



# **REPORT OF THE FORESTCOM NGO ON THE PROJECT “COMBATTING ILLEGAL LOGGING IN UKRAINE”**

**AUGUST 2020 -  
SEPTEMBER 2021**





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## Dear friends, colleagues and partners

The work of our NGO is aimed primarily at activities which intend to reduce the negative consequences that lead to climate change across the globe and in Ukraine in particular.

One of the main projects in this direction is the "Illegal Logging Project in Ukraine", which is supported by the US Forest Service International Program Office.

Below, my colleagues will present the successes we managed to achieve together during August 2020 - September 2021 implementation period in more detail. I will dwell only on the main points:

During the mentioned period, the project team conducted 25 field studies in Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv, Frankivsk, Lviv, Zakarpattia, Vinnytsia and Cherkasy oblasts. A total of 1014 hectares of forest were surveyed on 61 plots, 173 hectares of which are logging areas. The inspections revealed a total of 15 cases with signs of illegal logging, which were reported to the State Ecological Inspectorate of Ukraine.

Based on this information, the SEI conducted 11 unscheduled inspections and issued 9 instructions to eliminate the identified violations.

Also, 10 out of 15 cases were reported to law enforcement agencies (National Police and the State Bureau of Investigation) on the basis of which 7 cases of administrative and criminal offenses were initiated.

Additionally, in response to requests from law enforcement agencies, our organization's experts conducted 19 expert studies in criminal and administrative proceedings on illegal logging, violation of customs regulations and other laws of Ukraine related to illegal timber trafficking.

At our initiative, as an example, one of the forest users was obliged by the court to provide ecologically oriented organizations with an access to the information about detailed documentation that lead to the issue of permits, that were the cause of deforestation in Ukraine.

For the sake of transparent dialogue with the public, the organization's experts took part in more than 30 self-organized events. Our team conducted a series of thematic trainings for more than 2000 activists, NGOs, environmental workers, law enforcement officers and schoolchildren.

We have prepared specific proposals to the forestry reform strategy for the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, changes in legislation on open data in the forest sector for the Ministry of Digital Information and practical recommendations for citizens to control forest violations and combat illegal deforestation. Participated in the designing of state strategies for the development of the forest sector of Ukraine for the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, as well as for the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

In addition, we actively cooperate with the media, due to which Ukrainian and foreign journalists had the opportunity to cover the problems of illegal deforestation and methods of fighting them for more than 3 million people.

To increase the efficiency of our work, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, the Institute of Space Research of the NAS and SSAU of Ukraine, the National Forestry University of Ukraine, environmental agencies, and other NGOs, including international organizations.

We thank all the experts, colleagues from other organizations, activists, partners and especially at this stage — our donors who help to build civil society, increase the transparency of the forest sector and public awareness, protect nature and, in particular, help to protect forests from illegal logging.

We will continue to extend our influence to more and more areas and help the public to preserve and increase our forests as the project has been extended for another 1.5 years.

We will continue to provide information about the state of affairs and involve society in an active position, to promote a constructive dialogue between foresters, government agencies, responsible business and society. We will help to reforest, increase the efficiency of regulatory authorities, and provide further support to law enforcement investigations.

We can do it Together!

*Executive Director of the "FORESTCOM" NGO  
Dmytro Karabchuk*

## ABOUT FORESTCOM NGO

Non-governmental organization “FORESTCOM” was established in February 2020. The founders of the organization were scientists from the National Forestry University of Ukraine and experts in other fields related to forestry and environmental protection.

Today, more than 20 specialists work within our organization — experts in forestry, ecology, forest monitoring, law, sociology, urban forestry, urban landscaping, environmental education, policy development and other related fields.

Answering the call of the heart — we focus on that part of nature where about 80% of all terrestrial animals and plants live — forests. For us the forest is a part of nature and the forest is a branch of the economy. We do care how the forest grows and the community develops, because the forest, although self-renewable, is an exhaustive resource, the community will not have a comfortable home without it, as well as forest dwellers.

