



**BALTIC  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
FORUM LITHUANIA**

# ACTIVITY REPORT 2021



**PROTECTING NATURE TOGETHER WITH PEOPLE**

[WWW.BEF.LT](http://WWW.BEF.LT)

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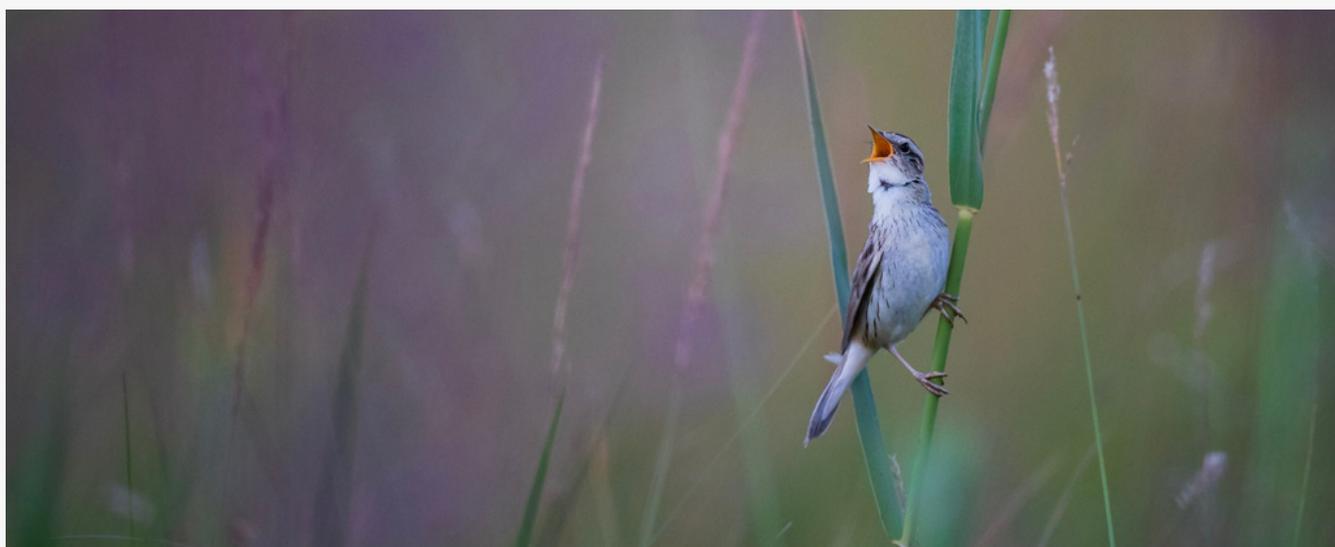
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# PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED



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# 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](http://WWW.MELDINE.LT)**

After two translocations from Belarus to Lithuania in 2018-2019, this year we focused on summarizing the results.

### **We traditionally counted aquatic warblers.**

This year, we traditionally approved two counts of aquatic warblers and evaluated the rarest population of the European songbird population. A total of 243 male aquatic warblers sang in Lithuania this year. After recording a record number of these birds last year, this year it is slightly smaller, but according to experts, the condition of the aquatic warbler population in Lithuania is stable and this is good news.

Records of aquatic warblers, a species protected at European and national level, are carried out on an annual basis, as the state of the populations of this species is constantly evolving and it is essential to have the most accurate data possible to plan the necessary measures. In addition, all hatcheries of the earliest of this species need to be inspected annually, as it is important to pay special aquatic warbler payments to farmers caring for grasslands that are needed to manage them. The counting of aquatic warblers is carried out in accordance with the constant methodological requirements, only singing male warblers are counted, the counting is performed twice a year - in the beginning of June and the beginning of July.

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The exact abundance of the breeding population is determined only after the second survey, when a comparison of the number of birds detected in the two surveys reveals the actual size of the population. It is determined by the maximum number of males found. This year, 209 singing male aquatic warblers were detected during the first census, and 243 during the second census. Last year, 246 singing males were found during the first census, and 316 during the second census.

The declining population size may have been due to several reasons. This may have been influenced by the deteriorating condition of habitats in the Šyša polder, as in 2019-2020. canal cleaning work was carried out here, during which the polder meadows remained dry throughout the winter and spring. This left the meadows without their usual tidal period. The unusually cool spring also caused a slightly worse start to the transition season.

Nevertheless, the results of this year's survey of aquatic warblers in the context of recent years show a stabilizing state of the population, which is good news.

Another piece of good news is as much as 98 percent. aquatic warblers (238 males) sang in such meadow areas that could be declared for the Rural Development Program (RDP) measure "Preservation of the endangered aquatic warblers population in meadows and wetlands". These results show that the measures envisaged are justified and that the majority of the rare population can be protected. It is therefore to be welcomed that the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture are paying off and to thank the farmers who are using these measures.

Also, according to the survey results, 175 male aquatic warblers (as many as 72%) sang in the areas of "late mowing". Where aquatic warblers were found during the first record. After the first survey in those areas, farmers chose to mow later to allow the aquatic warblers to successfully grow their young. For this reason, a large part of the population could be detected here. If the meadows had been mowed earlier, we would not have found any birds in those areas during the second survey.

The remaining five birds have been found in areas where no birds have been found in recent years. 2 - in new areas in the Alka polder, indicating that the local population is still expanding into adjacent meadows. One male found near Svencelė is a completely new place where no birds have been found so far. Two more male aquatic warblers were found in Tyrai, the new areas of the current project, where the birds settled in 2020 after the habitats were rehabilitated.

At least 3 translocated male birds were observed in Žuvintas during the counting. One of them was moved back in 2018, so it is already singing in Žuvintas for the third season. Bearing in mind that aquatic warblers live for about 3-4 years, one can rejoice in the fact that relocated and reared birds spend almost their entire lives in their new homes. 2018-2019 99 juveniles of these birds were raised and released in the meadows of Žuvintas. It was after the successful transfer of aquatic warblers from Belarus to Lithuania that a significant increase in the population of aquatic warblers in Žuvintas was observed.

Another interesting observation can be made - birds in Žuvintas, found in the Nemunas delta this year. This further confirms the hypothesis that aquatic warblers may travel considerable distances in their search for suitable habitats.

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## A new tradition - the National Mowing Championship

This year, for the first time in Lithuania, the National Mowing Championship was organized, in which both the Samogitian scavenger typical of western Lithuania and the old Lithuanian scythe, which cuts the meadows of Dzūkija and Aukštaitija, competed. The championship took place on July 31st. In the Nemunas delta. The championship is another way to tell farmers about the aquatic warbler and the need to protect it.

