



# **Biodiversity conservation in private forests of Latvia: involvement of landowners**

Ģirts Baranovskis

Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia (LIFE-IP LatViaNature)



### **EU Forest Strategy for 2030:**

*Forest owners and managers need drivers and financial incentives to be able to provide, in addition to wood and non-wood materials and products, also ecosystem services through forest protection and restoration and to increase the resilience of their forests through the adoption of most climate and biodiversity friendly forest management practices.*

### **The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030:**

*Biodiversity-friendly practices such as closer-to-nature-forestry should be further developed.*

### **Forests and biodiversity in Latvia:**

- ☞ 50% of forests are privately owned (more than 100 000 private forest owners)
- ☞ > 80% of them own forests that are smaller than 20 ha (50% under 5 ha)
- ☞ Article 17 of Habitats Directive (2013-2018): unfavourable conservation status (bad/inadequate) for all forest habitat types
- ☞ Challenges of forest species conservation (e.g. hazel grouse *Tetrastes bonasia*)
- ☞ Forest owners have very diverse forest management goals
- ☞ Only regulatory conservation approach is utilized in Latvia: establishment of protected areas or micro-reserves. No voluntary mechanisms are available.

## How to involve private landowners?

Opinion of forest owners

+

Best practices of other countries



Designing pilot programme for private forest owner involvement

## Opinion of forest owners

### SURVEY (2021) BEFORE DESIGNING THE PILOT-PROGRAMME:

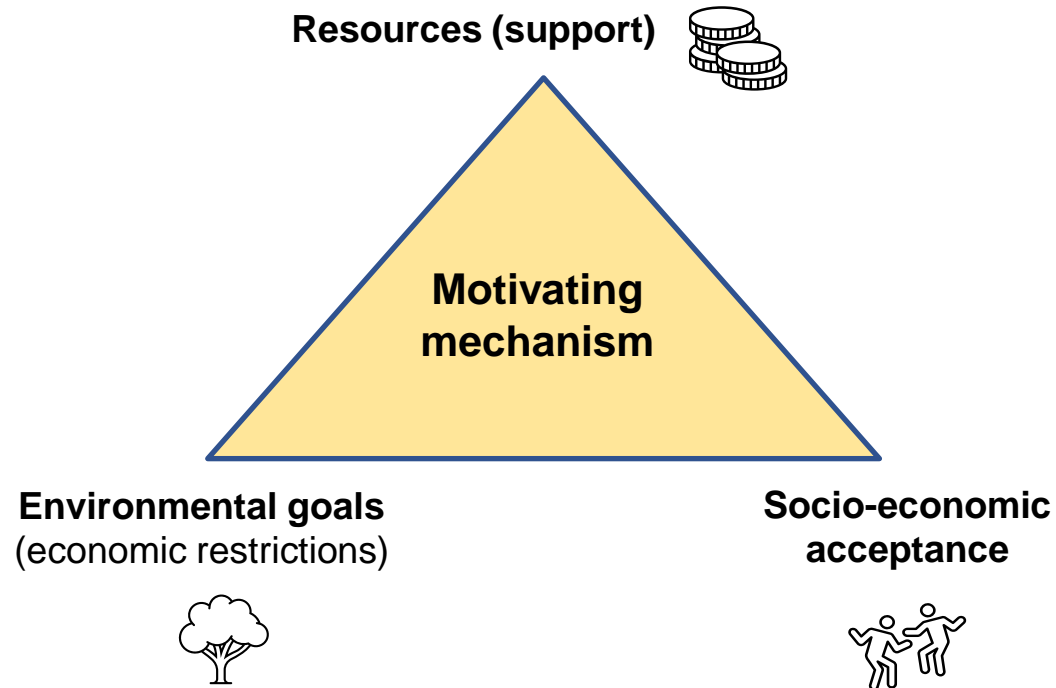
- ☞ Survey (n = 599) in order to explore private forest owners' attitudes towards biodiversity conservation strategies regarding their properties
- ☞ Target audience: forest owners within protected areas and forests with significant biodiversity values (e.g. forest habitats of EU importance)

### RESULTS:

+ smaller properties, female respondents, no forestry education, less dependent on forestry income

- larger properties, male respondents, with forestry education, more dependent on forestry income

- ☞ Rather positive towards minor forestry restrictions (e.g. no felling during bird breeding season and preserving more ecologically important trees and deadwood)
- ☞ Demand for advisory (on-site) and financial support
- ☞ Education on *closer-to-nature-forestry* + choice of communication channels



$$\text{Tree} + \text{People} = \text{Coins}$$

$$\text{Tree} - \text{Coins} = \text{Falling People}$$

$$\text{Coins} + \text{People} \neq \text{Tree}$$



Mežs – trausla un sarežģīta dabas ekosistēma, mājvieta miljoniem dzīvu organismu. Meža nākotne atkarīga no tā, cik tālredzīgi domājošs, prasmīgs un dabas vērtību saudzēšanā ieinteresēts ir meža saimnieks.