For society, the forest provides a variety of ecosystem services, which are not limited to the provision of wood resources. We consider the forest on a broader scale: its condition can affect not only the living conditions of forest dwellers, but also, above all, the living conditions of local communities and more — individual regions and the climate of the planet.

Our goal is to protect and improve the environment, promote sustainable development and management of forestry, raise environmental awareness and living standards of communities through the implementation of forest and related initiatives.

# WHAT DO WE DO?



We work with the youth to protect and increase biodiversity in urban areas



We cooperate with government agencies and provide recommendations for changes in legislation



We support the institutional development of environmentally oriented NGOs in Ukraine



We carry out ground monitoring of changes in forest cover to combat illegal logging



We are developing independent monitoring warning systems for the disappearance of forest cover



We provide expert support to law enforcement in investigations of illegal logging



We work to increase biodiversity in forests with the involvement of foresters

## HOW DO WE CARRY OUT GROUND MONITORING OF CHANGES IN FOREST COVER?

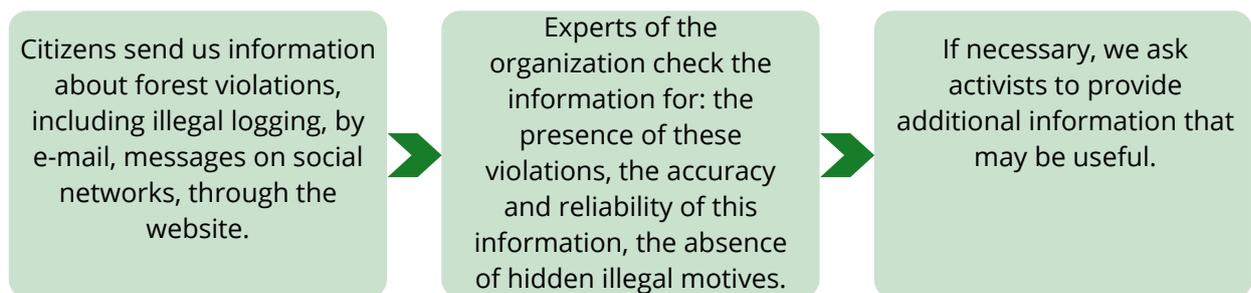
The organization's experts have specific knowledge and technologies for remote monitoring of changes in forest cover to combat illegal logging. Thus, with the help of radar and satellite images, we monitor monthly changes in the old-growth forests of the Ukrainian Carpathians.

In addition, our organization's experts work with the public on the ground to increase their knowledge of identifying illegal logging and informing law enforcement. We provide advice and also receive notifications about detected loggings.