Mowing championships already have a deep tradition in neighboring countries - Poland and Belarus. There are huge celebrations, which respect traditions and promote them to this day. The championships in Poland and Belarus are also associated aquatic warblers, which are symbolically melted into autumn migration, showing that the aquatic warblers that will return here next year will be welcomed by farmer-run meadows.



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The chosen time of the championship - the end of July - is very suitable for combining the interests of both mowers and birds. The end of July, the beginning of August is the time when the mowing is over. Farmers can breathe easier, train and compete in the championship. At that time, mowing was also extremely favorable for birds. The transition period is coming to an end and the birds are preparing for the autumn migration.

In the national championship, the prizes were swept by the team "Usniai", with Kozmas Auškalnis and Ignas Radžvilas. They won the titles of both the fastest and the highest quality mowers - "Flying Scythes" and "Quality Guaranteed". K. Auškalnis also performed flawlessly in an individual competition and won the honorary title of "Lawn Mower of the Year".

It is planned to hold the National Mowing Championship every year and thus maintain a beautiful new tradition.



### **Aquatic warbler - in the Presidential Courtyard**

Traditionally, on the first weekend of the summer, we celebrated the returning of the rarest European singer, the aquatic warbler. We invited those interested to come to the Presidential Courtyard, where the Green Ideas Festival took place. There, the specialists of the Baltic Environmental Forum spoke about the globally endangered aquatic warbler and its efforts to preserve it. And the little ones were waiting for fun creative activities and quizzes about the aquatic warbler.



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# NATURALIT - Optimizing the management of Natura 2000 network in Lithuania (LIFE IP PAF-NATURALIT)



**2018-2027 LITHUANIA**  
**[WWW.NATURALIT.LT](http://WWW.NATURALIT.LT)**

## **The first season of the result-oriented agri-environmental measure**

In 2021, the practical implementation of the measure began. In the end, 29 farmers were selected for the measure, and their supervised area was 243.71 ha. In early June, farmers' areas were first visited by experts who carried out an initial assessment of vegetation species using a special methodology. They also met with farmers, taught them how to recognize the plants and how to carry out the assessment, which was carried out by the farmers on their own. After processing the data, the farmers' areas were divided into three stages according to the number of points collected (the more species found, the higher the number of points). Under them, the first payments were made to farmers. A meeting of the project team and farmers was organized in the autumn to discuss the results. Farmers were happy to take part in such a measure, the benefits of such a measure were discussed, but they also commented on how it could be improved. This will be done by the project team during the winter in order to make the changes to the measure known to the participating farmers as early as possible and to start the new season without interruption.

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## Promotion of livestock farming in protected areas

For the second year in a row, cattle were transported to the Pabiržė peninsula in the Aukštaitija National Park. While grazing there, they carry out a very important nature conservation mission - they contribute to the restoration and maintenance of valuable meadow habitats. Intensive work also continued with the owners of private plots in the other two project areas: the Ginučiai oak grove and the Grūda river valley, with the aim of resuming livestock grazing in the future and thus increasing and maintaining the biodiversity there.



## Good Farmer Championship

This year, together with the Naturalit project partners, we organized the first "Good Farmer Championship". In the championship, we want to draw attention to the leaders who care about the common good of all of us - a healthy, harmonious and prosperous nature. We believe that a good farmer nowadays is one who carries out his activities in harmony with nature and creates a much wider public good than just quality products. So we want to show by good examples that nature-friendly farming can be progressive in agrarian, economic and social terms.

The "Good Farmer's Championship" consisted of two parts - competitions for farmers and elderships. In the Farmers' Competition, we invited the public to nominate farmers who admire their example, protect our environment and farm in harmony with nature. The public nominated a total of 21 farmers. Their farming model and benefits were further assessed by a special panel of championship experts with in-depth experience in nature and agriculture. Following an initial assessment, the panel selected and visited 12 exceptional farms and, after assessing the environmental, social and economic benefits generated by the farms, selected 5 exemplary farms to become ambassadors for the Good Farmers' Championship. You can get acquainted with the elected ambassadors on the championship website [www.kitoksukis.lt](http://www.kitoksukis.lt). At the end of the year, we announced the "Public Sympathy" election and encouraged the public to elect the most liked farmers.

In the "Good Farmer's Championship" eldership competition 2021 in the statistics of agricultural land declaration, we collected exceptional elderships that have made the greatest progress in declaring "Agri-environment and climate" activities. In this we wanted to encourage the specialists of the elderships to contribute to the protection of the nature and landscape of the eldership and to encourage farmers to declare as many areas as possible for the activities of "Agri-environment and Climate".

An informative leaflet on the measure and its activities was published together with the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Paying Agency to help professionals spread the word about the agri-environment and climate measure. Specialists from protected areas were also involved in advising and encouraging farmers, for whom special training was provided on the agri-environmental measure and the principles of operation of the declaration system

## AN INFORMATIVE LEAFLET ON THE AGRI-ENVIRONMENT-CLIMATE MEASURE AND ITS ACTIVITIES



Nominees for elderships and farmers' competitions were welcomed at the Good Farmer's Championship awards ceremony on December 10 in Beata's Nicholson culinary studio. At the awards ceremony, the "Agri-Environmental Champion" was awarded - the eldership where most of the agricultural land in the area is declared for agri-environmental measures. It became the eldership of Didžiasalis eldership of Ignalina district. The Agri-Environmental Accelerator 2021 was also congratulated - the Šimkaičiai eldership of Jurbarkas district, which has made the greatest progress in declaring areas for agri-environmental measures during 2021. Special thanks went to Šilalė District in the Pajūris Eldership for initiative and the biggest change of applicants during 2021. Special thanks signed by the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania were also given to the specialists of these elderships working with agricultural issues.

After a tense struggle between the five ambassadors, Nerijus and Agnė Sukackai, who have an extensive beef cattle breeding farm with 11 beef cattle and 30 sheep, won the title of "Public Sympathy". In the territory of Meteliai Regional Park the farming of Nerijus and Agnė demonstrates a sensitive coexistence with nature - extensive meadow grazing forms an open mosaic of meadows conducive to biodiversity.





