANIA AND
BELARUS
WWW.MELDINE.LT

This year Aquatic Warbler has been positively impacted in Lithuania. Especially the figure of individuals delighted us. In 2020, environmentalists recorded the most abundant population of this rare bird – 316 singing males. It is the largest registered number of birds since the systematic research of this species has started. In comparison to the previous year, the Aquatic Warbler population has grown almost 84%.



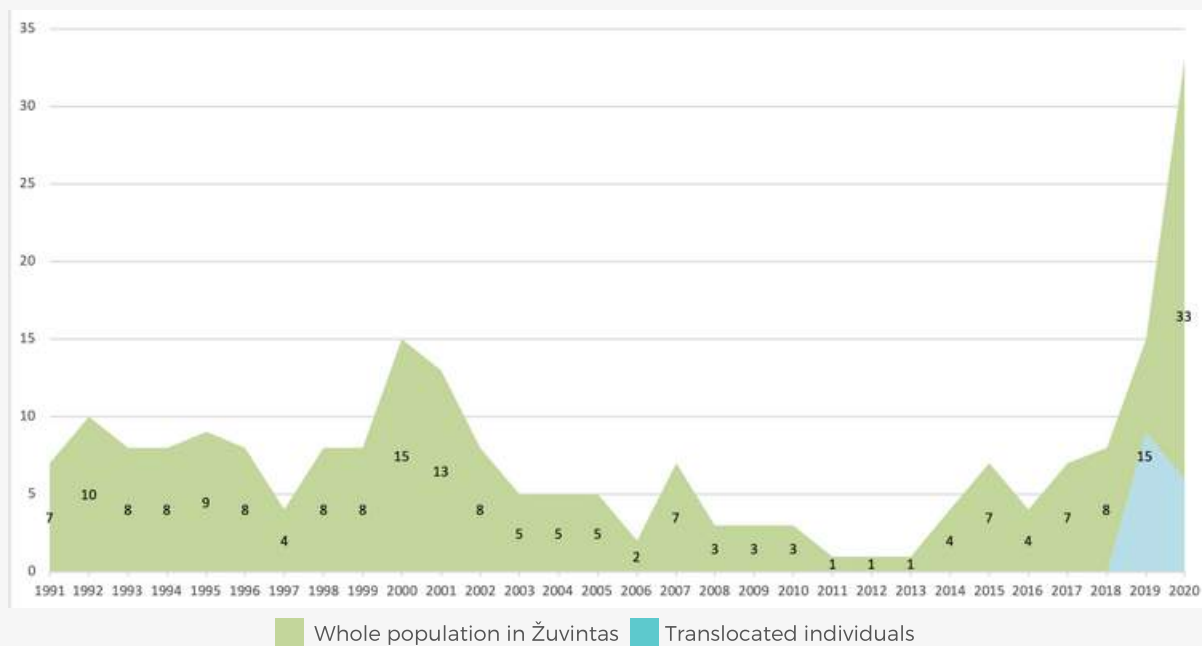
In this short video the outcome of the first translocation of Aquatic Warblers is reviewed.

It is exciting that the majority of birds (86%) chose territories which have been dedicated to agri-environmental measures – specifically the Aquatic Warbler measures “Management of specific grassland” and “Extensive management of wetlands”. In Alka polder, where most of the birds were found this year, almost all birds (99.3%) chose area under agri-environmental commitments. These results demonstrate that the collaboration of environmentalists and farmers to conserve this unique bird and its habitat is working. A huge thank you to the farmers.



In the Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve, recently there were 33 singing males found. It is historically the most abundant population of this vulnerable species in this protected site. A noticeable rise of individuals began after a successful Aquatic Warbler translocation (2018-2019) from Belarus to Lithuania. The success of the translocation also can be seen from the number of translocated birds which this year returned to Žuvintas – 7 birds (14%) which were transferred last year and 3 birds which were transferred in 2018. This means that the latter individuals have returned second year in a row. It is a significant achievement which will be followed by the colleagues from various countries.

Aquatic warbler population in Žuvintas



There is a great news as environmentalists discovered a new Aquatic Warbler habitat on the border of Lithuania and Belarus. There is hope that Aquatic Warbler will repopulate Aukštaitija.



However, the situation in other countries is double-edged. This the spring was exceptionally dry leading to uncontrollable fires in the Aquatic Warbler habitats. Fire destroyed approximately 6000 ha in Biebrza Marshes – the most important nesting site for Aquatic Warbler in Poland. In Belarus fires destroyed around 3000 ha area of the bird's habitat. Some of the damage was mitigated because of aid received from our project. Fires were prevented in the Zvanec marsh – a vital habitat of Aquatic Warbler – because environmentalists used the water regulation system, which was installed during the period of the project, to supply the needed water. In Ukraine, it is the extent of the damage is not known, however, ornithologists informed us that the harm is moderate.



Celebrated Children's Day by putting up Aquatic Warbler flags.



Became the first Lithuanian project to be the finalist in the international NATURA 2000 awards.



The results of a two-year long international scientific research project were described.

It is likely that some of the Aquatic Warbler transferred to Nemuno Delta after the fires in Žuvintas. This will be clarified in the further research when the population dynamics will be recorded over the next few years. If the hypothesis proves to be correct, this will give us hope that the birds, when searching for a suitable habitat, can disperse over long distances. However, this also means that scientists investigating Aquatic Warbler habitat connectivity should search in approximately few hundred kilometers radius. Once again this would prove the importance of conserving Aquatic Warbler nesting sites.

Furthermore, our project has been nominated for many awards. We are proud that the Aquatic Warbler conservation project was recognised as one of the best European nature conservation initiatives. The project became the first Lithuanian project to be the finalist in the international NATURA 2000 awards. The project was nominated in the category of benefit to the local community - social and economic well-being. Although shepherd project from Spain won the award, at the end of the day we are proud of the accomplishments we have made.

In the awards session another part of our project was noted - a game platform about nature gamtosreindzeris.lt . Young park ranger platform was a finalist in a digital solution competition „Naujas knygnešys 2020“ and won a special prize.

Additionally, the attention that our project received from European Commission through posts was exhilarating this year.

As always, we visited the farmers whose land is Aquatic Warbler nesting sites. We celebrated together Children's Day by putting up Aquatic Warbler flags.


The habitat restoration efforts continued in both Lithuania and Belarus. In Lithuania (in Kliošių landscape reserve (wilderness), in Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve, in the area around Apvardų lake) bushes and reeds were cut. In Šyšos polder water regulation gate was finished. In Belarus (in Servieč and Zvaniec marshes) the reeds were mowed (300ha and 500ha territories respectively) and the water level was reestablished. In Zvaniec marsh educational trail was established which contains many interactive elements. It is a pity that the pandemic forced us to postpone the opening of the educational trail. Meanwhile in Dokudovskoe marsh (73 ha territory) we have tried out a novelty - sowing sedges in the exploited mire. We will continue this work next year.