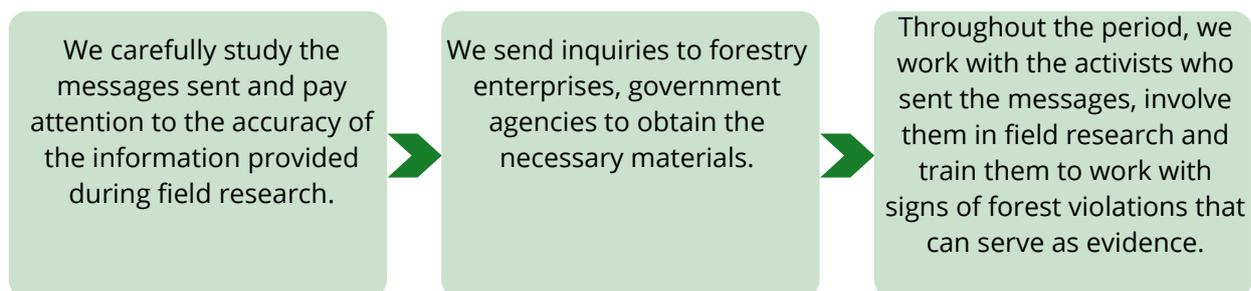


### WORK ALGORITHM

#### evaluation of messages



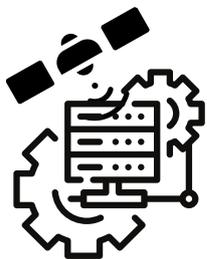
#### field research



#### report preparation and monitoring



## HOW DO WE DEVELOP INDEPENDENT FOREST COVER MONITORING AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS?



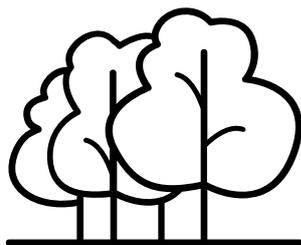
Our organization supports the development of independent monitoring and notification systems for illegal logging, such as Deep Forest and Deep Green Ukraine. To do it we establish partnerships with experts and other public organizations, government agencies and private companies that are interested in developing independent systems for monitoring changes of forest cover.

## HOW DO WE SUPPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL LOGGING?

Experts of our organization provide advice in each particular case, for example, on the evidence base to confirm the facts of the crime. We train law enforcement officers to increase their knowledge in the field of forestry. We also provide forensic examinations to establish the date of logging, wood species and more.

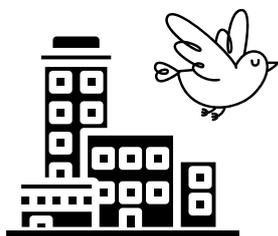


## HOW DO WE WORK TO INCREASE BIODIVERSITY IN FORESTS WITH THE INVOLVEMENT OF FORESTERS?



Experts of our organization analyze reforestation projects developed by forestry enterprises to identify the compliance of projects with the requirements of existing regulations in Ukraine and international principles of biodiversity conservation. Based on the analysis, we develop proposals for selected forest users to improve the conservation and restoration of biodiversity during reforestation work, which they carry out on their territory.

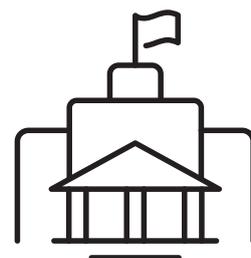
## HOW DO WE WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO PROTECT AND INCREASE BIODIVERSITY IN CITIES?



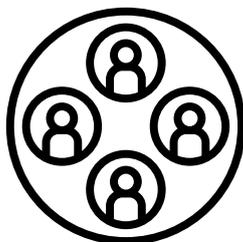
For us, working with schoolchildren is an important element in the formation of conscious defenders of forests and nature. To do this, during the meetings we tell students and teachers about the role of birds in cities and villages to support and develop local ecosystems and why it is necessary to care for them.

## HOW DO WE COOPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES IN LEGISLATION?

Our organization together with partners prepares changes to the laws and regulations necessary for sustainable development of the forest sector, participates in working meetings with the authorities, initiates expert discussions of problems that exist in the field to find ways to solve them, analyzes international law to study the possibility of adaptation and implementation in Ukraine. In addition, we provide consultations and prepare explanations for citizens who contact us about the specifics of forest legislation.



## HOW DO WE SUPPORT THE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS IN UKRAINE?



Our organization organizes and conducts free webinars for environmentally oriented NGOs on institutional development. During the training, civil society organizations' representatives have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and improve the skills needed to develop/update strategies, internal policies and procedures for their civil society organizations.

## KEY RESULTS

During the year of project implementation our experts have



Remotely monitored forest cover on the territory of more than 50 thousand hectares in 10 oblasts (Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Volyn, Vinnytsia, Lviv, Zakarpattia, Chernivtsi and Cherkasy oblasts).



Carried out direct field research on the territory of 1,014 hectares of forest lands and 173 hectares of logged areas. During which a number of violations of forest legislation were revealed, among which losses from unauthorized deforestation in the amount of UAH 1,887,000 were documented.



Carried out regular periodic space monitoring of 582 virgin, quasi-virgin and natural forest areas from continuous felling on a total area of 6,958 hectares.