**MORE ABOUT THE GOOD FARMER'S CHAMPIONSHIP AND THE AMBASSADORS' FARMS: [WWW.KITOKSUKIS.LT](http://WWW.KITOKSUKIS.LT)**

**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 who have the label.

2021 and again we organized seminars for small entrepreneurs with the Protected Areas product label. Next, we filled in the website [www.gamtoje.org](http://www.gamtoje.org). We have also traditionally published an updated publication-catalog, which also includes all trademark holders and their products and services.



**Infrastructure in national parks accessible for the disabled**

In 2021 we have completed and published the publication Nature for All: Infrastructure in national parks accessible for the disabled

Lithuanian protected areas strive to create conditions for everyone to get to know nature. These may be just the first steps, and there is still a long way to go, but we hope that this publication will make your acquaintance with protected areas smoother, provide all the information you need to enjoy nature and its gifts.



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## Nature festivals

We are glad that in 2021 on the first weekend of October, after a two-year break, the theatrical nature festival for young families "Forest Spells" returned to the Žemaitija National Park. This year, due to the challenges posed by the pandemic, the festival was organized in a new closed area - Plokštinė, where Natura 2000 sites are located. The former military territory here is once again turning into a wonderful corner of nature. This year, the festival spoke thematically about all conquering and returning nature, which was helped by the magical heroes of the forest.

The number of visitors was also limited to avoid close contacts. The festival was attended by about 170 guests - young families with children of all ages. Visitors came from all over the country - many visitors took part in the third Forest Spells Festival and promised to return next year to support the beautiful family tradition.



Families heard intriguing facts about bats and visited them, had fun at various nature games and made magical handicrafts, tasted local herbal teas. Another novelty this year is the magical "Kaukai trail", which leads through mysterious forest paths. Together with their parents, the little ones had to follow the hints and travel the trail to overcome various tasks prepared by the forest creatures: identify spiders, spread mushroom spores around the forest, weave a thread, build a house for kaukai. Only those who overcame the Kaukai Trail could get to the King of Kaukai, where they not only received presents, but also listened to the stories.

This year we have also traditionally boiled and eaten a pot of magical rowan jam that repel evil spirits and all sorts of ills, so the year promises to be really good, and the mysterious heroes of the festival are already preparing the most beautiful costumes and tasks for other festivals.

Unfortunately, the festivals "Vidur girių" and "Vidur ežerų" did not take place again in 2021, because the unfavorable pandemic situation prevailed in the spring. True, it is gratifying that both festivals should take place next year - the organizational work of the spring festivals has already started.



# 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



## Finding a way how to sustain extensive dairy farms

*while producing quality products with benefits for environment and society*

### Lithuanian case

During the LT case study activities with stakeholders, including policy makers, key shortcomings for AEFS transition at the governance level were identified. The co-constructed policy recommendations are designed to facilitate the transition to AEFS.

Knowledge on sustainable/ AE farming and entrepreneurship skills is presently low among the farmers. Improving access to knowledge should uptake through:

- education,
- field days,
- individualised consultations focused on transition to agroecology,
- access to high-quality advisory service or expert support.





Small farmers are underrepresented on the political level. The agricultural policy shall incorporate transition to agroecology and sustainability of small-scale farms in their long-term strategy.



On-farm processing is low. Also there is a low cooperation among farmers and product realisation is weak. Improving value chains as well as improving access and uptake of local sustainable produce (local sustainable food fairs, sustainable food markets, etc.) is needed.



Sustainable natural resource management is not sufficiently prioritised on the political level and critical observations about soil and water health do not translate to policy well. Support for improvement of sustainability of farming systems through direct payments throughout the transition period as well as result-based payments schemes aimed at reaching environmental targets are needed.







This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 773901

**Contacts:**  
Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania  
[info@bef.lt](mailto:info@bef.lt)

It is an international research project of the HORIZON 2020 research program, carried out 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 are pursuing 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.

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2021 was the last months of this project. In April, we held the last remote discussion of the project with the association of project stakeholders Vivasol - "Agroecology and resilience of food systems and communities". During this event, we presented the main results of the project and discussed with the farming community how environmentally friendly farming practices and short food supply chains could be strengthened. The results of the UNISECO project show that small family dairy farms can improve their economic sustainability through on-farm processing and innovative marketing measures. Achieving high product quality becomes an incentive for environmentally friendly / agro-ecological farming, which can help maintain valuable grassland habitats and thriving biodiversity. At the event, we also presented recommendations on how to strengthen agro-ecological farming in the country and what initiatives can be in the hands of farmers.

More about this:

<https://zenodo.org/record/4905259#.YeWAvy-IOWI>

<https://zenodo.org/record/4905264#.YeWBNI-IOWI>

[http://uniseco-project.eu/assets/content/case-studies/Lithuania/LT-case-uniseco\\_poster.pdf](http://uniseco-project.eu/assets/content/case-studies/Lithuania/LT-case-uniseco_poster.pdf)

We also held an international project conference with the entire international project team where the results of the project were presented and discussed in a wide international community. The material of the last UNISECO project conference can be found at the following link: <https://uniseco-project.eu/articles/34/final-conference>

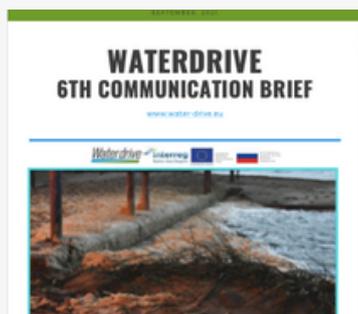


The last newsletter of this project summarizing the results and achievements of this project was also published. We invite you to read the newsletter here: <https://uniseco-project.eu/assets/content/resources/03-newsletters/uniseco-newsletter-Nr06-vFINAL.pdf>

A summary of the Lithuanian case study material can be found here: <https://uniseco-project.eu/case-study/lithuania>

# 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 being implemented by the Baltic Environmental Forum 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 entering water bodies, in particular from economic activities, which contribute to eutrophication and the quality of water bodies and aquatic ecosystems. In Lithuania, the Baltic Environmental Forum seeks to promote intersectoral cooperation in reducing pollution in and around the Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve.

This year we completed two years of water quality measurements in the Dovinė basin. At the end of the year, all the collected data were analyzed in a water monitoring report, and the main water challenges in the Dovinė basin were identified. We also continued to work with stakeholders during the year and organized remote meetings to present the results of our water quality measurements. We made a special effort to draw the attention of stakeholders to the problems of runoff in the basin and the impact of the Simnas fish farm in the southern region, and called for solutions to minimize the impact of ponds on water quality and runoff. We sought to highlight the need to ensure basin management and the implementation of measures at local level, involving stakeholders.

