



Forest Policy Report

SFI/2022

**Analytical report
«Efficiency of public relations of state forestry
in Ukraine»**

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About the Project “Sustainable Forestry Implementation” (SFI)

The project “Technical Support to Forest Policy Development and National Forest Inventory Implementation” (SFI) is a project established in the framework of the Bilateral Cooperation Program (BCP) of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany (BMEL) with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine (MENR). It is a continuation of activities started in the forest sector within the German-Ukrainian Agriculture Policy Dialogue (APD) forestry component.

The Project is implemented based on an agreement between GFA Group, the general authorized executor of BMEL, and the State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine (SFRA) since October 2021. On behalf of GFA Group, the executing agencies - Unique land use GmbH and IAK Agrar Consulting GmbH - are in charge of the implementation jointly with SFRA.

The project aims to support sustainable forest management planning in Ukraine and has a working focus on the results in the Forest Policy and National Forest Inventory.

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Disclaimer

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Period of research: 01.01.2021 – 05.2022.

Research objectives: capacity building to improve the efficiency of public relations of state forestry in Ukraine.

Analysis of public relations institutions (regulations and institutions)

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources

Institutionally, the Ministry of Environmental Protection deals with a wide range of environmental safety and preservation issues. Forest policy is only one of the areas of activity and control. MENR has a profile department of forest resources consisting of 5 people, a public communications department of 5 people and a press service, its own digital resources (website <https://mepr.gov.ua/>); Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/EnvironmentalofUkraine/> readers 12 000), YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo7vyKSW7hGlgBUXWs_wiQQ, 50 subscribers).

As forests are one segment among many, the proportion of forestry content in MENR is very small. In parallel, the personal page of Minister Ruslan Strilets is managed by (<https://www.facebook.com/ruslan.strelets>) with more personalized content. It should be noted that here the Minister personally comments on various events and the content is more dynamic and informal, which attracts readers. However, the theme of forests is weakly represented.

Also, a resource of the Ministry of Environmental Protection is the website "Green Country" (<https://zelenakraina.gov.ua/>), which covers only the theme of the presidential campaign for planting forests.

The activities of the press service are represented by the news, announcements of events, plans, protocols, photo albums, video gallery, regulatory framework, draft legal acts, samples and forms, announcements. There is no media rubric about us, so it is impossible to draw conclusions about media activity. There are also no links to media materials on Facebook.

A Google search for mentions using the keyword "Mindovkillia" produces mainly links to official news, press events (briefing) in which the thematic share of information on the subject of forests is critically low (3 items).

The first material is of a general news nature, and the second material on how Rivne forestry transfers seized contraband wood to the needs of the army (published on the regional website <https://business.rayon.in.ua/news/528249-na-rivnenshchini-virubanu-v-nezakonny-sposib-derevinu-peredayut-na-potrebi-armij>, however, not published by the Ministry of Environmental Protection in social media); the third material relates to the notification by the State Bureau of Investigation to an official of the State Agency of Ukraine for Exclusion Zone Management of the crime (illegal logging in the exclusion zone <https://mind.ua/news/20244075-dbr-pidozryue-ekspozadovcya-dazv-u-nezakonnij-virubci-lisu-bilya-chornobilya>).

There is a daily news update on the Facebook page. But again, the share of the theme of the forest is minimal. Work with public negativity is not carried out, even on the topic of the presidential program of forest restoration (<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=378261297742987&set=a.264734179095700>). The page is kept only in the direction of informing and does not give feedback to visitors of the page.

The Ministry has introduced a digital application "EcoThreat", which provides information about forest fires and promotes the development of environmental thinking, which is very important in the process of interaction with the public.

It is not possible to draw conclusions about the professional composition of the press service and internal regulations as there is no information on the press service composition and internal regulations on the website.

State Agency of Forest Resources of Ukraine

According to the Statute of the State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine, the SFRA is the central executive body, the activity of which is directed and coordinated by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine through the Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources and implements the state policy in the field of forestry and hunting. The State Forest Resources Agency consists of 24 regional divisions that oversee the work of state forest enterprises. They include forestry units, forest enterprises and subsidiaries.

It is the SFRA of Ukraine and its structural subdivisions that have responsibility for forestry communications in Ukraine.

The State Forest Agency has its own website (<https://forest.gov.ua/agentstvo/komunikaciyi-z-gromadskisty>), which has a sufficiently clear, well-defined structure. However, the Press Service section lacks information on the structure of the communication direction, information on the press service is not personalised and there are no links to media materials. This makes communication difficult for journalists.

The State Forest Resources Agency also has a Facebook page. (<https://www.facebook.com/forestUKR>, 14 000 subscribers), which is regularly filled with a variety of content and has a small number of reposts, but this is important for content distribution and outreach. The language of content has changed in recent months, becoming less formal, which improves perception. There are incisive discussions below the posts, indicating that the content is resonating with readers' views. However, there is also a lack of reaction to comments.

In parallel, the personal page of Yuriy Bolokhovets, Head of the State Forest Resources Agency, is ongoing (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010028957829>).

But the content is almost completely duplicated from the official page of the SFRA and has a very formalized character. Mr. Head does not give comments, does not write personal posts or comments, which harms readability and reduces attention, in particular media professionals who often visit the personal pages of heads of state institutions in search of insides.

SFRA launches a Telegram bot (@ukrforest_bot), through which you can report illegal logging, forest fires, illegal hunting, report treaty violations, send an information request, find out about 'the Green Country' programme, get useful links and make personal appointments. This is a very useful thing for communication, as there is no hotline.

There is also a YouTube channel.

(<https://www.youtube.com/c/%D0%94%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B6%D0%BB%D1%96%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE1/videos>, 202 subscribers).

The location of forests on the territory of Ukraine is not homogenous, therefore, the level of material and technical support of forestry and regional departments is different, which affects both personnel policy in the field of communications and material and technical capabilities for the creation and distribution of content.