Taken down and constructed 17 orthophotoplans of clear cut areas with a total area of 76 hectares, where the analysis of compliance of the logged area with the one indicated in the logging ticket and other information was carried out.



Provided more than 40 consultations to law enforcement agencies and enterprises in the field of forestry and timber issues. Sent 15 appeals to the State Environmental Inspectorate, 8 to the National Police and 5 to the State Bureau of Investigation. State Environmental Inspectorate charged fines for unauthorized felling in the amount of UAH 2,403,000.



Collected data on the geographical location of virgin natural monuments with an area of 13,706 hectares, which received the appropriate environmental status, 51% of all areas in 4 oblasts were taken under periodic monitoring: Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia and Chernivtsi.



Conducted 19 expert studies in the framework of criminal and administrative proceedings on illegal logging, customs rules and other laws of Ukraine related to illegal timber trafficking at the request of the Security Service of Ukraine, the National Police of Ukraine, the State Bureau of Investigation, and the State Customs Service of Ukraine in 6 oblasts.



Educated 17 civil society activists during a 2-day training on how to detect illegal logging and how to cooperate with law enforcement agencies.



Conducted a series of 7 webinars for more than 30 law enforcement officers of the National Police in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast on the peculiarities of forest use and the involvement of scientific methods in the investigation of crimes against the environment.



Coordinated the development and presentation of the monitoring project on illegal logging "Deep Green Ukraine".



Developed the concept to create a Wood Identification Lab (Wood Identification and Screening Center) to help to combat illegal logging and trafficking in Ukraine.



Analyzed 14 reforestation projects and provided recommendations on how to increase biodiversity to forestry enterprises of Lviv region.



Conducted 5 open lessons in schools of Lviv region about the role of birds in cities and villages and the incentives to feed them in winter. As part of the competition, students made 160 feeders for feeding birds.



Organized a free tour for 30 most active schoolchildren of the village of Sudova Vyshnya to the Regional Ecological and Naturalistic Center "LOCETUM" in L'viv.



Participated in garden works to improve the territory of the Lviv geriatric home on the eve of Easter.



Planted more than 200 new trees together with volunteers on the territory of the Regional Landscape Park "Znesinnya".



Collected and sorted more than 30 bags of garbage in the forest around the alpine lake "Marichayka" in the Carpathian National Nature Park together with volunteers. In general, we involved more than 2000 representatives from 14 oblasts of Ukraine in the events organized by the NGO "FORESTCOM".



Developed recommendations on how and whom to inform about detected landfills in the forests of Ukraine, what to do when citizens do not respond to public inquiries, how to distinguish legal logging from illegal logging and others.



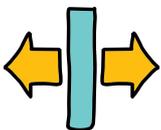
Improved an updated concept of Electronic Public Maps of Forest Users and prepared it for implementation, which allows electronic discussion of planned deforestation in local communities, thus involving local communities in forest management in state and municipal forests of Ukraine.



Prepared information for the development of a draft law on the involvement of local communities in the management of forest resources located in the subordinate territory.



Prepared proposals for a list of open data related to sanitary and other felling, most of which are included in the relevant Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on open data.



Presented and published the concept of the State and Voluntary systems of monitoring the movement of round logs and wood products to the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, the Office of Reforms under the President of Ukraine, the Reform Support Team at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine.



Participated in the analysis and development of proposals for inclusion in regulations on Electronic Accounting Timber system, forest management and other documents governing the procedure of forestry in Ukraine.



Taken measures to increase the transparency of all forest users in Ukraine, during which the availability of websites and the publication of relevant information has been analyzed, and communicated with the relevant state structures about further actions.



Started monitoring of documented volumes of illegal logging on the territory of forest users of all types of ownership and subordination since 2019.