In 2020 the results of a two-year long international scientific research project were described. We found out that the Lithuanian Aquatic Warblers hibernate further than previously thought. In Senegal they take a break but then move further into Africa and reach Mali. These tiny, less than a spoon of sugar weighing birds fly 7000-8000km and in spring get back the same distance to their homeland.



In 2020 we also took a step further in the development of the biomass recycling establishment in Dreverna. Finally, we managed to perfect the production process so that we get the highest quality pellets. We supply pellets to a regular customer in Scandinavia. We have sent trial packages to other European countries as well as sold some in Lithuania. The biomass as every year was acquired from farmers who protect Aquatic Warblers in their fields.

WE MADE A PUBLICATION ON LISTENING TO THE AQUATIC WARBLER. SO WE INVITE YOU TO COME TO NEMUNAS DELTA AND ENJOY THE WONDERFUL SONG OF THE AQUATIC WARBLER WHEN YOU HAVE SOME FREE TIME.



Aplankyk paukščių rojų Nemuno deltą ir jo garsenybę – mėldinę nendrinukę

Gamtos oazė, kur gyvenimo ritmą diktuoja vanduo, toli nuo masinių turizmo taikų, kupina paukščių klagesio, gyvybės alsuojančių šlapynių, tilių tiliukų, rėkomos žuvies kvapo, žmonių Lietuvosnių tradicijų. Tokia ji – neatstatoji Nemuno delta. Kviečiame ją aplankyti ir susipažinti su krašto garsenybe – retu paukščiu, kuriuo pasigirti gali tik 4 pasaulio valstybės – mėldinė nendrinukė.

Vakarinė palintis su mėldine nendrinuke


Mėldinė nendrinukė yra labai romantiškas paukštis. Geriausia jį klausyti saulei leidžiantis. Tada kiti paukščiai nutyla, o mėldinių nendrinukių patinėliai užsilpę ant aukštesnio stiebo garsiai plešia savo trešę. Nors retasis giesmininkas pakankamai drąsus, neriekėtų pamiršti, jog tai – globuliai saugama rūšis, todėl jos klausyti ar jį stebėti reikėtų jos netrikdant – nuo teritorijose esančių ketulių, nebrendant gilyn į pievą.

Romantiškam vakarui nepamirškite:

- Apsiuogos nuo vabzdžių. Jei aplink save pamatysite turtą įvairiausių vabzdžių, pasidžiaukite – teritorijoje apstu maisto mėldinėms nendrinukėms ir kitiems paukščiams.
- Patogios avalynės arba turstinės kėdės ir pledo. Jei ketinate tiesiog mėgautis ramybe, avalyne galite nesėdinti – patogiai įsikurkite ir gerkite į save pamario garsumą, kvapus ir vaizdus. Jei ketinate pasivaikščioti – pasirūpinkite patogią avalynę, nes asfaltuotų kelialyčių čia mažai.
- Termoso su mėgstamu gėrimu, užkandžių. Potyri visada sustiprins laimingas skrandis.



Medžiaga parengta įgyvendinant projektą „Mėldinė nendrinukė: traukiant kurtinį šoninių tilių formavimas skaitant užrašytą lietuvių žmonių“ (LIFE MAGNUS/2019/00004_01) finansuojamą Europos Sąjungos LIFE programoje, Lietuvos Respublikos Aplinkos ministro ir projekto partnerių: Švedijos: www.meldina.lt



NATURALIT - Optimizing the management of Natura2000 network in Lithuania (LIFE IP PAF-NATURALIT)



2018-2027 LITHUANIA
WWW.NATURALIT.LT

The first result-oriented agri-environmental measure

In 2020 we introduced the first innovative result-oriented agri-environmental measure to preserve abundant flowering natural grasslands. Twenty-seven farmers will be the first to test this new measure, based on the best European agri-environmental practice, on almost three hundred hectares under their management.

The uniqueness of this measure is that farmers will not be encouraged to comply with established requirements (for example, mowing after 15 July) and for the results achieved, i.e. improved natural condition. The selected farmers will receive a list of indicative species against which they will assess how the natural diversity of their meadows is changing. The assessment will also be carried out by botanists. If successful, this measure will be continued in the future and will be available to a wider range of farmers.

Festivals in nature

It's a pity, but in 2020 due to COVID-19, three of our festivals in nature - "Vidur girių", "Vidur ežerų" and "Miško burtai" - did not take place. We hope to meet again in nature next year. We hope to meet again in nature next year.



Livestock in protected areas

The NATURALIT project worked intensively with both local farmers and landowners with management measures to encourage livestock farming in protected areas to maintain valuable open habitats. At the beginning of the year, an entrepreneurship and marketing seminar was organized for farmers in Aukštaitija and Dzūkija National Parks.

On June 2, the tradition of cow riding was revived in Aukštaitija - ten Angus cattle were transported to the Pabiržė peninsula by a specially made raft, where they spent the whole summer grazing and thus helping to restore valuable habitats and meadows of EC importance. Also in other project territories, Ginučiai oak grove and Grūda river valley, there was active communication with the owners of the plots in order to buy out part of them or sign cooperation agreements on nature management works.



Protected areas product label

Choose products and services from protected areas!

To help small local businesses in protected areas, we have further developed the Protected Areas product label, promoted it, and worked with manufacturers and service providers of products bearing this label. 2020 together with the State Service for Protected Areas, we have developed a simplified procedure for awarding the label. We believe this will reduce bureaucracy and increase the willingness of locals to certify their products for the Protected Areas product label.

2020 we organized two seminars for small entrepreneurs with the Protected Areas product label. In both seminars, we deepened our knowledge in the field of marketing, but we also discussed the subtleties of environmentally friendly business, looked for partnership opportunities, and shared good practices while we still had the opportunity - we visited each other. We have also produced souvenirs for the label holders, which will help them to promote their products and the brand itself - aprons, flags and certificates.

2020 we worked even harder to publicize this brand. Finally, we completed the collection and compiled information on all 177 certified brand suppliers on the gamtoje.org website. We invite you to choose unique products! Publishing on this site will be of great benefit to those suppliers who have not been detected in the online space at all so far. Also, with the help of volunteer Goda, we have completed the preparation of a publication-catalog, which also includes all brand holders and their products and services. Now finding everything in one place will be extremely easy. This year we also organized two thematic publicity campaigns - at Late and Christmas. It is gratifying that they have received a lot of media and public attention. This year, we also created as many as three video reports with detailed articles on three exceptional stories from different protected areas.