High-income enterprises have a separate full-time unit of the press secretary, in poorer forestry, these official duties are assigned to the secretaries of Heads, employees of other departments, and, sometimes, to foresters. Often these duties are performed by freelance workers or people without special professional education.

As noted above, regional departments, forestry farms, forestry enterprises and subsidiaries are subordinated to the State Forestry Resources Agency. Analysing the social and digital media, it can be stated that there is no unified communication strategy and control over content.

Most of the structures subordinated to the SFRA keep their pages in social media at the amateur level: (there is no omnicality of content submission; there is no inclusion of the central administration in the content, there is also no reaction to complaints of consumers of services (Central Administration), enterprises in most themselves become a source of scandals and put emphasis not on the forest, but on foreign topics).

Some forestry is becoming a source of potential crises and corporate conflicts:

- Hlynske forestry <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100028920384376>;

- Forester of Bukovyna. Chernivtsi Regional Forestry Department
<https://www.facebook.com/lisivnyk.buk>.

Thus, we can say that the communication resources (social networks) of structural units and enterprises subordinated to the State Forest Resources Agency are not structured, not systematized and little controlled.

Some enterprises have their own websites, Facebook pages, individual organizations, even have Tick-Tok accounts, but there is no common content policy or communication strategy. The information landscape of enterprises subordinated to the State Forest Resources Agency is heterogeneous: from developed Kyiv, Zhytomyr and Sumy, and other regional departments that have excellent sites and communicate with territorial communities, to outsiders with semi-anonymous Facebook pages.

At the level of the State Forest Resources Agency, communications are conducted at a sufficiently high professional level.

Recently implemented public relations activities (regular and special) of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the State Forest Resources Agency

The State Forest Resources Agency is a state institution that is authorized by the Ministry of Environmental Protection to engage in forest resources, in particular, to communicate with the scientific, international and domestic public.

Accordingly, most of the events take place under the auspices and forces of the SFRA. In particular, career guidance and educational events with young people, local communities are constantly held, public involvement in the identification of damaged areas takes place, interactive incentive events, competitions, quizzes, charity events, actions in support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are held. Thus, pro-activities are taking place on the ground, but it is not possible to assess their quality remotely.

Information on proactivity can be obtained only from the website of the State Forest Resources Agency and subordinate institutions, a public report for previous years, from the pages of social networks. Publication activity in the regions initiated by the relevant departments of the SFRA and revealing the agency's activities are not available for analysis due to low citations of regional websites in search engines.

According to the Public Report of the Head of the State Forest Resources Agency for 2021 (<https://forest.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/8/%D0%BF%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%BB%D1%96%D1%87%D0%BD%D1%96%20%D0%B7%D0%B2%D1%96%D1%82%D0%B8/publiczny-zvit-za-2021.pdf>), during the analyzed period, it was done:

1. Geoportal "Forests of Ukraine" was introduced into the activities of about 100 forestry enterprises in 14 regions of Ukraine, in particular, in 2021, geoportal was introduced into the activities of 56 forestry enterprises.
2. In June 2021, an international scientific and practical conference "Forestry Science: State, Problems, Prospects for Development" was held, dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the founding of Ukrainian Research Institute for Forestry and Agroforestry and Melioration.
3. The next edition of the professional collection "Forestry and Agroforestry" is ready for printing.
4. In October 2021, at the initiative of the Institute, a meeting of the Council of the North-Eastern Scientific Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine was held in the conference hall of URIFFM, which coordinates and popularizes the scientific and educational activities of about 80 institutions of Kharkiv, Poltava and Sumy regions. At the meeting, the scientific foundations of the strategy for adapting forests and forestry of Ukraine in the conditions of climate change were discussed.
5. In May 2021, director of URIFFM, Doctor of Agricultural Sciences, Professor, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Tkach V.P. was elected a corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in the specialty "Ecology of Forests".
6. Senior Researcher of the Laboratory of Forest Crops and Agroforestry, Ph.D. in Agriculture Romyantsev M.G. became the winner of the Kharkiv Regional Competition of Young Scientists, receiving a scholarship named after O.N. Sokolovskiy in the nomination agrarian sciences.

Cooperation with international organizations and processes was carried out in accordance with the powers granted by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 13.09.2002 No. 1371. In particular, in 2021,:

1. Participated in the 16th session of FLOON.

2. Two expert discussions were taken on the preparation of a report on the implementation of international agreements on forests and the reporting format for the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests.
3. On a permanent basis, the duties of the co-chair of the joint bureau of the European Forest Commission FAO and the Committee on Forestry and Forestry of the UNECE and the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the European Forest Commission FAO were fulfilled.
4. Participated in the 42nd session of the Working Group on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management of the UNECE/FAO and the joint session of the FAO European Forest Commission and the UNECE Forest and Forestry Committee.
5. Participated in a webinar to increase the role of non-wood forest products.
6. Participated in the preparation and holding of the Ministerial Conference on the Reproduction of Forest Landscapes and the contribution of the Region of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe to the Challenge of Bonn and the ECCA 30 Initiative.
7. The preparatory process was completed and participation in the 8th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe was taken.
8. The draft program of the process for the next 4 years has been worked out.
9. Participated in the survey on "green" jobs and the launch of a mechanism for preventing the consequences of natural disasters.
10. Participated in the work of a group of experts on forestry and a working meeting on assessing the impact of climate change on forest ecosystems.
11. Specialists of the State Forest Resources Agency took part in three international trips to the Republic of Latvia to exchange experience, 4 round tables with representatives of the forest administration of the Republic of Austria, Bavaria and China, 4 trainings (3 online with the US Forest Service and 1 in the Republic of Turkey), visits of 3 international delegations (Latvia and Turkey, FAO) were provided.
12. A meeting with representatives of the Embassy of Japan and Latvia in Ukraine on the issues of expanding cooperation in the field of forestry and possible areas of support for such cooperation was held.
13. A Memorandum of Cooperation between the Latvian Forest Company and the State Forest Resources Agency was signed.
14. The law on Ukraine's accession to the Convention on the European Forest Institute has been approved.
15. FAO project to combat pine decline initiated. 2 working meetings and an introductory seminar on the project were held. A survey was conducted on the state of forest-ecological monitoring. A visit of the FAO mission to Ukraine was organized and conducted.
16. FAO project "Comprehensive, competitive and sustainable supply chains in agriculture, forestry and fisheries" has been launched (GCP/UKR/012/EC).
17. The implementation of the Ukrainian-German project "Technical support to forest policy development and national forest inventory implementation" has begun. Working groups have been formed, the project work plan for 2022 has been worked out.
18. USAID project aimed at overcoming the consequences of fires in Luhansk region has been completed. In particular, a report on the economic consequences of forest fires in 2020 in the Luhansk region was compiled; methodology for assessing the economic impact of fires on forestry; reports on the volume of wood damaged and destroyed by fires, the practices of its harvesting;