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We also contributed with the project partners to the development of a set of Participatory Methods that could be useful in involving local stakeholders in pool management issues. [https://www.landbrugsinfo.dk/-/media/landbrugsinfo/public/4/c/e/waterdrive\\_local\\_participatory\\_toolbox.pdf](https://www.landbrugsinfo.dk/-/media/landbrugsinfo/public/4/c/e/waterdrive_local_participatory_toolbox.pdf)

At the end of the year, we organized a study trip to Vestervice in Sweden with interested parties from the State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of the Environment, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Ministry of the Environment. We introduced Lithuanian representatives to good water management practices in Sweden and Denmark. We presented how these countries are implementing basin management principles at the local level through local basin coordinators and how they are implementing innovative water protection measures.

Also with water monitoring data, based on the experience of our work in this basin and the experience of international project partners and close work with stakeholders, we have submitted proposals for 2022-2027. Nemunas River Basin District Management Plan and Program of Measures for Better Protection of the Water and Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve.

At the end of the year, together with international project partners, we organized remote seminars on various water protection topics. Conference materials and recordings are available here: <https://water-drive.eu/seminar-videos/>



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# GRAZELIFE - Ecosystem services, biodiversity and landscape improvement with livestock



**2019-2021 LITHUANIA  
AND 5 PARTNER  
COUNTRIES  
[WWW.GRAZELIFE.COM](http://WWW.GRAZELIFE.COM)**

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

2021 was the last year of the GRAZELIFE project. Through these, we analyzed all the information we collected: data collected during interviews with intensively and extensively grazing and haymaking farmers, and vegetation diversity data collected in the fields of these farmers. We provided all the information in the Grazelife Lithuania case study report. The data we have collected have contributed to the Common Agricultural Policy's recommendations to promote environmentally friendly grazing regimes that contribute to the creation of public goods. We also presented these recommendations to the representatives and experts of the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture of our country. The recommendations in English are available here:

- <https://www.rewildingeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/grazelife-report/>
- <https://www.rewildingeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/grazelife-recommendations/index.html>

We also contributed to the project partners developing a Grazelife Practice Guide for those who want to improve or promote environmentally friendly grazing practices:  
<https://www.rewildingeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/grazelife-practitioners-guide-en/index.html>

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# LIFE MARSHMEADOWS - Piloting integrated wetland restoration approaches in Latvia and Lithuania



## 2021-2027 LITHUANIA AND LATVIA

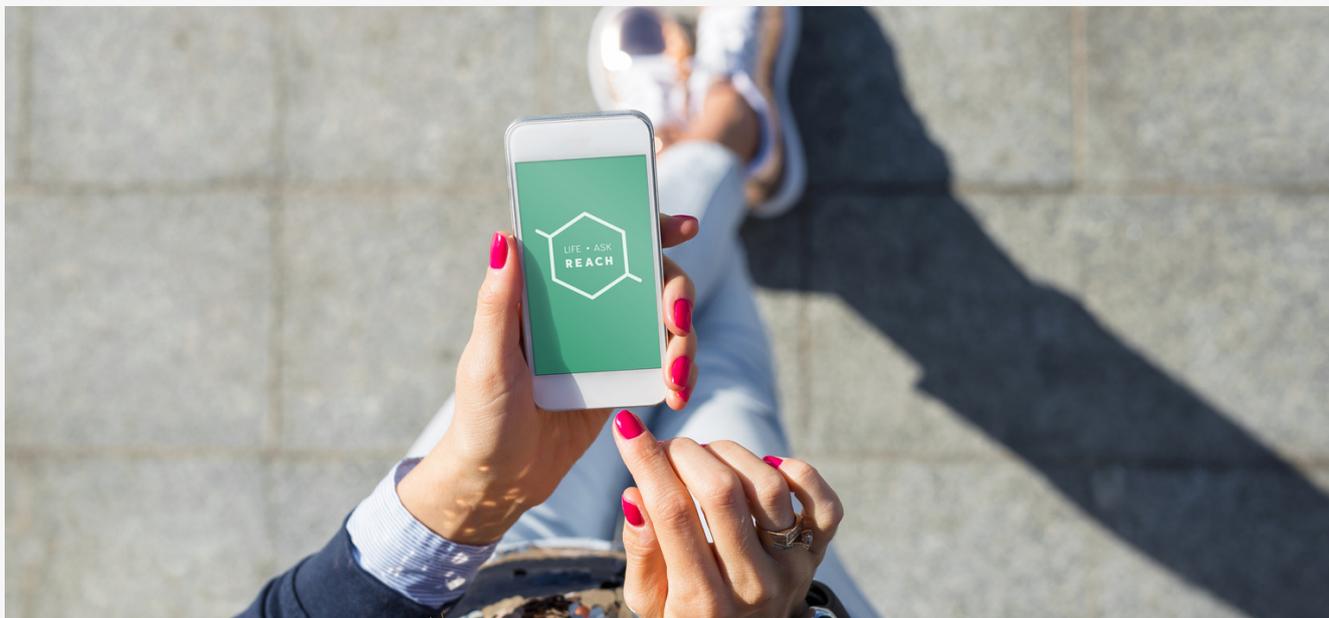
During 2021 we cooperated intensively with the Latvian Fund for Nature, prepared an application and received funding for the LIFE Marsh Meadows (LIFE20 NAT / LV / 000273) project.

The main objective of the LIFE Marsh Meadows project is to restore degraded wetland and grassland agro-ecosystems by demonstrating the direct links between the maintenance of naturally valuable ecosystems and socio-economic benefits, thus ensuring a long-term mechanism for maintaining protected areas in good condition. Applying European best practices, the project aims to address some of today's most pressing biodiversity challenges in the Baltic region:

- Restore and ensure the long-term maintenance of the most endangered grasslands and wetlands in the EU through a combination of nature conservation needs and sustainable economic activity;
- To implement economically viable nature conservation farming in the most economically complex wetland habitats;
- To ensure the good conservation status of natural complexes by using and promoting extensive cattle grazing; to promote endangered animal husbandry practices in protected areas as an important precondition for ensuring high biodiversity.

The project will be implemented in Natura 2000 areas in Latvia and Lithuania covering an area of 1390 ha. In Lithuania, the project will seek to restore the areas of the Baltoji Vokė wetland complex to restore the areas to be suitable for breeding and feeding on protected wetland species: thistles, bluethroats, red-bellied terns and shrike. Also promote extensive grazing practices as a nature conservation model that enables biodiversity and the protection of endangered habitats and provides economic benefits to farmers who maintain valuable habitats in Natura 2000 sites.