Savo krašto pašaukti etnografinę sodybą įkūrė gudiškoje Dzūkijoje – Dieveniškėse

03/11/2020 | Rita G. | Istorijos



Žvelgiant į Lietuvos žemėlapij ne vienam akis užkliūva už unikalią kilpos – žemės lopinėlio, tarsi dirbtinai atrežto nuo Baltarusijos ir priskirto Lietuvai. Tai – Dieveniškės ... [read more](#)

Saugomoje teritorijoje verslą pradėję vilniečiai: pabuvus čia norisi eiliuoti

09/09/2020 | Rita G. | Istorijos



Buvusių vilniečių Mindaugo ir Vitos Balčiūnų šeima jau ketvirtus metus gyvena greta Anykščių regioninio parko esančiame Padvarninkų kaime. Verslą ir vadybą studijavęs, daugiau nei 20 ... [read more](#)

Ūkis Žemaitijoje: seserų ir kaimynų bendrystėje gimstantys ekologiški produktai ir paslaugos

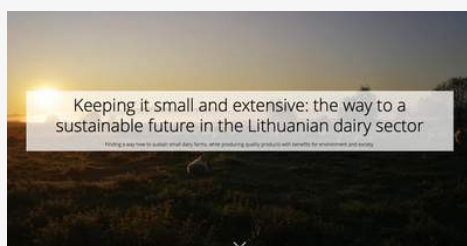
05/08/2020 | Rita G. | Istorijos



Žemaitijos nacionaliniame parke, Visvainių kaime, kiek atokiau nuo poilsiautojų itin mėgiamo Platelių ežero, yra įsikūręs nedidelis šeimos verslas – ekologinis – biodinaminis ūkis „Miško sodai“. ... [read more](#)

UNISECO - Understanding and improving the sustainability of agro-ecological farming systems in the EU

2018-2021 LITHUANIA
AND 16 PARTNER
COUNTRIES
WWW.UNISECO-PROJECT.EU



Project results



Social media and project newsletters

It is an international research project of the HORIZON 2020 research program, implemented together with partners from 16 European countries. The main objective of this project is to strengthen the sustainability of farming in the European Union, based on agro-ecological farming strategies. In Lithuania, we pursue this goal by researching how to maintain extensive grazing practices for dairy and cheese farms, but to remain competitive in the market without intensifying farming practices.

This year, in order to achieve this goal, we participated in the event "City without pesticides" organized at the Academy of Agriculture of Vytautas Magnus University. At the event, we discussed agroecology and civic initiatives.

Also, in collaboration with the project advisory group and other stakeholders, we continued our analysis of the research problem and discussed an agroecological strategy that would encourage farms to adopt agroecological practices. During the meetings, we also discussed the current political and market measures and their effectiveness in promoting the development of agroecology. Based on these discussions, we also proposed a number of innovative measures and, with the involvement of stakeholders, assessed and discussed which measures would most effectively encourage farms to adopt agro-ecological practices, reduce their negative impact on the environment and create public goods.

WATERDRIVE - Water driven rural development in the Baltic sea region

2019-2024 LITHUANIA
AND 19 PARTNER
COUN
WWW.WATER-DRIVE.EU



Project newsletters

WATERDRIVE is a project of the international INTERREG Baltic Sea Program, which is implemented by the Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania together with 19 partners from 9 countries of the Baltic Sea Region.

The main goal of the project is to improve water management practices in the Baltic Sea Region by promoting cooperation between local authorities, rural communities and other stakeholders. The aim is to reduce the amount of nutrients that enter water bodies, in particular from economic activities, which lead to eutrophication, water body quality and aquatic ecosystems. In Lithuania, the Baltic Environmental Forum seeks to promote intersectoral cooperation in reducing pollution in the territory of the Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve and its surroundings.

Meetings and consultations with various stakeholders and experts continued with the Dovine Basin municipalities, representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment. A meeting was also held with farmers farming in the Dovinė River Basin. During the meeting, we discussed water pollution from agriculture and agri-environmental measures that help farmers reduce their impact on water bodies.

Throughout the year, we performed water quality measurements in the Dovinė basin, actively sought ways to reduce water pollution, improve water management and ensure the protection of the Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve.

GRAZELIFE - Ecosystem services, biodiversity and landscape improvement with livestock



2019-2021
LITHUANIA AND 5
PARTNER
COUNTRIES
WWW.GRAZELIFE.COM

GRAZELIFE is a LIFE preparatory project in whose main objective is to improve the grazing conditions of domestic, wild and semi-wild animals in order to reduce fire risks, maintain ecosystem health, improve adaptation to climate change, improve the state of ecosystem services and biodiversity, and reduce conflicts between people and wildlife.

This year we continued to interact with intensively and extensively grazing and haying farmers and gathering information about the areas they manage on different soil types. It was also important and interesting to hear the experience of farmers related to grazing and mowing. We also spoke to experts in various fields about the impact of different grassland management methods on biodiversity and the effectiveness of the measures of the Rural Development Program.

We analyzed the vegetation structure using satellite images. Later, we visited meadows grazed by farmers and collected data on vegetation diversity.



LIFE Fit for REACH – Baltic pilot cases on reduction of emissions by substitution of hazardous chemicals and resource efficiency



2015-2020
LITHUANIA, LATVIA,
ESTONIA
WWW.FITREACH.EU/

In 2020, the project LIFE Fit for REACH, which was jointly funded by LIFE programme, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian governments as well as 15 partners of the project, ended. Replacement and reduction in use of many hazardous chemical substances were successful. Our project built a foundation for enterprises in the Baltic Region to independently replace hazardous chemicals with the help of the material organized during the project. During the period of this thorough and extensive project we made many useful reports, publications, and other material. All this information can be found on the project website.

Support of the enterprises

Since the start of the project there were six participants, who covered various industries, from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Almost all of them are leaders in their industries. Enterprises joined the project with ambitious intentions to reduce the use and emissions of toxic chemicals. As production processes and used material greatly differ, each enterprise with the help of project specialists independently searched for solutions. The search for alternative materials took place up until the end of the project. This was this case because the best-fitting alternative material had to be found, then tested and finally implemented into the production process.



Here you can find a thorough project Layman's report

More than 80 Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian enterprises were consulted by our specialists about the management of chemicals. The enterprises also received advice on the risk management of chemicals, such as, when developing or enhancing chemical substances inventory, quality of safety data sheets, etc. The acquired knowledge and the developed tools during the project will allow enterprises to not only more effectively buy, manage and utilize dangerous chemicals, but also will ensure a safer environment for the workers. Additionally, some enterprises managed to get funding for the reduction, replacement, or removal of the hazardous chemical substances. As we are seeking to raise awareness among companies about green procurement, eco-labels, environmental statements and their proper use, these topics were included in the meetings with the enterprises and the agenda of management of chemicals seminars.