recommendations for the preservation of seed trees and key biotopes; commercial and management model for the production of wood biofuels, etc. The issue of signing a Memorandum of Cooperation with the project is being worked out.

19. The international project "Forest in Women's Hands" continues.

In the direction of internal Ukrainian communications:

1. A new Public Council of the State Forest Resources Agency was formed. Seven meetings of the Public Council were held, its governing board was elected and re-elected, and the Regulation was approved.

2. Spring and autumn actions "Create forests together" were organized and held.

Almost 60 million seedlings and tree saplings have been planted this autumn as part of the campaign, of which 6.6 million were planted by other permanent forest users in municipal and state ownership.

In addition to representatives of state forestry enterprises, about 14,000 pupils and students; more than 7,500 representatives of public organisations; and representatives of the authorities and the media took part in the tree planting activities.

During the period of the Promotion, forestry enterprises conducted: 348 excursions for children and the public, 140 lessons on forestry topics. Almost 700 activities were held to green the territories of educational institutions, kindergartens, hospitals, recreation areas, etc.

3. A separate website has been developed and presented to cover the implementation of the Program of the President of Ukraine "Green Country" (Green Country (zelenakraina.gov.ua)). The harbingers of the "Green Ukraine" campaign are the projects "The future of the forest in your hands", "Creating forests together".

4. Supported the preparation and implementation of the "Greening the Planet" and "Unite One Million People a Day" greening campaigns.

5. Cooperation has been established with ATB Corporation, Nova Poshta, "Mama, Plant Tree" project and Davines cosmetic line as sponsors of forestry works.

With the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the focus of communications changed to assisting the Ukrainian Armed Forces, increasing international cooperation, increasing attention to illegal logging and redirecting confiscated timber to the Ukrainian military.

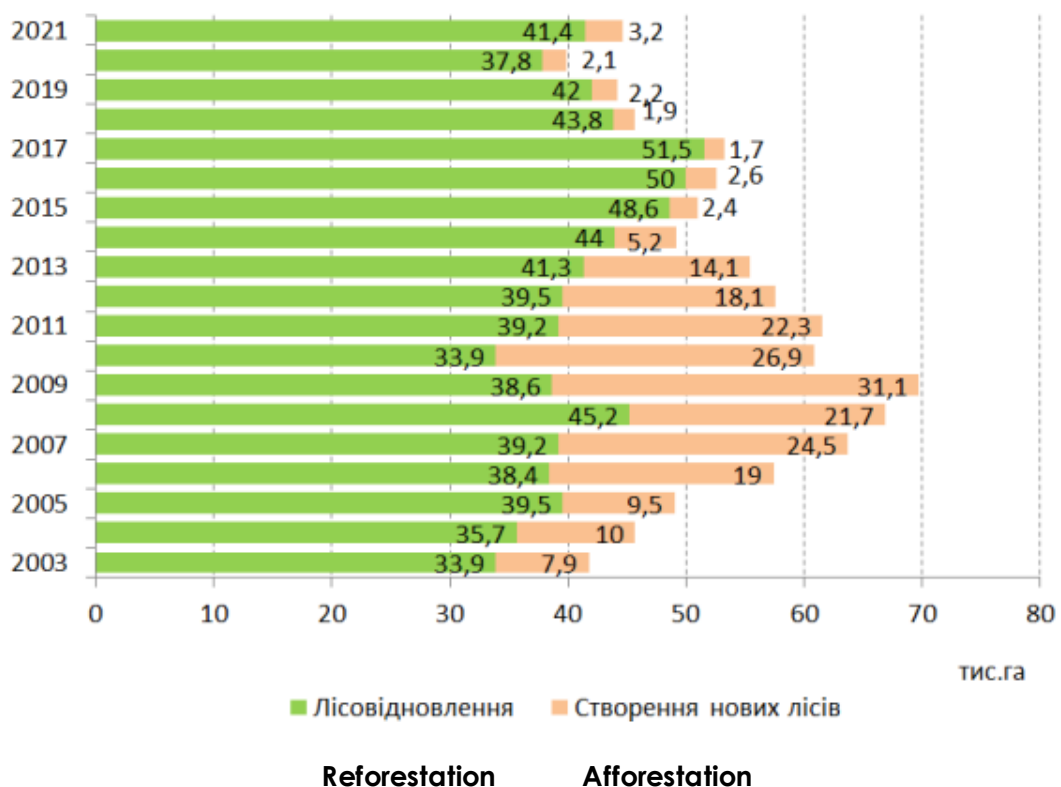
The above facts show that the State Forest Agency pays enough attention to work in the scientific and international direction, there are certain projects aimed at the domestic Ukrainian public, however, they are not so successful. In general, the State Forest Agency shows good results compared to the previous period: the website was created, a press service works (of course, the one in Kyiv is more professional), a willingness to respond to modern challenges and to learn the team, and there is some activity, but there is a range of problematic issues that need to be solved.

