

SLOVAKIA

Sustainable use of forestry land

Location

Volovec mountains

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 2 – Improving the environment and the countryside

Measure

M226 - Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 460 383
EAFRD 368 307
National/regional 92 077

Project duration

2014 – 2015

Project promoter

LESY Slovenskej republiky,
state enterprise

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A Slovak state enterprise used EAFRD funding to plant new forest seedlings and develop a forest road for maintenance activities, strengthening the forest's sustainability.

Summary

Climate change, fires, pests and disease pose a major threat to spruce forests in Slovakia's Volovec mountains. Soil erosion and water run-off are also a concern. The forest had declining biodiversity and needed a road to give fire-fighting and maintenance vehicles access to the area.



The Slovak state enterprise used the EAFRD funding to plant 591 150 forest tree seedlings (mainly beech and maple) and to protect them against animals and weeds. The funding was also used towards the re-development of a 1.4 km unpaved road including earthworks, drainage and asphalt paving.

Results

New seedlings of mainly beech and maple ensure the forest is healthier and resistant to damage caused by wind and pests.

Lower risk of soil erosion and greater water retention.

The new road allows heavy equipment to access the forest for wood harvesting or to combat fires.

The road is also a boost to tourism and sports organisations.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Preparations for the project were strongly influenced by the weather conditions.
- ❑ A crucial factor for this project was to involve experienced experts.
- ❑ Most operations are manual so hired workers must be highly skilled. The quality of the workers is another key factor in the success of the project.

Context

Forests of spruce largely replaced deciduous trees in Slovakia's Volovec mountains to supply the mining and construction industries especially in the 19th and early 20th century. Back then, to supply the metallurgical industry with charcoal, non-coniferous timber was harvested massively in the mountain areas of the Volovec Mountains. After harvesting, faster growing coniferous trees started to be planted, not only to replace deciduous woody plants, but also to supply the mining and construction industries. But the trees were often ill-suited to the area and extreme weather events combined with pests were damaging the forests. Fires are also a risk, but there were no roads for fire-fighting vehicles. The long-term sustainability of the forest depended on greater biodiversity and access for maintenance vehicles and fire equipment.

Objectives

The project aimed to safeguard the long-term viability of the forest by strengthening its biodiversity and production potential. At the same time it aimed to enhance its ecological functions such as soil retention, improve soil absorption capacity and water management. The scheme also sought to develop a 1.4km unpaved road to allow maintenance vehicles to carry out important management work and fight fire outbreaks as well as improve accessibility for tourists.

Activities

The project was carried out in two phases after the preparatory work which included assessments by experts and launching the procurement procedures.

The first phase lasted from the 1st March, 2014 till the 30th May, 2015. It concerned forest renewal activities including the afforestation and taking care of planted seedlings growth. Only tree seedlings of the highest quality were planted that would be able to withstand competition from weeds. All works were managed by highly experienced foresters. The mix of planted seedlings was in favour of deciduous trees mainly beech and maple. The mixed forest will be healthier and more resistant to damages caused either by windstorms or insects. Specific activities included:

- preparation of the areas for afforestation – manual cleaning after harvesting in 90 ha,
- planting of 591 150 forest tree seedlings in an area of 148.1 ha,
- protection of planted forest tree seedlings against weeds by using brush-cutters in area of 320.59 ha. Seedlings were also protected against forest animals in area of 320.19 ha.

The second phase lasted from the 1st of July, 2014 till the 30th of November, 2014. It concerned the re-development of unpaved road into main forest road of 1L category – usable for forest activities and fire fighting operations. The original unpaved road, called Jaminy, was not suitable for forestry harvesting and accessible for heavy equipment. Therefore it was completely rebuilt. The re-developed road is the first main forest road in the area and it is 1 403m long. Construction works included earthworks, transverse and longitudinal drainage, strengthening of the road, paving with asphalt.



Additional sources of information

n/a