Collaboration and sharing the experience

Collaboration with different groups of key stakeholders was a vital part of the project. This is evident not only from the team of the project, which was made up of NGO, enterprises, governmental institutions, universities, scientific research organizations, but also from the involvement of various stakeholders during the discussions. During round table meetings and international events our experts discussed the encountered issues and results with an audience of almost 400 people who work in business, governmental institutions, NGO, national and international organizations.

Close collaboration with enterprises which use chemicals gave us important insights. The conclusions we made were presented to national policymakers and we hope it will facilitate the implementation of future legislations. Twelve national and two international events were dedicated to collaboration with policymakers and competent authorities, which work with various aspects of REACH implementation.

After a five-year long project experts have formulated detailed recommendations for compliance with current legislative law as well as the risk management of chemicals and improvement of competencies. These recommendations can be found on our website.

The project team organized seminars and trainings for more than 3000 business representatives promoting changes and better risk management of chemicals. Some of the successful cases were published to inspire other enterprises. Some of the trainings were made together with business associations to reach wider audience.

To share the enterprise experience of implementing the chemicals replacement, a few examples will be thoroughly described and published in an international the substitution support portal Subsportplus, which is accessible in the whole Europe. This way, our work is put to good use as our goal is to help as many as possible companies to replace hazardous chemicals with safer alternatives and to work more responsibly and sustainably.

**DURING THE PROJECT
THERE WERE MANY
PUBLICATIONS
(WWW.FITREACH.EU). ONE
OF THEM WAS A PLAYFUL
COMIC BOOK “MANAGEMENT
OF DANGEROUS CHEMICALS
- NO BIG DEAL”**



NonHazCity 2 – Capitalizing key elements of NonHazCity: empowering private and professional users for better risk management and use reduction of chemical products in their cities



**2019-2021 LITHUANIA
AND PARTNER
COUNTRIES**
WWW.NONHAZCITY.EU

The purpose of the project was to share the acquired knowledge as well as to involve various Lithuanian municipalities. This year an online training platform is being developed for the specialists from municipalities and other procurement-performing organizations to acquire skills on responsible management of chemicals and performing green procurement.

Information material

“NonHazCity2” continues to raise awareness in society. Articles are constantly posted on the website www.pagalvok.lt. In 2020, website was renewed and became even more accessible to the readers. The information is actively shared on the Facebook page “Pagalvok kai perki” (en. “Think when buying”). During the year we also created a new detailed publication on plastics and their harm. Additionally, we commenced writing a household guide, which is planned to be published next year. It aids to identify and refrain from household chemicals.

Second place in a contest

This year the project has received international interest. The project was nominated in The Interreg 30 years Project Slam. The project “NonHazCity” became a finalist and won a second place.



Here you can find the detailed publication about plastics

SUSTAGR - Sustainable, healthy agriculture



2019-2020 LITHUANIA AND PARTNER COUNTRIES

Farming products are inseparable from each country. Pesticides used in economic activities for many years are of great concern in all European countries, including Lithuania. A photography exhibition "City without pesticides" was presented at Vytautas Magnus University Academy of Agriculture. This is a visual story about the world's first city to completely abandon pesticides, which is expected to become an example for Lithuania as well.

The exhibition was presented as part of the SustAgr project, which aims to initiate closer co-operation between Baltic and Nordic NGOs, strengthening the voice of NGOs and emphasizing sustainable farming and a responsible approach to pesticide use to protect human health and the environment. The demonstration of the exhibition was supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia.

During the implementation of the project, workshops were also organized to share views and the situation of pesticide use in the cooperating countries. Information has also been prepared for farmers and other stakeholders on their right and obligation to protect the environment and human health.

LIFE ASKREACH - Enabling REACH consumer information rights on chemicals in articles by IT-tools

**2017-2022 LITHUANIA
AND PARTNER
COUNTRIES**
WWW.ASKREACH.EU



A special scanning application, Scan4Chem, has been launched in fourteen EU countries and LIFE project partners. Which helps to find out if there are substances of very high concern in the products. This app has been translated into Lithuanian and is also being tested in Lithuania. A database is currently being compiled and completed. Consumers can also make a significant contribution to the success of the gadget by simply scanning product barcodes and sending inquiries to sellers and manufacturers of goods.

The app in Lithuanian is available to all users of the App Store and Google Play. All you have to do is download the Scan4Chem app and scan, scan, scan. They will be required by EU law (Article 33 st of the REACH Regulation) to answer you if it contains dangerous substances.

With the help of both consumers and businesses, the app's database is expected to capture most of the market and become a great sustainable consumption tool that will encourage businesses to review their product range and find out with suppliers whether products contain very high concern substances. Next year, more intensive work with companies will start - they will be invited to join this initiative and actively participate in the creation of the data file.

Understand, measure and reduce CO2 footprint in Belarus

**2020-2021 LITHUANIA
AND BELARUS**



The project is implemented by the Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania and the Belarusian organization Ecoproject Partnership. The project aims to increase the knowledge of Belarusian youth about the environment, especially in relation to climate change, as the country still lacks environmentally-oriented people and environmental initiatives. 3 remote seminars for the public and young people on the implementation of sustainable development goals and climate change were organized. Participants were introduced to the possibilities of mitigating climate change, learning to measure their impact and sharing ideas on how to reduce their impact on the environment.

The Baltic Environmental Forum not only held theoretical seminars and discussions for the project participants, but also told about their experience in reducing the ecological footprint of the office, organized a virtual tour of the environmentally friendly renovated office.

ALL PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN 2020

Only one new project was implemented in 2020. It is listed in the table. You can see the table of other implemented projects in the [Activity report 2019](#)

** this column shows the total budget of all partners involved in the project.*

Duration	Total budget*	Financed by	Project name	Partners/ executors	Project 's website
2020-2021	56 789 EUR	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion programme	Understand, measure and reduce CO2 footprint in Belarus	Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania (LT) and „Ecoproject“ Partnership (BY)	

SERVICES



Services for the society, business, and governmental institutions



Green procurement. Recently green procurement seminar cycle for national and municipal institutions was finished. The trainings aroused a lot of interest. Also, we actively participated in the formation of green procurement policies.

International consultations. We continued to consult Albanian institutions and organizations about the conservation sector adaptation to EU's environment policy.