Identification and assessment of the fundamental deficit in public relations activities of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the State Forest Resources Agency

The main KPI of the State Forest Resources Agency's activities is preservation and restoration of forests, as it is a direct consequence of the communication work carried out with the relevant target audiences. According to recent global trends, PR should not be converted into the number of printed press releases or media publications, but into concrete changes. The dynamics of change are reflected in the following graphic:

Dynamics of forest renewal work

Динаміка робіт з відтворення лісів



Source: Public report of the Head of the State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine for 2021 (<https://forest.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/8/%D0%BF%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%BB%D1%96%D1%87%D0%BD%D1%96%20%D0%B7%D0%B2%D1%96%D1%82%D0%B8/publicnny-zvit-za-2021.pdf>), which clearly shows the growth of forest restoration compared to 2020, but a significant drop in dynamics compared to 2013-2017). This table clearly shows the directions of future work and the existing communication gaps.

Even the implementation of the presidential program "Green Country" and the invitation to its implementation of the PR agency will not solve modern challenges, since the communication policy of the State Forest Resources Agency has significant problems, without which this case cannot be solved. Since the communication direction consists not only of the Sector of International Relations, Science and Public Relations of the SFRA, but also of subordinate institutions, there are a number of problems among the positive cases. Without correcting the work of all communication units, and with it without reforming the entire system without exception, even

in the presence of a creative PR campaign, there will be a discommunication and dissonance between the values that are declared and broadcast in reality.

Key errors

1. Reduced status of forest issue

The analysis showed that the Ministry of Environmental Protection delegated the function of communication to the forestry issue of the State Forest Resources Agency. On behalf of the Government representative, this topic sounds in very small volumes, although the importance of the topic of forest conservation was emphasized by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Therefore, it would be desirable that in their communications the first persons of the Ministry of Environmental Protection from time to time raised forest themes. This will increase the status of the issue.

2. Lack of brand strategy, communication strategy, strategic vision and one-tone policy, negative image.

The study showed that the brand of the State Forest Resources Agency is not formed and individual.

In the image component there is a lot of negativity associated with illegal logging, raiding and corruption. We have two constant images: the official who covers up illegal business for big money and the forester with whom any problem can be solved for relatively little money. The image of the respectable forester, the protector of the forest, is a thing of the past. Mentally, not only logging issues have become entrenched in the industry, but illegal hunting, land expropriation and so on.

Public communications are chaotic, not systematized.

Accordingly, it is worth developing one-tone policy vertically from the ministry to the lowest level.

There is no communication strategy, PR program, concepts of key campaigns. The State Forest Resources Agency is moving in an unknown direction.

3. Lack of anti-crisis packages and pre-crisis preparation. Lack of work with negativity

Very often, news about forestry resembles the construction of a criminal chronicle (https://zaxid.net/lisove_gospodarstvo_lisgospi_tag44608/) (See Appendix 2).

The network is filled with a lot of negativity that should have been prevented. These negative materials increase distrust of both the State Forest Resources Agency and the industry in general. The following screenshots illustrate the negativity that the public has towards foresters. Accordingly, in such a case, we cannot speak of a positive change in public behaviour in the field of forest protection if we ourselves are the source of the negativity. Most of such information has no official explanation or denial by the officials involved. Even if some of these reports are fake, they must be refuted as soon as they appear in the media. If these cases really took place, there should be a response from the press services indicating the official position of the institution.

Work on neutralizing the negative is practically not carried out, there are a lot of complaints on the network, to which there is no reaction.

The network spreads news with a negative mention of the State Forest Resources Agency over the past 5 years.

Examples:

1. The State Forest Resources Agency did not allow to build a shelter for animals (derzhlisagentsiya_ukrainy_pereshkodzhaie_domu_sirka_pobuduvaty_prytulok_pid_franki_vskom_49430).
2. "Corruption" association of forestry enterprises in Zhytomyr region (<https://www.stopcor.org/ukr/section-suspilstvo/news-bitij-nebitogo-veze-naslidki-obednannya-lisgospiv-na-zhitomirschini-28-04-2022.html>)

With time and their numbers, no action is taken. The impunity of the forest rangers allows people to ignore the rules. All communication is therefore wasted.

4. Problems with reputational communications, the presence of media scandals, errors in communication with the media

According to the Yukontrol system, the State Forest Resources Agency has only recently appeared in 47 negative materials and journalistic investigations (see Annex 1). In fact, none has been responded to.

There is no data on the development of the reputation complex. Even on the social pages of the State Forestry Resources Agency and the pages of subordinate structures there is no work with negativity. It is also worth remembering the conflict with the media that arose in the Volyn (the best!!!) department, when the press service turned off the phones to avoid communication with the press.

Reputational complex is a big direction that needs to be paid great attention and which is worth a separate strategy.

Weak advocacy and almost no work with influencers.

5. Human resources policy

It was noted above that the financial level of forestry and territorial departments is not the same. Therefore, some enterprises do not have the position of press secretary or this position is occupied by people without appropriate education, who do not know either the rules of communication with the community or the rules for communicating with the media. However, the closest contacts with the public take place at the level of local communities. Therefore, it is critically important in these positions to have people with professional education. Also on the ground, public relations officers are not subordinate to the vertical of communications officers, but under the order of local managers who have no idea about the quality of communication. Moreover, press secretaries should respond deftly to crises, in particular, corruption, and moderate information in accordance with communication standards, and not aggravate the crisis by covering up their leadership. Press secretaries avoid the media to keep the post.

6. Discommunication between the State Forest Resources Agency and the Press Service of Territorial Departments and the State Enterprise

Lack of algorithms of actions and guidelines that would determine the hierarchy, the system of approvals (which should certify and control the central office, which can be solved by the press service locally). Complete inconsistency of actions, texts, messages. In fact, public relations are not institutionalized.

7. Content production.

Key errors:

Forestry is presented as private pages that write about anything that does not relate to the life of forestry (bondage, rape during the war (Golovaniv forestry <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100012470584940>)).

Lack of entertaining, interesting and educational content.

Lack of message boxes and content planning.

Very state language of communication.