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



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



In fourteen EU countries, the LIFE project partners have further developed a special scanning application, Scan4Chem, which helps to find out if products contain substances of very high concern or to send a pre-generated inquiry to the manufacturer. The app is available in Lithuanian to all users of the App Store and Google Play.

2021 Intensified work with companies has started - they are invited to join this initiative and actively participate in the development of the database. Users can also contribute to various campaigns to contribute and send requests.

This year, the leaflet in Lithuanian was presented. It explains why and how you should correctly inform consumers about hazardous substances in articles. The information is intended for both large industrial and retail businesses.

## PROMOTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**2020-2021 LITHUANIA**

The project "Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility", funded by the European Social Fund, contacted various types of companies. There have also been a number of discussions on the responsibilities of businesses and consumers for choosing safe products and the determinants in this area.

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## Understand, measure and reduce CO2 footprint in Belarus

### 2020-2021 LITHUANIA AND BELARUS

Projektą vykdė Baltijos aplinkos forumas ir Baltarusijos organizacija „Ecoproject“ Partnership“. Juo siekta gilinti Baltarusijos jaunimo žinias apie aplinkosaugą, ypač susijusias su klimato kaita, nes šalyje vis dar trūksta į aplinkosaugą orientuotų žmonių ir aplinkos apsaugos iniciatyvų.

2021 m. organizuoti baigiamieji projekto veiksmai. Baltarusijoje besikuriančioms ir jaunoms įmonėms suorganizuotas klimatonas, kuriame ieškota klimatui draugiškų sprendinių.

Taip pat pristatytas leidinys rusų kalbą, kaip nedidelėms organizacijoms priimti sprendimus, palankius aplinkai.



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# OTHER INITIATIVES AND SERVICES



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# PUNIA HEATH MOVEMENT



## [WWW.PUNIOSSILAS.LT](http://WWW.PUNIOSSILAS.LT)

This year, for the third year in a row, we have been working on the defense of the integral Punia heath.

In the spring, it became clear that last year the promises of the political parties forming the new government to preserve the old Punia had been broken. Although it is planned to expand the Punia Heath Reserve, it is planned that "holes" of almost 300 ha will be "cut" in which genetic stands will be protected. It is in this way that seed pine cones are collected in the stands by cutting centuries-old pine trees (75 kg of pine cones were harvested after cutting 0.2 ha of pine last year).

The project for the development of the nature reserve was also submitted to the public for consideration this year. We have actively encouraged citizens to take part in the process and to express their support for a holistic reserve of Punia Heath without holes. We have prepared information on why we are aiming for an integrated Punia heath reserve and how the public can contribute to this.

We were surprised by the active participation of the public in the deliberation process. About 170 people submitted their proposals to us. These are just some of the suggestions that were sent not only to the planning organizers but also as a copy to us. So we believe that even more proposals have been submitted. We have been thrilled with such active participation (a large number in the planning process) and hoped that this would be a clear signal to our politicians that the issue is important to us all.

### **To support the reserve entered the world-renowned anthropologist**

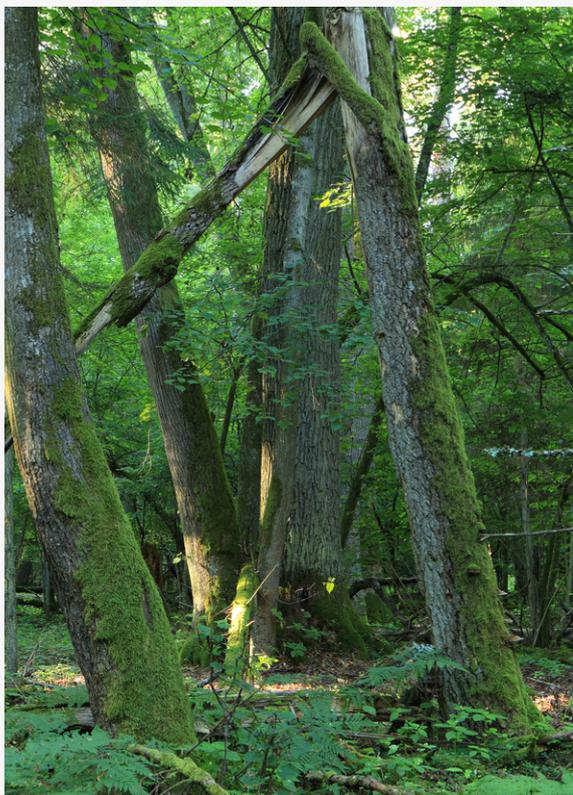
Birutė Galdikas, a world-famous anthropologist, visited Lithuania in the autumn. After getting acquainted with the current protection regime in the Punia heath, Galdikas expressed great support for those who are fighting for the preservation of an integral reserve of the Punia heath without genetic stands. In her opinion, the Punia must be protected in its entirety and no felling is justified here - neither sanitary nor seeking to manage genetic reserves.

Galdikas also visited the presidency. Concerns about the delay and a call for strict protection of the Punia Heath Reserve and the abandonment of any felling were also expressed to President Gitanas Nausėda. The President expressed support for the need for strict protection of the Punia Heath. Later, the famous anthropologist also met with the Minister of the Environment Simonas Gentvilas, who during the conversation promised to maintain an integral reserve of the Punia Heath.



Unfortunately, changes in the reserve's plans have not yet been implemented. It is planned to submit a document to the government, which still provides for “holes” in genetic reserves, so the Baltic Environmental Forum will pay close attention to the Punia Heath movement in 2022 as well.

## NATIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT



From 2021 From the beginning of the year, we are intensively participating in the National Agreement on Lithuanian Forests (National Forest Agreement - NMS) initiated by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. This is the first initiative of its kind in Lithuania, inviting all interested parties to a negotiating table to sit down at the negotiating table and agree on the future of Lithuanian forests. The whole process is divided into 4 stages, at the turn of 2021-2022 the transition to the penultimate stage - topics - in which work in mixed groups of agreements takes place. The representatives of each of the sectoral groups involved in these groups can influence the agreements on the forest sector topic that is important to them. A total of 17 individual sectoral groups participate in the NMS, with representatives currently discussing in nine NMS topic groups. 2 BEF representatives have been regularly involved in the work. We have declared that our organization represents ecological and social interest groups, and our representatives are most actively involved in the work of the sectoral groups “Forest Ecology and Biodiversity” and “Non-timber forest economy”.

