

New project of the Forest Institute - "For everyone saved a tree" (FOREST), co-funded by the European Union through the Interreg-IPA Bulgaria-Serbia Cross-Border Program 2014-2020.

Forest Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences is a partner in the international project "For everyone saved a tree" (FOREST), funded by the Interreg-IPA Bulgaria-Serbia Cross-Border Cooperation Program, which started on May 16, 2019 with an official award ceremony of the subsidy contracts in the building of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works - Sofia. The leading partner in the project is the Bulgarian non-governmental organization Youth Movement for Development of Rural Areas in Bulgaria (www.ymdrab.eu), and the Serbian partner is the Society Innovation Center, Niš (www.niit.rs). The total value of the project is 185906.26 Euro with duration of 15 months.

The FOREST project is based on the concept of involving volunteer youth in solving problems related to the conservation of forest habitats in the cross-border region. With the methodological support of experts from Forest Research Institute and the joint participation of young people from the municipalities of Botevgrad and Nis, a series of activities will be implemented aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of young people regarding the assessment of the health status of forests, methods of conservation and restoring degraded habitats and promoting such initiatives among the public. The specific activities that will be implemented during this period are the following:

- Organizing an International Seminar aimed at raising public awareness and involvement of young people in forest conservation activities (Venue - Serbia).
- Conducting a training course for youth volunteer, with the participation of international experts, who will present topics related to environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources in forests (Bulgaria).
- Carrying out afforestation activities in different types of habitats on forest and urban territories (Serbia).
- Diagnosis and control of insect pest and pathogen populations in forest ecosystems and assessment of their health status in the context of related ecosystem services (Bulgaria).
- Mapping, evaluation and improvement of the status of populations of valuable plant species (Bulgaria).
- Creating herbarium of native plant species and presenting it to the public in the form of exhibitions (Serbia and Bulgaria).
- Creation of a joint electronic database, keeping information from field surveys, applied and scientific results from the implementation of individual project activities (photos, videos, location, maps, publications, population and community measurement data and etc.) (Bulgaria).
- Developing a long-term strategy for engaging young people in nature conservation activities (Bulgaria).
- Final conference with international participation, including presentation of project results and demonstration of good practice from projects and initiatives with a similar focus (Bulgaria).

Each of the above activities will include 25 young people from the municipalities of Botevgrad and Nis, aged 13 to 18, and the participants in the individual activities will not be repeated. In this way, more than 400 young people from both countries will participate in the project.

The project is co-funded by EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme.

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