Focus only on covering the activities of management (news), lack of newsjacking (monotony of news: meetings, trips, speeches, awards). There is very little content I would like to share. People are not interested in officials.

Virtually no blogging, not much storytelling

8. Public discommunication

Distribution of fakes, misunderstanding of the peculiarities of the industry and the main tasks of the industry. Lack of quality advocacy and work with influencers.

9. Development of social networks

Not all administrations lead social networks.

Not everyone works omnically.

Not all social networks are used. The policy of using social networks and messengers has not been fully formed, there is a problem with the omniqueness of content distribution.

Insufficient number of subscribers (14,000 this is not even for Kyiv), low activity under messages and a low number of dissemination (replication) of information. Probably, the problem here lies in uninteresting and unhelpful content for the general public. Bears or chicks from the forest will spread much more than an official. Moreover, the content about forests and animals is empathetic and visualizes why it is necessary to protect and increase the forest.

Likes mostly put each other forestry, and the general public is not included.

10. Prompt response and dissemination of information

The speed of response to the crisis or to the request of the media should be up to 10 minutes, but in this case, most often there is no reaction as such.

11. Poor communication of behavioral changes

This direction should be in focus for the implementation of the "Green Country" campaign.

12. Working with activists and the problematic public

The activities of the State Forest Resources Agency and its subsidiaries are related to working with negative groups: activists, service users, poachers, amber collectors, eco-activists. Therefore, their timely identification and constant communication with them is necessary

13. Prevention of specific crises (raiding, information wars, media crises)

As far as I know, these areas are not developed at all in the communication plan.

14. Political factors

It is necessary to work taking into account the political factors that are concentrated around forest resources in Ukraine, but to develop unbiased strategies, to try to bring the industry out of political influence.

15. Corporate communications

It is not known whether there is a corporate code, corporate team building, system corporate training. In the absence of it, it is necessary to develop these directions.

Proposals for improving public relations, which will be implemented by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the State Forest Resources Agency

Public relations has long ceased to have a purely informative function. The issue of communication support of forest (communication) policy and the effective implementation of the forest inventory program must be treated systematically and comprehensively. In this case, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the State Forest Resources Agency should teach Ukrainians to:

- preserve the available forest resources;
- restore and multiply them;
- protect nature and wildlife;
- don't break the rules themselves.

That is to say, these communications must not only determine for the end result awareness or accountability, but also form: **trust in the organisation that will implement the project, discipline (as following the rules of forest preservation), building a positive reputation, changing the behaviour pattern of individuals and legal entities.** People will never comply with the rules when they see them being broken by those who make them.

The effectiveness of public relations in the field of state forestry of Ukraine depends on many factors. In the process of communication of forestry enterprises, it is necessary to adhere to an integrated multi-vector approach. It was the complexity, strategic and systematic nature of communications that was the basis for the analysis of communications.

For several years now, Ukraine has seen a surge in civic engagement and environmental thinking has long been the social mainstream of Ukrainians. Accordingly, the mainstream is shaping the demand for communication as a two-way interaction between the public and the State Forest Resources Agency/Ministry of Environment. In this case, the institutions operate on a one-way communication model.

Forests of Ukraine are not just about a resource system that provides the country with wood or a strategic sphere for the construction or furniture industry. Forests in the public consciousness and mentality of Ukrainians are:

- source of income of citizens living from forest stocks (hunting, picking mushrooms and berries);
- extraction of wood (building materials and furniture creation) for domestic and export needs;
- New Year trees;
- an integral part of the folklore and mythological heritage associated with the spirits of the forest, ancient customs and cults of nature;
- active recreation area (traditional kebabs, campgrounds, recreation centers and SPA-centers; place of spiritual practices (retreats));

- safety of the population (natural air purification and flood prevention);
- distribution area of plants, animals, in particular, red book;
- Wildlife habitat, in particular red-listed animals;
- shelter in case of emergency / military conditions and many other factors that indicate the exceptional importance of preserving, restoring and increasing forest resources.

Thus, the forest is a large part of the life of Ukrainians, their history and future. Forest plantations are almost the only natural resource that today is under the care of the state and cannot be privatized in large sizes.

The forest is a home for animals!

The forest is not our lungs!

The forest is life!

Standards of communications in the field of technical support for forest protection

According to the above, we can say that the target audiences for the communication are multiple. To date, the following lines of communication (**target audiences**) can be identified that should be engaged for the actual KPI of the State Forest Resources Agency and the Ministry of Environment :

1. GR – President of Ukraine, Government, Verkhovna Rada, Ministry of Emergency Situations, state institutions and various regulatory structures.
2. International communications – cooperation with foreign partners, colleagues, institutions, public figures, activists and media professionals.
3. Scientific communications.
4. Media professionals.
5. Industrialists (woodworking industry, furniture manufacturers, amber miners, mushroom and berry harvesters, etc.) and relevant professional associations.
6. Hunters and relevant professional associations.
7. NGOs and activists (environmental, animal protection).
8. Investors who invest in forestry development.
9. The general public (residents of cities who like to relax in the forests).
10. Local communities (which historically live near forests and have income from the use of resources).
11. Internal public – the staff of the Ministry, the State Forest Resources Agency and regional departments.
12. Participants in potential conflicts (negative public), haters, potential aggressors.
13. Consumers of services.

Main directions of communications:

1. Informing about the activities of the Ministry, the State Forest Resources Agency and relevant regional institutions (transparency of the functioning).
2. Formation of the brand complex and brand strategy of the Ministry, the State Forest Resources Agency and the relevant regional institutions (transparency of functioning), since today people prefer to communicate directly with the brand, and not with the media as an intermediary.
3. Ecological education of Ukrainians (enlightenment).

