

Introduction of Net4Forest

On September 1, 2018, we started with the Erasmus + project: Network of knowledge for efficient private forests (Net4Forest) which will last 3 years.

The lead partner is the Slovenian Forestry Institute (SFI) with project partners from:

- Latvia: Foundation Centre for Support of Forest Owner Cooperation
- Estonia: Estonian Private Forest Centre
- Sweden: Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- Spain: Forest Science and Technology Centre of Catalonia

The main purpose of the project is to educate stakeholders in forestry, especially advisory services and forest owners. Although literature about efficient forest products marketing and evaluation of forest services is available widely in EU, there is a big deficit in information, guidelines and training materials for forest owner's practical education, training and use.

The goal of this project is to exchange experiences, knowledge, good practice examples and to form innovative and publicly available materials, which will enable trainers and forest owners to acquire adequate knowledge for efficient forest management.

The main results of the project (handbook, hands-on guidelines, tool kit, good practice examples) will be presented to the target groups at organized events, will be published on the websites of project partners and other existing communication channels.

PROJECT ID

Title: Network of knowledge for efficient private forests

Acronym: Net4Forest

Co-financing program: Erasmus+

Project number: 2018-1-SI01-KA202-047016

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Finish: 31. 12. 2021

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No. of partners: 5

Lead partner: Gozdarski inštitut Slovenije

Website: <http://www.gozdis.si/projekti/net4forest-mreza-znanja-za-ucinkovitejse-gospodarjenje-z-zasebnimi-gozdovi/>



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Farm Višič

FROM FORESTS TO END PRODUCT

1. Private forests in Slovenia

Private forest estates are small, with an average area of only 2.9 ha even these are further fragmented into several separate plots. For the vast majority of these estates, forests are not of economic interest. Private forest estate is becoming even more fragmented as the number of forest owners increases.

According to the latest data there are already 413,000 forest owners in Slovenia on 286,000 forest estates. The strong fragmentation of forest property, the number of forest owners and co-owners, present a serious obstacle to professional work in private forests, to optimal timber production and exploitation of forest potential.

However, there are some forest estates that are larger and can therefore be well managed. As a good example of how to add the highest value to the wood from the local forest, we present the farm Višič from Kot na Pohorju.



2. Introduction of the farm

The owner of the farm, Konrad Smogavec, took over the farm Višič from his parents in 1991. He runs the farm together with his wife Marija, they have three daughters. The farm has 113 hectares of land, of which 13 hectares are arable land and 100 hectares are forest. The farm used to be about half as small, but in 2005 they received a gift from a neighboring farm, so that today the farm covers 113 hectares. The property extends from 800 to 1200 meters above sea level. On the farm they are engaged in forestry, sawmill and cattle breeding. Since 1999 they have been involved in the organic farming program, for which they have obtained an organic certificate.

The main activity of their farm is the processing and sale of wood and firewood. Due to the special climatic conditions, the wood obtained from their forests on the slopes of Pohorje grows more slowly and therefore has a long life span. Despite the fact that they are located at an altitude of 1000 m, there are relatively many flat areas on their farm, which makes agriculture and cattle breeding a little easier for them. Over the years, 8 ha of steep meadows have been reforested and 2 ha of forest in the plain has been cut down and turned into meadows.



3. Good forest owner

They constantly pay special attention and care to the forest, for which they were awarded the title of »Good Forest Manager« in 2002. They carry out many thinnings on their forest estate, at least one hectare of forest every year. They have a lot of forest in the development phase of poles, the wood from these thinnings is then processed into formwork boards.

About 500 m³ of wood is felled in their own forests every year. Most of this is spruce wood, which accounts for 80 % of the tree composition in their forests, the remaining part is beech.

They actively participate in the association of Forest Owners Pohorje-Kozjak. They are also a member of Pohorje-Kozjak Forestry Cooperative.



4. Supplementary activity on farm

At the farm Višič, they have a registered supplementary activity of sawing, planing and impregnation of wood. All the wood that is felled in their forest is cut on their own sawmill. The wood is cut on a Primultini band saw, which enables precise and high-quality wood processing. In addition to cutting their own wood, they provide services for neighbors and other customers of the sawmill. All products that customers buy from them are delivered to them on request.



They provide the following services as part of complementary activities on the farm:

- Sale of sawn timber of all dimensions, according to the customer's requirements
- Formwork sale
- Roofs (beams, rafters)
- Plates, boards
- Production of firewood



Working on a saw is physically demanding. In the past they had employees who worked in the sawmill, but today it is difficult to recruit candidates for this kind of work.

The low-quality wood is processed into boards which are then sold to manufacturers of wooden pallets. The pulp is sold for processing into wood fuel (wood chips), and some of the pulp is chipped into wood chips at home.



For heating purposes, they have a wood chip boiler HDG Bavaria of 50 kW power. They consume 100 m³ of loose wood chips per year.

5. Modernization of the farm

The modernization of the farm is made possible, among other things, by tenders within Rural Development Program (RDP). Within the framework of the co-financing of the RDP 2014-2020, applications for the following measures were successfully carried out:

- Under measure M 8.6: »Support for investment in forestry technologies and in processing, mobilization and marketing of forest products« they purchased a forestry-equipped Lindner 126 HP tractor, which enables them to perform work in the forest and a Krpan GP 12 D forestry trailer, with which they can export timber and wood residues from the forest.
- Under sub-measure M 4.3: »Support for investments in infrastructure related to the development, modernization and adaptation of agriculture and forestry« skidding trails have been reconstructed to facilitate access to their forests with new machinery.



As an attraction they have two ponds on their farm, which can also be visited by visitors.

Website of the farm: www.zaganles-visic.si.