## GENERAL STATISTICS OF THE MAIN INDICATORS OF THE PROJECT

Number of consultations provided - 79

Number of field visits - 25

Number of hectares of forest surveyed -> 50 thousand hectares

Number of illegal logging cases discovered - 7

Number of cases reported to Law Enforcement Agencies - 7

Number of trainings - 3

Number of proceedings, guidelines, draft legislations, proposals that translated, developed or adopted - 5

Number of short videos created - 13

Number of TV stories created or featured in - 9

Number of news posts generated - 207

Number of people reached online -> 3, 640, 000

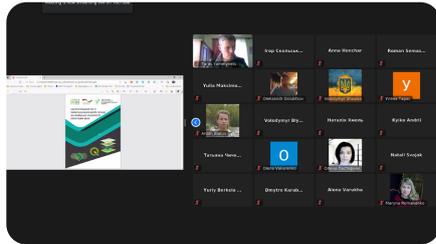
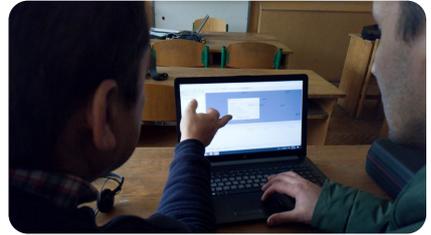
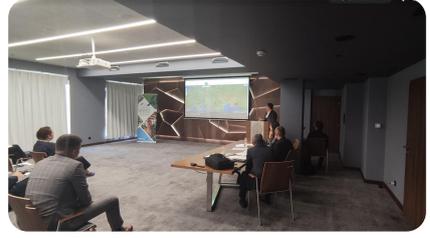
Lists of participants at the organized meetings - 2284

Number meetings (including online) with stakeholders, partners, potential supporters/donors conducted -> 30

Number of youth involved - 493

## OUR WORK IN THE PHOTO





## MEDIA ACTIVITY

Communication is extremely important to increase our visibility and influence. To do this, we develop our pages on social networks, websites, as well as cooperate with the media.



### SOCIAL NETWORKS



**1500+** users subscribed to the FORESTCOM NGO Facebook page, which is 74% more than last year



**200+** users have subscribed to the FORESTCOM NGO Instagram page

We focused on quality content, spreading information about the work of our organization, important industry news and recommendations for law enforcement and the public for promotion.

In order to store our video archive of public events (webinars, trainings) and share recordings with participants, we have created a youtube channel. The channel was created on December 4, 2020, since then 42 videos have been published, the channel received 4,500 shows and more than 1,000 views in total.

To expand our influence in the international environment and support international partners, we have created a Twitter page, the coverage of posts reaches 2200+ people of all time.



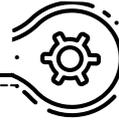
### WEBSITE

The website <https://forestcom.org.ua> was launched on **April 1, 2021**. There you can find information about us, our activities and find our contacts; read articles, news, reports; make a donation and contact us through social media.



**6 600 +** page views of our site

## MEDIA



“FORESTCOM” cooperates with the media on the basis of information exchange and does not provide financial compensation to publications, journalists for mentioning its activities or speakers.

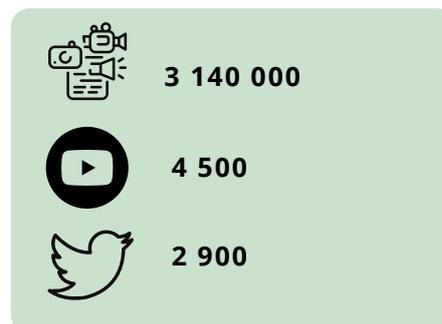
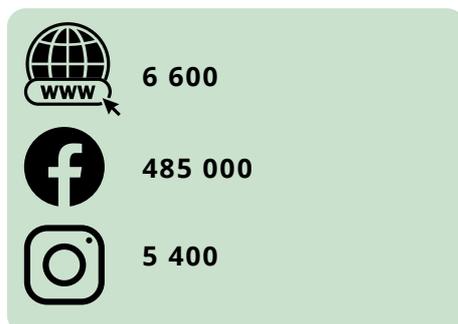
We continued to provide informational support to journalists to prepare publications on the forest sector, as well as information on deforestation and who is affected, and shared news about our projects. In particular, the Deep Green Ukraine system was reported by the publication Livyi Bereh.