## DZĪVAIS MEŽS

### Atbalsta programma dabas daudzveidības saglabāšanai privātajos mežos

- ▼ Konsultatīvs un finansiāls atbalsts mežu īpašniekiem, kuri apņemas brīvprātīgi saglabāt vai veidot biotopus un īstenot dabai draudzīgu mežsaimniecību:
  - privātajos mežos, kas atrodas ārpus *Natura 2000* teritorijām vai mikroliegumiem
  - maksimālā atbalsttiesīgā platība – 15 ha
- ▼ Paredzētais atbalsts:
  - sertificēta meža biotopu eksperta konsultācijas
  - ikgadējs vai vienreizējs atbalsta maksājums
- ▼ Prioritāte mežiem ar lielāku dabas daudzveidību vai potenciālu
- ▼ Programmas norise – 4 gadi (2023.-2026.)

**Aicinām privāto mežu īpašniekus piedalīties programmā!**

▼ **Piedalīties var vienā vai vairākās apakšprogrammās:**



#### Biotopu saglabāšana

- Var pieteikt:
- ES nozīmes meža biotopus ar minimālo platību 0,1 ha.
  - Dabisko traucējumu skartus mežus (ugunsgrēks, vējgāzes).



#### Biotopu veidošana

- Var pieteikt:
- Mežaudzes, kuru valdošās sugas vidējais caurmērs sasniedzis 25 cm.



#### Dabai draudzīga mežsaimniecība

- Var pieteikt:
- Mežaudzes, kuru valdošās sugas vidējais caurmērs sasniedzis 25 cm.
  - Minimālā platība – 1 ha.

## PILOT-PROGRAMME «LIVING FOREST»:

- ☞ voluntary (contract based) approach
- ☞ advisory and financial support for private forest owners
- ☞ private forests outside protected areas (>25 cm diameter)
- ☞ 4 years (2023.-2027.)
- ☞ Funding: LIFE Programme
- ☞ 70 forest owners (346 ha)
- ☞ Involvement in monitoring (old trees, deadwood, trees with microhabitats)
- ☞ Individual calculation of financial support:
  - composition of tree species;
  - productivity of forest stand;
  - on average 197 euro/ha (per year)

# «LIVING FOREST»

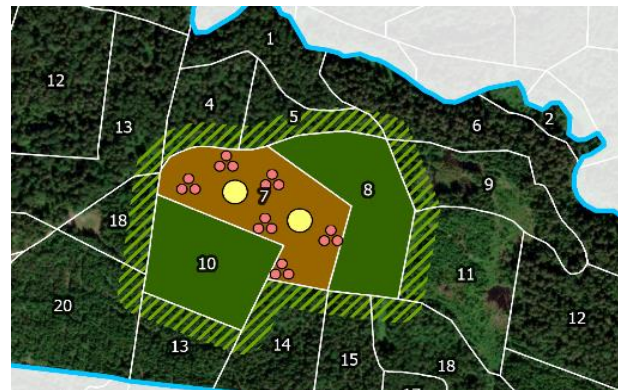
## Habitat conservation (A1)

- Do not interfere (no logging in the protected habitat)
- Preserve the buffer zone around the protected habitat polygons (selective logging is allowed)
- No harvesting for economic purposes



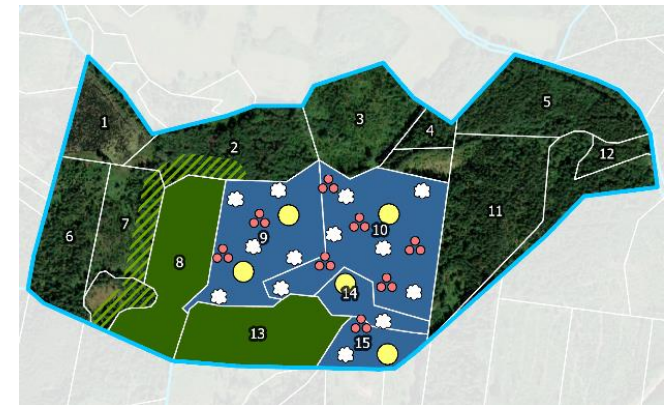
## Habitat creation (A2)

- Create multi-aged forest stand structure
- Preserve and create dead wood
- Preserve the buffer zone
- No harvesting for economic purposes



## Nature-friendly forestry (B)

- Preserve the oldest and largest trees (20 trees/ha)
- Preserve and create dead wood
- Selective logging to mimic natural disturbances
- Create multi-aged forest stand structure
- Seasonal forestry restrictions
- Harvesting of timber for economic purposes is allowed



- 👉 Biodiversity focused forest owners
- 👉 Diverse forests (0,3-15 ha)
- 👉 Forest stands of: pine (*Pinus sylvestris*); birch (*Betula spp.*); spruce (*Picea abies*); alder (*Alnus glutinosa*); aspen (*Populus tremula*)
- 👉 Significantly over final felling age
- 👉 Forest habitats of EU importance: 9050 *Fennoscandian herb-rich forests with Picea abies*; 9010\* *Western Taiga*; 91D0\* *Bog Woodland*; 9080\* *Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods*
- 👉 Rare and specially protected species
- 👉 Good perspective for voluntary (contract based) biodiversity conservation in private forests
- 👉 Proposals for integration of voluntary conservation models into forest biodiversity conservation strategies of Latvia





# Thank You!



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