4. Formation and implementation of sustainable eco-oriented narratives aimed at changing the behavior of Ukrainians.
5. Interaction with local communities.
6. Verification of risks and crises.
7. Crisis communications and pre-crisis preparation (readiness for man-made disasters, raiding, illegal logging, self-seizure of land, avoidance of animal casualties, fire prevention).
8. Identification of information attacks and neutralization of public negatives.
9. Setting up an emergency notification system, planned activities of institutions.
10. Transparency of work and fight against corruption (this factor directly affects the efficiency of the industry).
11. Reputational communications.
12. Fixing environmental crimes and responding to them.
13. Formation of a system of strategic communications.
14. Investor PR.
15. Formation of expertise.
16. Interaction between different structural units.
17. Information support of the Ministry, SFRA and regional institutions.
18. Personal communications of the heads of the Ministry, SFMPA and regional structural subdivisions.
19. Prompt response to requests from the media, the public, crisis situations of different origins.
20. Ensuring the European integration processes of the industry and the transition to Western standards of work, in particular, in communication and integration into the European information space (Global PR).
21. System analytics.
22. Blogosphere and working with opinion leaders.
23. Fact-checking and media literacy of both staff and local communities.
24. Communication monitoring and system analytics.
25. Formation and implementation of corporate culture.
26. Imagebuilding of the industry and individual professions.
27. Overcoming negative stereotypes.

Indicators of KPI communication activities

Exclusively mass media activities (the number of articles printed, proactive events or the number of press releases sent out), the number of meetings held and the writing of posts for social media is no longer an indicator of effectiveness. Key performance indicators in forestry should be highlighted:

1. Awareness of the population about actions, plans, projects and the state of forestry.
2. Increasing the level of trust in the Ministry, SFRA and regional institutions.
3. Changing consciousness among Ukrainians about Ukraine's forest resources.
4. Positive reputation of the Ministry, SFRA and regional institutions.
5. Lack of public negatives, conflicts (in particular, corporate ones), crises, scandals, negative communication.
6. Practical implementation of presidential, governmental programs, European programs.
7. Integration into the European professional and information space, introduction of the best technologies and European experience.
8. Professional staff growth.
9. Providing top-class service.

10. Increase of forest fund and protection of wild animals.
11. Readiness for crises and the presence of anti-crisis packages (ideally, prevention of).
12. The presence of a loyal journalistic pool.
13. Having a loyal public.
14. The presence of lobbyists.
15. Knowledge and publicity of the heads of the Ministry, SFRA and regional structural organizations.
16. Awareness of the central administration about the life and functioning of the Ministry, SFRA and regional structural organizations.
17. The inclusion of the central administration in the functioning of the industry and in the consumption of information.
18. The presence of clear institutionalization and operational communication in the structures, in particular, in the State Forest Resources Agency, between the head office and regional offices.
19. Actual compliance by staff with ethical standards of communication.
20. Digitalization of communication processes.
21. Communication according to a two-way model, when the main indicators of activity and curiosity are: real subscribers, reactions, comments, discussions, reposts, diverse interesting and useful content, public involvement in the formation of content, distribution of content and public reaction to it.
22. Having a sustainable corporate culture.
23. Lack of negative stereotypes.
24. Changing public biases about the corruption of the industry.

PR-processing

Effective PR-processing is possible only in the presence of strategic development of the industry, strategic concept of communications and prompt response to streaming and dynamic calls for the purpose of rapid tactical actions.

Also a prerequisite is the availability of annual and current PR-planning, content planning, databases of Ukrainian and international media, bloggers, opinion leaders, the presence of photo and video bank, sites, pages in social networks, the presence of owned-media.

In the cluster of forest protection programmes, a special place should be given to continuous communication with the local communities in the forest areas. Because the closest thing to the people is not an official from MENR, SFRA, but the forester and the regional management.

The combination of the above structural elements is a real indicator of systemic changes and efficiency of communication activities.

Proposed solutions

General:

1. Develop a brand strategy (together with the brand book) and develop a general vision of the communication development of forest policy and development strategy for 2023 by October 31.
2. The war has changed Ukrainians, their motivations and attitudes towards key values in a big way. It is necessary to conduct research and produce a detailed description of the target audience. Ukrainians are geographically dispersed all over the world. Those left behind have many triggers and psychotraumas.
3. Move to a new level of defining effectiveness with the introduction of the AMEC standards system. Also, when defining effectiveness, not only quantitative characteristics should be

considered, but also qualitative ones. In particular, concrete changes. Today, it must be understood that actions are more important than words.

4. It is also necessary:

- develop uniform standards for sites and pages in social networks (page type, design, policy content, content plan, message boxes, language, visual, style);
- develop message boxes;
- separately develop a strategy for dealing with the problematic public

Crisis management

The forest industry is highly crisis-ridden, from technogenic disasters and natural catastrophes to problems with personnel, raids, illegal logging and cases of corruption. There is a high risk of conflict with the public, even to the point of physical confrontation. It is necessary to verify, describe all risks and develop for each potential risk (with a score or colouring of its strength) an anti-crisis package which is communicated to communication staff at all levels. Provide training and learning as close to reality as possible.

In anti-crisis packages, it is necessary to prescribe an algorithm of actions and key speakers for each structural unit with timing.

Pay due attention to risk verification and their constant tracking through constant monitoring and analysis of public resonance.

Reputational communications

Particular attention should be paid to a set of reputational communications (online and offline).

This work needs to be done in several ways:

- personal branding of managers of all levels;
- work with the reputation of foresters (the community contacts them most often, and their reputation suffers the most);
- building trust, therefore, full transparency of communication;
- fighting corruption and reducing the number of public scandals on the subject (go public first, apologise to the public, make a helpline to expose bribe-takers quickly on their own, not hide from inconvenient media people) ;
- work with negativity in social networks, react and respond to negative comments, analyze each stated case, correct negative situations.

The main thing is to realize that the war will not write down scandals and crises.

Important! Do not create new crises and do not deepen old ones.

Most of the negative information available online has not been officially clarified or refuted by the relevant officials. Even if some of these reports are fake, they should be refuted as soon as they appear in the media. If these cases did occur, there should be a response from the press services indicating the official position of the institution (briefing, press statement).

A separate direction is the personal brand of the head and his mediatization.