Advice seminars. Various advice seminars have been carried out. For example, informing Autogamintojų ir importuotojų asociacija members about the management of chemicals, workers of Orkla Care, Telia Global Service Lithuania, and some other companies about sustainability, etc. Additionally, discussion with the scientific community and NGO representatives about the pollution in Baltic Sea was organized.

Familiarization with bats. Together with Pavilnių and Verkių regional park authorities we organized an event, which is called the Night of Bats, in Vilnius last summer. This time we talked and searched for bats in Verkių regional park and its surrounding areas, however, bat-preferred habitats also are found away from the city areas. If you want to find out more about bats, we would be happy to organize such an event again.

Preparation of National Framework of Progress (NFP). We actively participated in the preparation of 2021-2030 NFP. Together with Environment Coalition we made comments, suggestions, participated in deliberations, analyzed the consistency of NFP with the documents of European Green Deal and Lithuanian plan DNA of Future Economy. Most of the comments about the NFP were taken into account.

Mentorship. Our representative Audronė Alijošiutė-Paulauskienė was part of the jury in ClimateLaunchpad Lithuania so she helped to select the most sustainable, climate-friendly business ideas.

New partnerships. Together with the Armenian NGO Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Development of Communities a project was started to bring attention to topics such as environmental democracy, raising environmental awareness.

OTHER INITIATIVES



PUNIA HEATH MOVEMENT



WWW.PUNIOSSILAS.LT

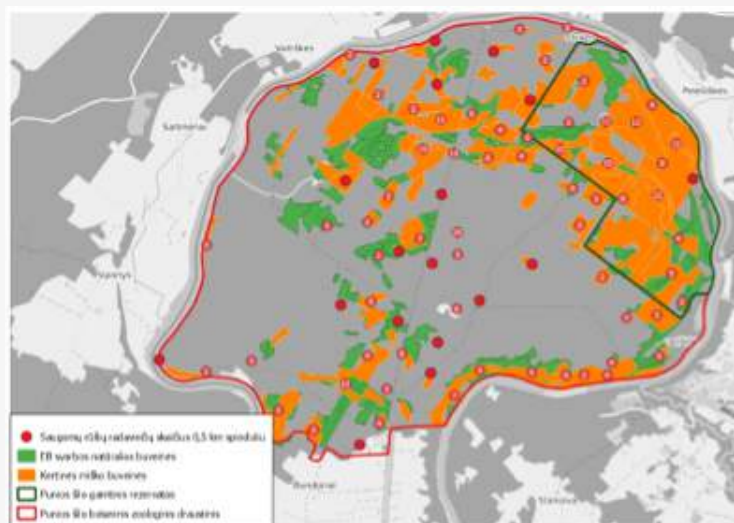
Together with the theater director Gintaras Varnas and many members of the public and naturalists since 2019 we started defending the Punia heath and continued our work in 2020.

Why was this necessary?

Because only the nature reserve can save the Punia heath but its development has been suspended.

Currently, only a small part of the Punia heath Reserve (456.94 ha) has the status of a reserve. The other part (2249.39 ha) is a botanical-zoological reserve. Unfortunately, the status of the reserve is not sufficient for the protection of the old forest, as it allows various types of felling, which impoverishes the forest, disturbs its ecological balance, and prevents the spread or recovery of ancient forest species.

The reserve also allows and conducts intensive hunting, which disturbs the natural ecological balance of species and natural processes. The existing reserve occupies a small area and is too small to maintain a full-fledged old forest. The status of the reserve would also ensure the long-term protection of this forest massif, as the status cannot be changed so easily by the new minister.



Realizing the importance of the Punia heath and seeing the decline of natural values, in November 2017, the State Service for Protected Areas started the process of developing the Punia heath Reserve. A company was hired to prepare a planning document, and consultation with the public was done.

On July 12 in 2019, the same day that the newly elected President Gitanas Nausėda took the oath of the country, Minister of the Environment K. Mažeika instructed the State Service for Protected Areas to suspend the development process of the Punia heath Reserve, which had started almost two years ago. We were outraged by such an unfounded, unmotivated order from the Minister, which poses a threat to the most valuable Lithuanian old forest, and we took active steps to stop it.

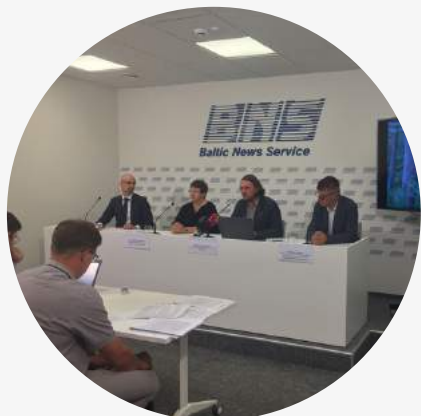
What did we do?

We mobilized a society that cares about the preservation of Lithuanian forests:

- We prepared an open letter to the President, signed by the 100 most famous representatives of culture and art, public figures, and informed them about the process.
- We prepared an open letter signed by the most famous Lithuanian scientists and naturalists, and informed them about the process.
- We have prepared an open letter asking us to stop the felling, which anyone could sign.
- We attracted the support of two former Presidents - Valdas Adamkus and Vytautas Landsbergis.
- We organized public events - debates, excursions, speeches.
- We have ensured continued media attention by issuing press releases to the media (20), organizing a press conference, drafting articles (3), and communicating regularly on social media.
- We have announced a fundraising campaign to cover court costs.
- We have created various videos about the Punia heath, an ongoing process.
- We read reports in the Presidency, the Parliament and kept politicians informed about the problem.
- We organized joint protests with other forest movements, preparing for a massive protest "March for Nature", which did not take place due to COVID-19.

We have taken legal measures:

- We initiated a petition signed by almost 15,000 people. We handed it over to the Committee on Petitions.
- We have prepared a number of letters to various institutions, both about the suspension of the development of the reserve and about the felling, as well as about the loss of European habitats in Punia.
- In order to protect the public interest, we went to court and participated in two hearings.



WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL THAT WE HAVE A LARGE PUBLIC SUPPORT - BOTH MORAL AND FINANCIAL. WE COLLECTED EUR 7068 THROUGHOUT THE FUNDING CAMPAIGN. THIS IS A LARGER AMOUNT THAN WE NEEDED. THE BALANCE WILL BE STORED IN THE RESERVE UNTIL THE RESERVE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IS COMPLETELY COMPLETED.

If at the end of 2019 the fate of the Punia heath was unclear, then a year later the situation gradually became clearer. Our greatest achievement in 2020 was the mobilization of huge public support and the winning of a lawsuit. It is to be welcomed that the court acknowledged that the suspension of the reserve development process was unjustified and illegal. No one appealed against this decision and it took effect in early April.