## Services for the society, business, and governmental institutions



**Quiz for students.** This year, together with Klaipėda City Municipality, we organized a virtual quiz for Klaipėda city students "What do I know about waste?". In three age groups, students answered a wide range of questions about waste avoidance, sorting, recycling, responsible use, reuse of items and saving natural resources.

**Fish resources.** 2021 We contributed to the project of the Nature Research Center "about fish resources, the aim of which is to contribute to the improvement of the condition of ecosystems and fisheries management in Lithuanian inland waters and in the world. We helped to create a project communication plan and prepare for events. We will continue the work in 2022.

**CO2 calculator.** We strive for both the public and the business community to look for sustainable everyday solutions. We cooperated with Utena Brewery and helped to create a special test. This hero test allows us to test how an individual's lifestyle affects our environment and in which areas the impact is greatest. The test is of an entertaining-educational nature and seeks to highlight some of the very important direct and indirect effects on climate change. You can take the test at <https://utenosnealkoholinis.lt>

**Consultation seminars and trainings.** We conducted various consulting seminars and training. We presented the topics of responsible business and sustainable leadership to various companies, and we cooperated with state institutions on the topic of green procurement.

# SUPPORT AND VOLUNTEERING



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# 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 percent

In 2021 we received support from 1.2 % of GPM - 867 euros. Personal support was also received - 110 euros. Compared to 2020, the amount of support collected has remained virtually unchanged.

In 2021 we continued 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.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



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# BEF CO2 AND WASTE FOOTPRINT IN 2021

Although we are an environmental organization, our activities also have an impact on the environment. We encourage businesses to start assessing their impact on the environment, so we can't ignore our advice.

The nature of our activities and the impact on the environment are inseparable from the ongoing project activities, which change from year to year. One year we do more training, so we use more paper, the next year we work more in rural areas, which increases fuel consumption. We are at the beginning of our path to environmental impact assessment, so we are still learning to set the right indicators to properly reflect our efforts to promote sustainable change in our society at the lowest possible cost.

## **ELECTRICITY**

2021: Electricity has increased as we use more electricity for heating. And compared to 2020, we worked more time in the office.

## **TRANSPORT**

Transport makes up the bulk of our CO2 footprint. This is natural because we have a small team of experts and work in a small office, so the main impact on the environment comes from traveling.

## **PAPER**

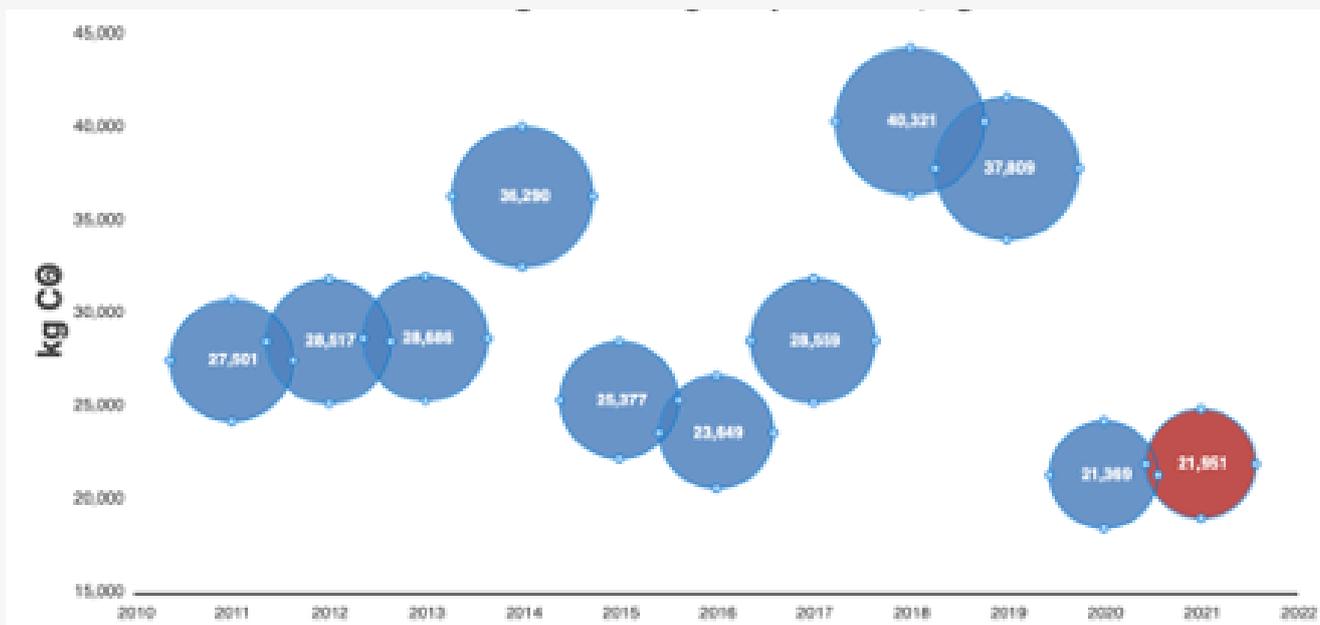
We use only 100% recycled paper. Recycling and product production also require energy, but we avoid 5 times the CO2 content of paper made from cellulose. For example, if during 2012 if we had used recycled paper our CO2 footprint would have increased by 4.5 tons of CO2

## **WATER**

Water consumption almost doubled by 10 m. timing - cause quarantine

## **GENERATED WASTE**

2012 only we started measuring our generated waste. Kolk can only boast that we are preparing about 80% of the waste generated in the office. From 2022, we also started sorting food waste.



*In 2021, the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint was 2.7% higher than in 2020.*

## CO<sub>2</sub> FOOTPRINT

CO<sub>2</sub> is easy to measure, but climate change is not the only environmental issue. In our office, we focus on reducing the use of hazardous chemicals. We choose certified, environmentally friendly household chemical products (dishwashing detergent, soap, air fresheners) and we simply aim to avoid products that are not necessary.

According to the Carbon Footprint calculation system, it is measured that the average office worker generates 3.5 tons of carbon dioxide per year. We can boast that our employees generated an average of 1.1 tons of carbon dioxide, which is about 3 times less than the average.

THE MOST SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION THAT LEAVES THE SMALLEST FOOTPRINT OF CARBON IS NON-CONSUMPTION.