It is also necessary to constantly monitor the mention of SFRA in investigative journalism and special monitoring systems.

You need to set up proper advocacy and work with influencers.
Creation of an anonymous hotline.

Work with staff

It was noted above that the financial level of forestry and territorial departments is not the same. Therefore, some enterprises do not have the position of press secretary or this position is occupied by people without appropriate education who do not know either the rules of communication with the community or the rules for communicating with the media. However, the closest contacts with the public are at the local community and local media level. It is therefore critical to have people in these positions with a professional background. In my opinion, it is necessary to conduct a review of all public relations personnel, the communication history of the units and offer (if necessary) either advanced training (studies) or dismissal with replacement by someone with a professional background. It is also possible to consolidate press offices at local levels (the press office of a department can manage the communications of its state-owned enterprises).

Also in the local public relations staff are not subordinated to the communications vertical, but to local leaders who have no understanding of the very essence of communication. Moreover, spokespersons need to react skilfully to crises, in particular corrupt ones, and moderate information according to communication standards, instead of escalating the crisis by covering up for their management.

Often, press secretaries are afraid of the negative reaction of their manager to their actions, so they avoid communicating with the media, which deepens the crisis. It is advisable to create a Regulation on the press service, where to enter information about official duties and the system of subordination of the press service. Develop general algorithms for the actions of press services on typical situations (force action, picket, contact with the media). If the specialist on the spot does not know how to do the right thing in a particular situation, redirect contact to the Communications Department of the SFRA, especially in cases of local corruption scandals.

Local officials are mostly conservative and have no right to put pressure on the press secretary in any way. That is why they need to get the local chief out of control, at least significantly weaken his influence on the dismissal procedure. Also, for the management of all levels and structural units, it is necessary to conduct trainings on communication and the basics of interaction with the public and media.

Due to the massive outflow of Ukrainians abroad, it is necessary to develop a program to support people in order to preserve staff.

It is necessary to take care of the digital and media literacy of staff, since the reputation of the employee is reflected in the reputation of the enterprise.

Proactivity

In addition to the general events "Drawing Contest" or "Planting Trees", it is necessary to integrate the community into constant interaction: plant trees - take care of them, inspect, so as not to be cut down, it is better to replace the drawing contest with the best video, which the forestry will publish in its Teak Tok or YouTube. Lecture is better to hold in the forest and turn it into a solution to specific environmental activities. For children and young people it is better to arrange forest quests with prizes.

Implementation of online activities.

Content

Work out and unify the content policy. Introduce strategic and operational content planning.

The war made its own adjustments to the information and content sphere. Now we have to talk about: the danger of being in the forest with an explanation of why; about the dangers of subversive and reconnaissance groups, because they move through forests; about the psychological state of people and the ability to provide assistance; about animals during hostilities and how they can be helped and how they are already being helped; do not be afraid to talk about problems (if the price of firewood rises, then it is necessary to explain the components of the tariff); it is necessary to speak and show the damage that the occupiers caused to forestry, about the personnel who are now at war; talk more about the volunteer movement, rejoice in success at the front.

It is necessary to diversify the topics: besides official information, present stories about the forest, its inhabitants, employees, different tips (how to cut trees properly, what can/do not do in the forest..., what to do in case of....., make a link to newsjacking) following the example of State Emergency Service and Ukrposhta) The forest is very interesting!

At the same time, the possible tragic consequences of deforestation (animal deaths, floods, destruction, decline of the timber industry) should be shown in order to trigger irritation and emphasise emotional intelligence.

It is also important to review the language of communication and move away from a formal, clichéd, official business style. It is better to communicate with people in ordinary, beautiful, figurative language.

What do people do in the forest? Not only work, but also rest. Therefore, I recommend introducing entertaining and informative content into communication. Now the problem of mental health is very relevant for Ukrainians, so they must be removed from a depressed state. Humor will make the content interesting and increase reach. By the way, among schoolchildren and young people you can announce a competition of memes.

For a positive perception of the State Forest Resources Agency, I propose to develop a cheerful creative image, such as dog Patron (SES).

Content must be personalized to each target audience.

It is necessary to explain everything to people and to work proactively. Every step, every action has to be explained. Ahead of the curve, not after the fact.

Social networks

Special attention to fact-checking and total transparency of communications.

Successful foreign cases of forest preservation and restoration, in particular from Germany, should also be added to the policy content, which would be appropriate as part of the cooperation program.

It is necessary to blog / to establish work with bloggers (the forest is very interesting!), as well as to involve influencers in communication.

It is necessary to adapt the content to martial law, taking into account the censorship of wartime.

In the long term, create owned-media and intensively develop digital direction.

Perhaps to establish a collaboration with the SES, which are related to the forest theme. They have a very creative and flexible approach to communications, and their creativity goes into the hearts and minds of information consumers.

Write about how the MENR, SRFA and all structural units help the country. In general, more talk about the cuisine of foresters and all the good things that are happening so that the positive is greater than the negative.

We hold the information front, tell foreign partners how the occupiers harm forests and animals.

We introduce remote services.

We conduct training in case of contact with the enemy, especially in forestry bordering Belarus.

Increase the share of valuable content that will be stored and replicated.

The basic principles of communication should be:

- continuity of communication;
- pro bono - we do more than we get;
- we help the state.

Maximum transparency in communications.

Innovation in the forest industry is needed not only in the working tools of foresters, but also in communication solutions.