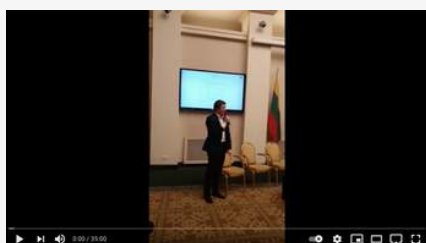
The focus on the Punia heath has also yielded political results. Even several political parties have included the development of the Punia heath Reserve or the protection of forests in their electoral program. The delay in the development of the reserve was expressed by President G. Nausėda, the newly elected Government and the new Minister of Environment S. Gentvilas. The latter politician named the development of the reserve as one of his first works and renewed this development process.

It is great that the public will be able to visit the large area of the Punia heath, but the question arises as to how the flow of visitors will be managed so that the animals are not disturbed during the most sensitive periods. Hatching and raising birds or animals dancing at weddings can be devastating to human activity.

Thus, we will continue to closely monitor the process of establishing the reserve and will make every effort to preserve the most valuable Lithuanian ancient forest for future generations. Keep us up. It is only through this support that we have already taken a big step forward.

It is also to be welcomed that the history of the Punia heath has become widely known to the public and has contributed to the active debate on forest management, policy and the future of forests. We are also actively involved in this debate, we are involved in drafting a national agreement on forests.

Žymantas Morkvėnas speeches about Punia moments:



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

In 2020, we were quite active in implementing other advocacy initiatives.

We submitted our comments to the Ministry of Environment on the amendment of the Hunting Rules

We disagreed with:

- use of hunting spotlights;
- lure using up to 100 kg of bait;
- regulation of fish birds (hunting);
- hunting invasive animals in the dark with dogs;
- extension of the badger hunting season;
- badger hunting with dogs during their hibernation period;
- extension of the term for beaver hunting;
- hunting of some ducks and geese;
- attracting animals near protected areas, forests.

Result: Some of the proposals were rejected.

We started defending the nature of the Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve

Together with other organizations, we have spoken out in official letters and public communication against the new regulations of the Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve approved by the Government, which legalize the irresponsible and scientifically not based use of natural resources in the oldest protected area of the country. These regulations confirmed the privilege of under-controlled fishing and berrying for an unprecedented number of almost a thousand people.

The result: the newly elected government changed these regulations.

We did not support the increase in the wolf hunting quota

We have advocated a fundamental overhaul of the regulation of the wolf population through a broader ecosystem approach. Its benefits to the ecosystem are likely to far outweigh the compensation paid to farmers. We have proposed resolving the conflict between farmers and wolves by: a) fair compensation for damage, b) eliminating only those individuals who cause damage on a permanent basis and entrusting that work to professionals and not to the hunting community as a whole, c) promoting preventive measures (eg non-compensation). , if the farmer has not taken any precautionary measures).

Result: An increased quota was maintained.

We appealed to the Ministry of the Environment and AB Orlen Lietuva regarding the unpreparedness to solve the problem of the oil spill and its impact on nature

At the Būtingė terminal owned by Orlen Lietuva, after the spill of the oil product from the loading buoy, we contacted the politicians and the company itself. This is not the first disaster in Būtingė and, especially, in the Baltic Sea. It is gratifying that in this particular case the spill was not large, the coastal zone and the oil terminal were constantly monitored to ensure the protection of maritime traffic and the environment. According to AB Orlen Lietuva, the situation was completely under control. In writing, we called on the company and politicians to better prepare for similar potential disasters in the future, to provide compensatory measures, and so on.

The result: a dialogue was initiated between the Ministry, environmentalists and Orlen Lietuva, and a promise was received to review the procedure for liquidating such disasters.



Artificial island for terns



Together with Colgate we organized a campaign which resulted in an artificial island for common terns in Trakai district, Totoriškių lake. Currently, terns are struggling to find suitable habitats to hatch, therefore, a decline in their population can be observed. We hope that this island will become a new home for these rare birds.

Common terns brood in islands which form in lakes or rivers, however, there is shortage of these islands as naturally they overgrow with shrubs. Additionally, in this habitat there is a great risk of nests being flooded due to water dynamics. One of the measures to create new habitat for the birds is to build these artificial islands. It is being used more and more in various countries. Another factor that causes disruption to the brooding terns is irresponsible human behavior. When socializing near rivers people scare the birds away leaving the nests unprotected from the predators. That is why to make terns feel safe the artificial island in Trakai was set up away from shore.

Even though the islands for terns are being introduced by environmentalists in Lithuania and foreign countries, the process of introduction is subtle and needs to be researched more. Lithuanian ornithologist society and other organizations are trying out many island introduction technologies, for instance, make metal or wooden structure, search for measures to protect the youngsters, test different locations. In some cases terns settle, in others – do not. We hope that our artificial island will facilitate the further evolution of the technologies. If next season terns do not arrive, we will transfer the raft to another location or alter the anchor technology or make improvements. At least ducks appreciate the artificial island as they have already settled there.

Although, we ask people to keep distance from the artificial tern island, especially during the warm season when terns nest, people are invited to gaze at them. It is a wonderful, graceful bird. A learning goal could be to discern terns from seagulls. Bear in mind that we should prioritize tern privacy and their youngster's safety. This can be achieved by using binoculars to observe the terns from the shore.

Colgate has helped us to bring the idea of the island to life. Initially, people voted which environmental initiative they would like the Colgate to sponsor. Just by a small margin (51% to 49%) bird protection was favored over meadow restoration. We decided to seize the opportunity and use the fund to build an artificial island for terns.

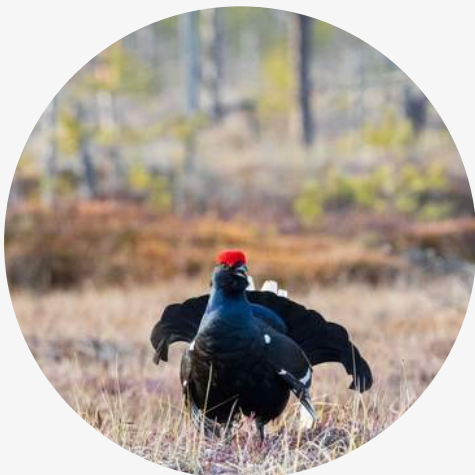
The restoration of black grouse mating-place continues



This summer was intense in a sense that there were many adventures and we barely made it. Nonetheless, we managed to maintain our tradition with the Dundulio men to gather flowers and foster the largest black grouse mating-place in Lithuania. For the black grouse to successfully mate the site cannot be overgrown by plants, therefore, we cut lush heather plants. From the gathered heather flowers Dundulio men brewed a tasty heather beer. This year, during the management of the mating-site the thunder clapped and the light rain started which lead to the flower bloom. In autumn we tasted the fruits of this bloom. It is a great example of people and nature coexisting.