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# FINACIAL REPORT

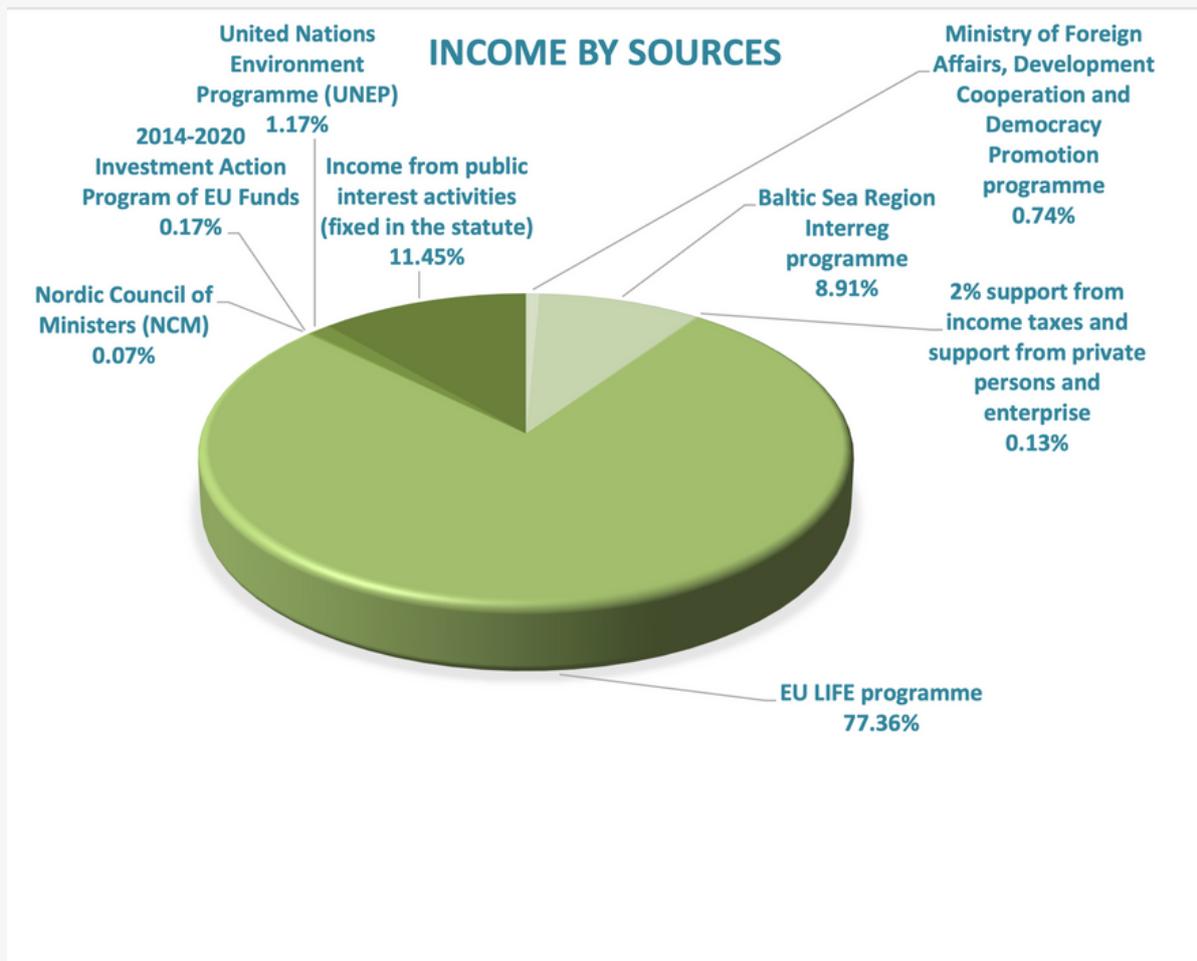


# INCOME

Total income for 2021 year was 744 735 euro\*. Part of this sum was related with Project expenses reimbursement from 2020 and another part with Project expenses from 2021, income from public interest activities, advance payments for projects activities implementation and support.

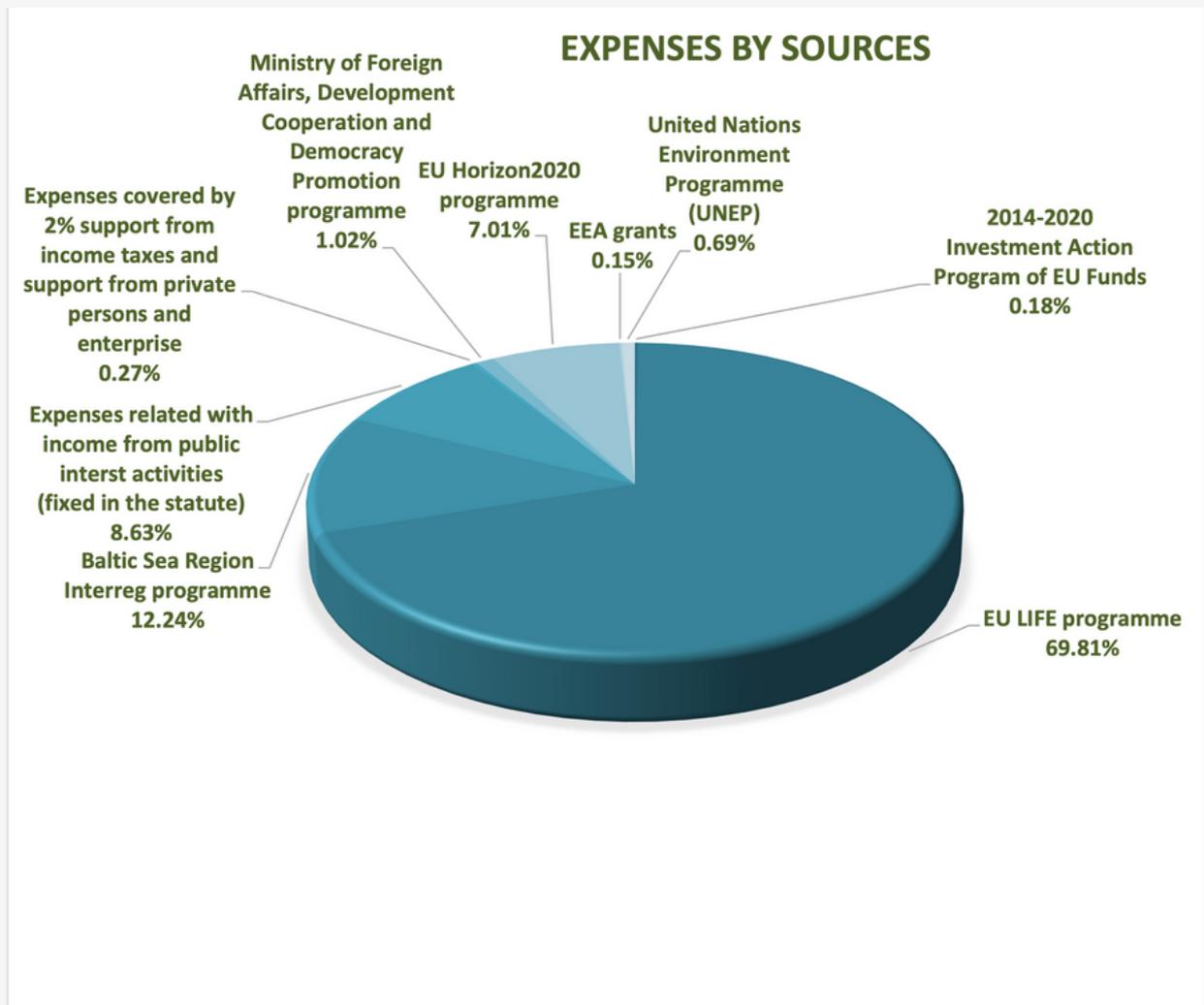
\*A remark. According to the LR public organizations legislation, the activity report has to indicate the received income, and this amount does not match with the financial turnover in the balance sheet, because the turnover in the balance sheet is counted cumulatively. Part of income from EU LIFE programme was distributed to Project partners – 5,4 % from such income. Institutional part here was left 94,6 %. Other part of funding will be distributed in coming year.