Our organization has been mentioned in the media more than 200 times, including WDR (Germany), BBC (UK), BBC (Ukraine), mind.ua (Ukraine), AIN.UA (Ukraine), UNIAN (Ukraine), Den newspaper (Ukraine), Ukrainian Radio (Ukraine), Hromadske radio (Ukraine), ICTV (Ukraine), TSN (Ukraine), Channel 24 (Ukraine), LivyiBereh (Ukraine), KyivPost (Ukraine), Ukrinform (Ukraine).

**81%** of mentions are in online media, the rest are in print, television, radio and digital platforms.

The total coverage of publications on activities and organization in the media and on all platforms is over **3 million 640 thousand** people with foreign and Ukrainian audiences.

## COVERAGE



\*data according to the price of publications for advertising, circulation and number of views

## FEEDBACK FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

After completion of the events, we send feedback forms to participants. During this period, we received 33 responses.

100% of participants noted that they were satisfied with the information received and our work.

They also noted what they were most satisfied with working with us and what aspects of our work need to be improved.



**Larisa Denysenko is a participant of the Training:**  
*"I really liked everything, very grateful to the experts. The training was very useful for me, now I know how to distinguish between illegal and legal logging, and where to go. I think that the acquired knowledge will help me to protect the forest."*



**Victoria Volskaya, NGO "Country of Free Community":**  
*"Very interesting and informative sessions of Institutional development for NGO. Gained a lot of tools and a lot of knowledge. Thanks"*



**Zhanna Bezpiatchuk journalist:**  
*"Thank you very much for your help in preparing the material, communication with you was very useful and helpful to me."*

## COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

To increase our efficiency, we cooperate with public, private and non-governmental organizations. We testify to our intentions in agreements and Memorandums of Understanding.

The memorandums provide for measures to combat illegal logging, develop adaptive infrastructure in tourist destinations, develop strategies and implement an action plan to mitigate the effects of climate change, and improve forest legislation.

We have participated in 30 expert groups with stakeholders, partners, potential supporters/donors.

**In addition, experts of the "FORESTCOM" NGO took part in the following events:**

- "Forum Carpaticum 2021"
- "Regional WWF Workshop on illegal logging and forestry crime"
- The conference "Forest in women's hands"
- "IUCN Global Youth Summit Conference"
- "IPBES online conference"
- USFS "The Nature of Cities Festival"
- "EU Forest Crime Initiative Conference: Joining forces against illegal timber on the EU market"
- International meeting on environmental protection within the "AMBITUS" project

## DONORS AND PARTNERS

To increase the efficiency of our work, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, the Institute of Space Research of NAS and SCA of Ukraine, the National Forestry University of Ukraine, NGOs, in particular with NGO "Network of National Interests "ANTS"", NGO "Authorities Monitoring Center", the Ukrainian Climate Network, institutions of the nature protection fund and other including international organizations.

The project "Illegal Logging Project in Ukraine" was implemented with the support of the US Forest Service International Program Office.



## SOCIAL NETWORKS

If you want to be the first to receive news about the work of our team, learn more about the current forestry issues in Ukraine, read the news and reports with a professional view and keep in touch with us, subscribe to our pages on social networks:



Лісові ініціативи і суспільство ForestCom <https://www.facebook.com/Forest.Initiatives/>  
Моніторинг Лісу <https://www.facebook.com/groups/forestmonitoring>



Лісові ініціативи і суспільство  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9jTdPo0DPOArdh\\_sddqvPw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9jTdPo0DPOArdh_sddqvPw)



ForestCom [https://twitter.com/ForestCom\\_UA](https://twitter.com/ForestCom_UA)



forestcom\_ua [https://www.instagram.com/forestcom\\_ua/](https://www.instagram.com/forestcom_ua/)