About the black grouse mating and why it is essential to gather heather plants



SUPPORT AND VOLUNTEERING



SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BALTIC ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM LITHUANIA

The Baltic Environmental Forum protects nature with people. Together, this is much easier.

Many of our initiatives that protect nature and promote human personal experience (residence) in it could not exist without public support. Help us support existing and implement new ideas.

By supporting our activities, you have contributed at least in part to the following activities:

- Activities that promote human immersion (experience in a hurry, getting to know) in nature. An example of such activities are the festivals in nature "Vidur girių", "Miško burtai", "Vidur ežerų".
- Preserving forests for future generations.
- Helped protect the globally endangered reed warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*).
- Contributed to informing the public about hazardous substances in everyday products.
- Contributed to the birth of new publications on nature.

It can also support specific activities that interest you.

SUPPORT



Donate 1,2%

2020 of 1.2 percent. GPM we received 902.55eur. support. Compared to 2019, the amount of support collected remained virtually unchanged.

We dedicated it to the Punia heath campaign and to environmental education and activities that promote children's experiences in nature.

2021 we will continue to be active in the field of forest conservation, as well as in environmental education. We will use the collected support to strengthen these activities.

Volunteering to help protect nature

We provide an opportunity for motivated people to connect and protect nature together.

If you burn with enthusiasm and desire, and nature protection is one of the most important areas for you, you are welcome to visit us.

Volunteers Eigirdas and Goda helped us especially this year. Eigirdas helped a lot with the Punia heath campaign, and Goda - with the promotion of the product label of protected areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



BEF CO2 AND WASTE FOOTPRINT IN 2020

Waste generated

In 2020, the work-from-home regime dominated about half of the working time. This is also reflected in the amount of waste generated in the office. In 2019, the amount of waste amounted to 343 kg, and in 2020 only 87 kg. This is almost 4 times less waste, the most significant reason for which is the increase in work from home and after the first quarantine. Glass and unsorted waste accounted for approximately 30% of total waste and paper for 25%. The remaining 13% was plastic.

Transport

The year 2020 was sparse with travel for reasons that everyone understood, but it had its advantages - we significantly reduced the CO2 footprint of transport by as much as 55%. As the number of flights decreased significantly, the footprint of our flights decreased by as much as 88%. True, travel by car still remained, but we traveled a third less. We also traveled 50% less by train / bus and taxi, as we held a large number of meetings remotely, which allowed us to significantly reduce our footprint. In total, we have reduced our transport-related CO2 footprint by a staggering 55%.

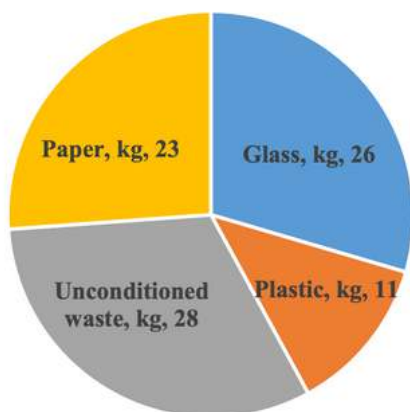
Electricity

This year, we cannot objectively estimate our electricity consumption readings because a significant portion of the BEF team worked from home rather than the office.

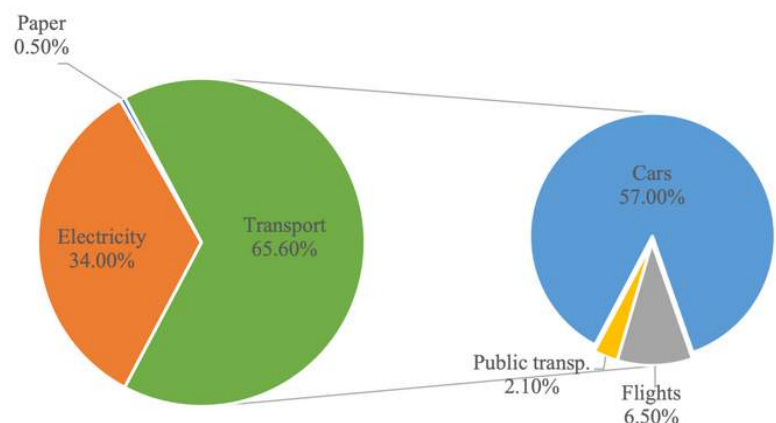
Paper

Due to the increased frequency of work from home during the emergency and the increasing possibilities to process documents electronically, we have halved our paper consumption.

Waste in 2020



BEF CO2 footprint distribution





Overall, our carbon footprint in 2020 was as much as 43.5% lower than in previous years. We generated 21.5 tons of CO₂, which is even 16.5 tons less than last year. For a better idea - with the volume of CO₂ gas generated in 2019, we could fill our office about 70 times. This year - about 40 times. This is as much as 30 office volumes less, which is 9000 m³ of CO₂ gas volume.

BEF has been calculating our CO₂ footprint for 10 years. Looking at this time period, we can say that the footprint changes depending on the number of employees, which increased overall (except for a temporary decrease in 2016). This year, our CO₂ footprint is the lowest in 10 years, largely due to lower energy consumption in the office due to work from home and reduced travel.