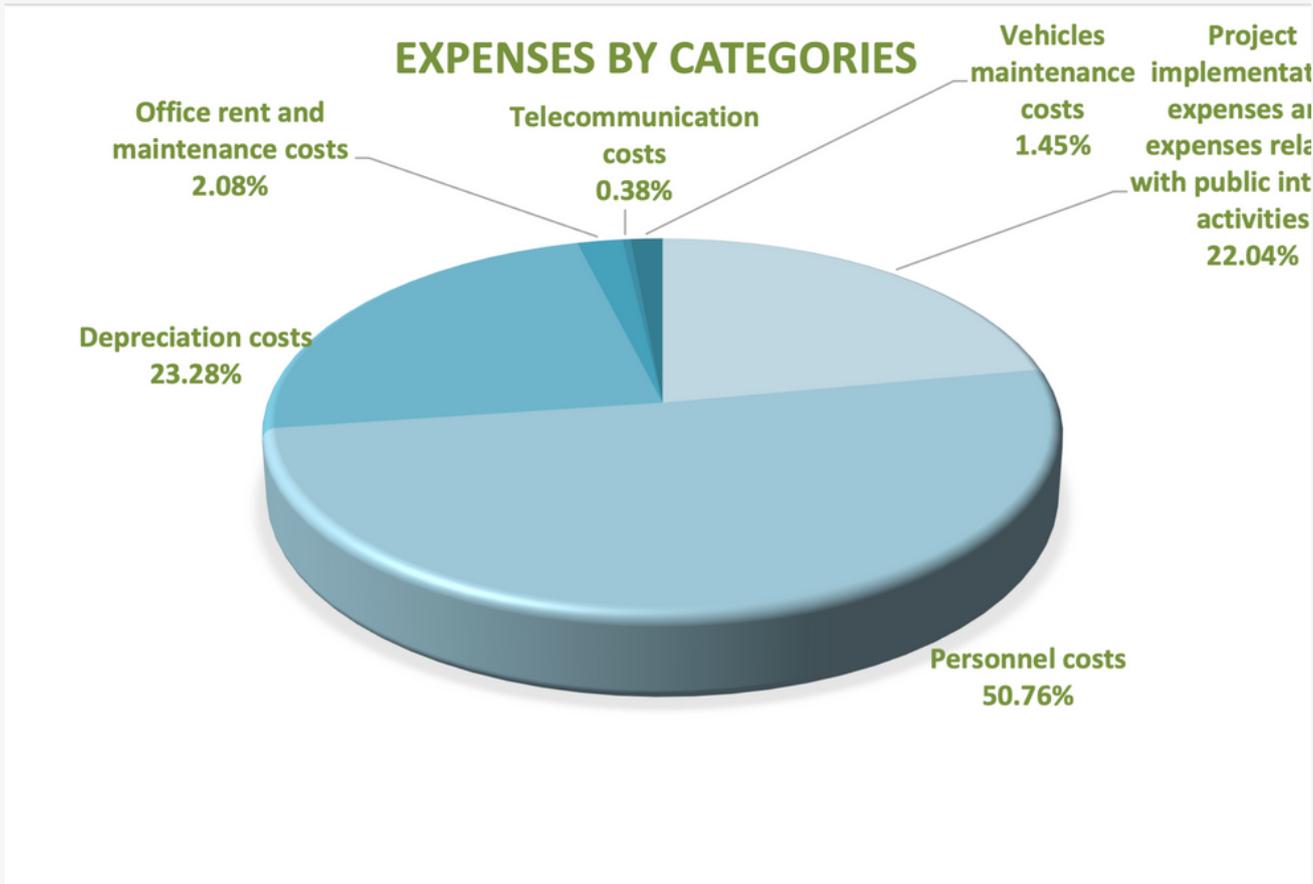
We got 867 euros 2% support from taxes and 110 euros from private persons.



# EXPENSES

Total expenses for 2021 year was 697 127 euro. Part of these expenses were covered from previous years funding and another will be reimbursed from receivable funding on 2022. In diagrams below you can see "Expenses by categories" and "Expenses by sources".





## INFORMATION ABOUT SUPPORT

Support from 1.2 % GPM - 867 eur

Personal support: 110 eur. Of these, 75 euros were received from the students of the Queen Morta School - it is gratifying that the younger generation also cares about environmental issues.

Total received: 977 eur.

## EMPLOYEES AND SHAREHOLDERS

At the beginning of the year 19 employees worked in organization, 6 of them were part-time employees and 2 persons were on Maternity leave. At the end of the year 20 employees worked in organization, 7 of them were part-time employees and 3 persons were on Maternity leave.

There was no any changes in a shareholders' structure on 2021. The shareholder's contribution is 1 554 euro (with the proportions 96%, 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