FINACIAL REPORT



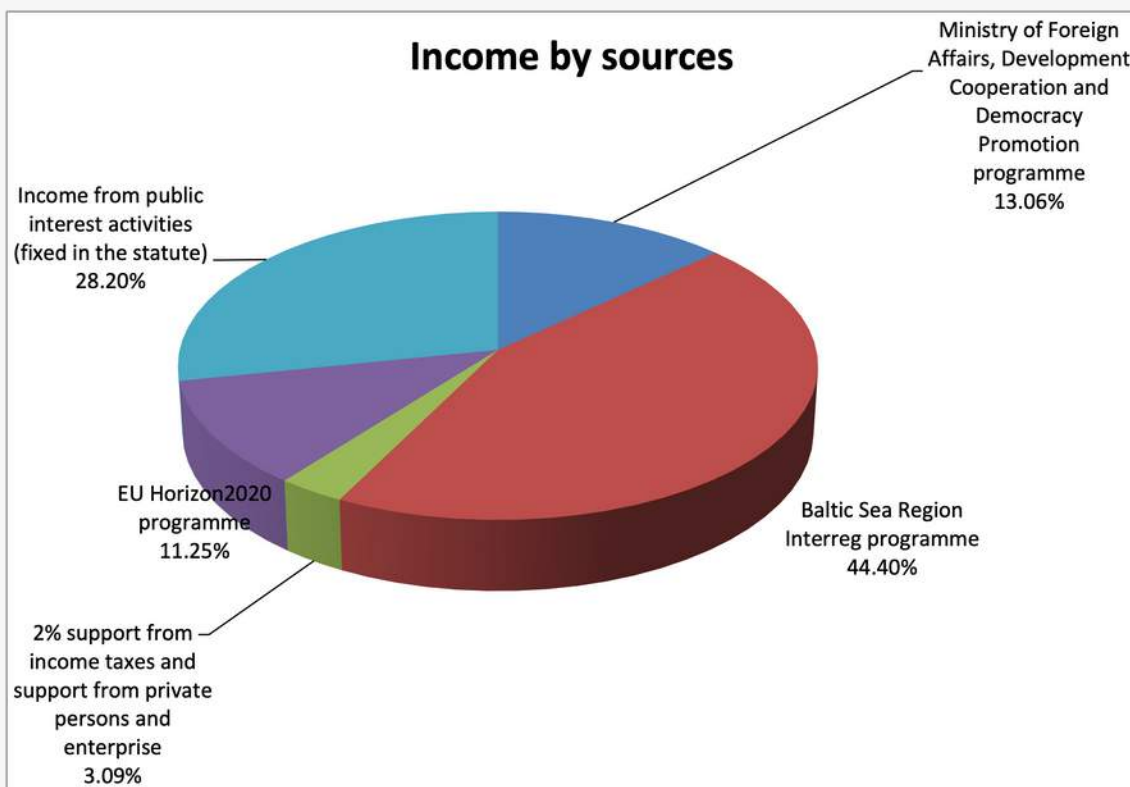
INCOME

Total income for 2020 year was 165 060 euro*. Part of this sum was related with Project expenses reimbursement from 2019 and another part with Project expenses from 2020, support 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. Part of income from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion programme was distributed to Project partner - 43,65 % from such income. Institutional part here was 56,35 %.

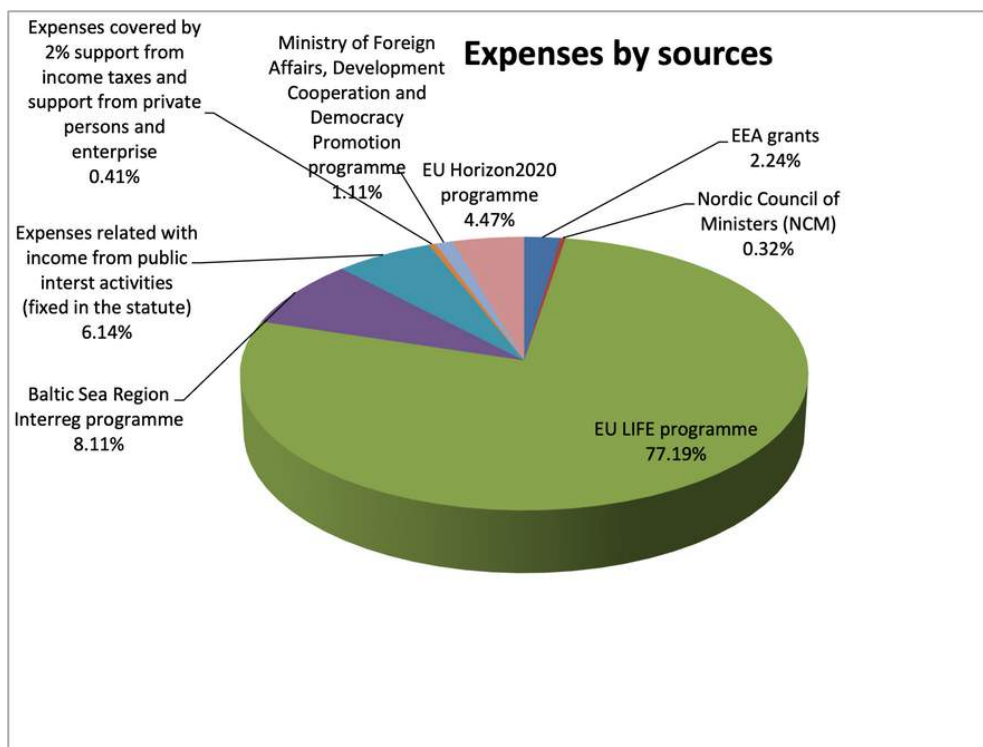
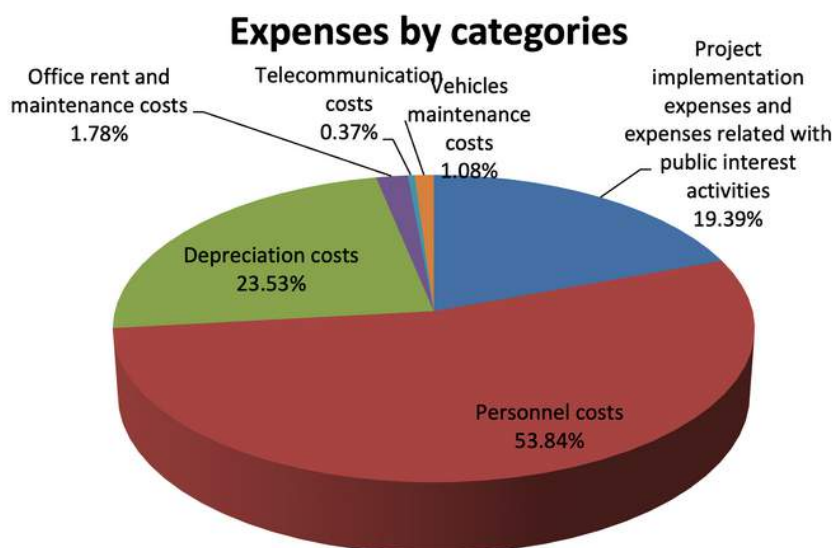
There was no income form EU LIFE programme in 2020, only distributed amounts between project partners (from previous years funding).

2% support from taxes was 903 euro in 2020. Support from private persons and enterprise was 4 206 euro.



EXPENSES

Total expenses for 2020 year was 764 933 euro. Part of these expenses were covered from previous years funding and another will be reimbursed from receivable funding on 2021. In diagrams below you can see "Expenses by categories" and "Expenses by sources".



EMPLOYEES AND SHAREHOLDERS

At the beginning of the year 19 employees worked in organization, 4 of them were part-time employees and 1 person was on Maternity leave. At the end of the year 19 employees worked in organization, 6 of them were part-time employees and 2 persons was on Maternity leave.

In 2020 a shareholders' structure changed a little bit as a new shareholder joined. The shareholders contribution is 1 554 euro (with the proportions 97%, 2%, 1% 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).



PHOTO MOMENTS