Determination of SFI project inputs (e.g. report on German experience on public relations between state forestry and society, trainings on effective public relations activities)

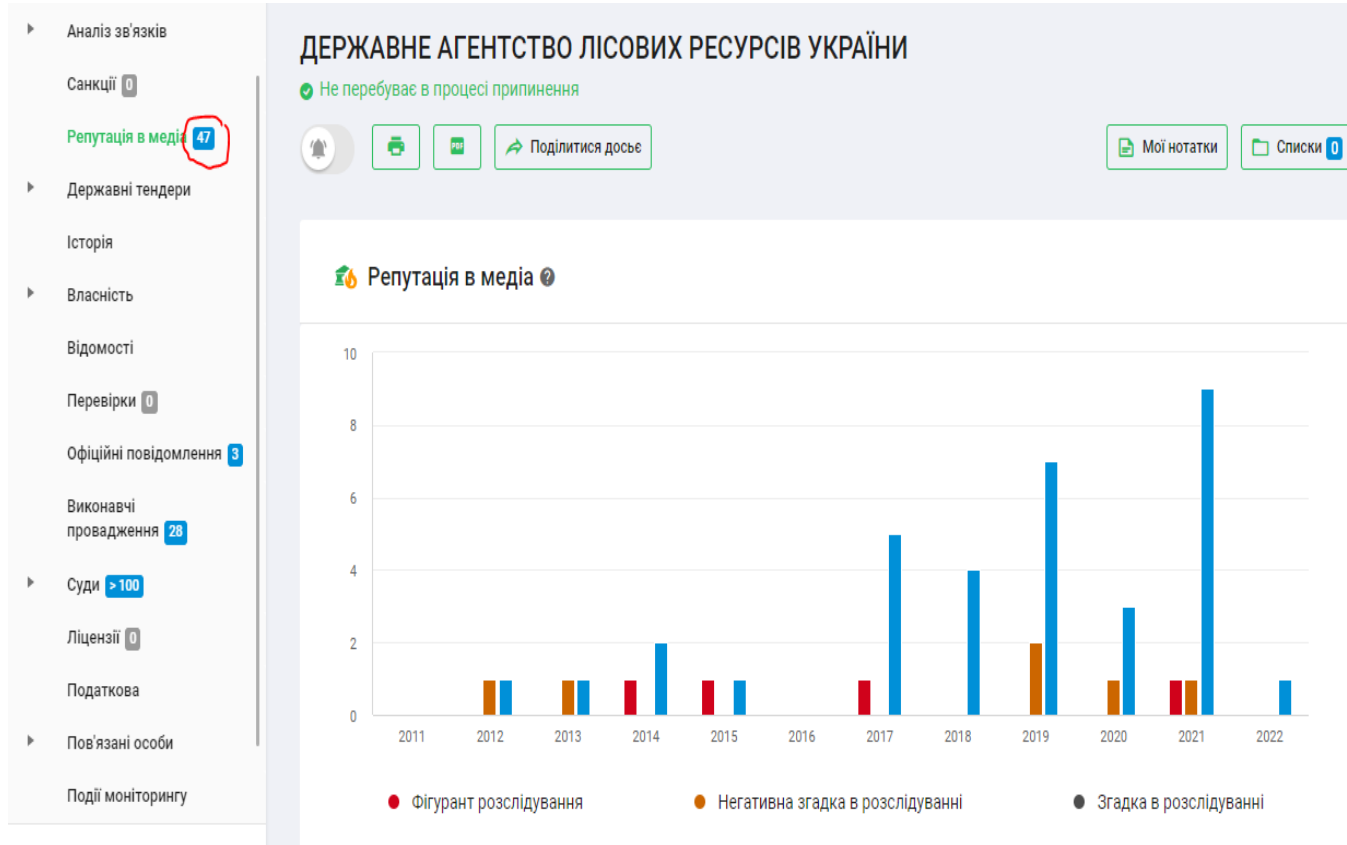
To form a sustainable result on the part of German partners, it is necessary to:

1. Help the press office of the State Forestry Agency and all subordinate institutions and the SEs adopt European communication standards, the AMEC system and take into account the Barcelona principles 3.0.
2. Conduct trainings, education and retraining on an ongoing basis. The communication field is very dynamic and covid pandemics are very different from the challenges of war. Knowledge is constantly being updated, trends are changing and new challenges emerge depending on socio-political and economic superdynamics.
3. Conduct training sessions for State Forest Agency management and all subordinate institutions and state enterprises on the fundamentals of public communication, where it is clear to convey the role of media, communication with the public, etc.
4. Invite communication and working staff to Germany to exchange experiences.
5. Motivate staff for changes
6. Control the creation of a brand and communication strategy.
7. Control the processing and implementation, periodically make sociological measurements.
8. Control the work of requested PR agencies: learn plans, strategies.
9. Support for the development of an effective SMM tool for the State Forest Agency's work.
10. Help in institutionalizing the communication vertical in the industry.
11. Help in the formation of material and technical base for creating interesting content: drones, motion cameras, tripods, licensed installation programs, light.
12. Develop together with the State Forest Resources Agency and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine digital owned-media.

Annex 1. Extract from the Yukontrol monitoring system from 11.07.2022.

State Forest Resources Agency

Media reputation




investigative subject negative mention in the investigation mention in the investigation

Annex 2. Screenshots of searches


Forestries

ЛІСГОСПИ

17:46 06-07-2022	СБУ оголосила підозру директору миколаївського підрозділу «Галсільлісу»
10:36 23-06-2022	На Львівщині третій день шукають 62-річну жінку, яка зникла в лісі
11:19 12-06-2022	Двох лісівників з Тернопільщини затримали під час продажу деревини на 500 тис. грн
13:54 09-06-2022	ДБР завершило розслідування смертельної ДТП із директором Надвірнянського лісгоспу
15:14 08-06-2022	Керівника військового лісництва на Львівщині затримали за незаконну торгівлю деревиною
11:43 06-06-2022	Керівник заповідника «Медобори» чотири рази незаконно звільняв підлеглого
11:52 26-05-2022	Чотирьох керівників лісгоспів із Закарпаття звільнили через корупцію
17:34 25-05-2022	Польські лісівники передали 22 позашляховики для української армії
12:40 16-05-2022	Цивільним мешканцям Хмельниччини дозволили відвідувати ліси
12:44 20-04-2022	Українців просять не відвідувати ліси на звільнених від росіян територіях
12:15 20-04-2022	41-річний мешканець Волині вкрав у лісівників заготовлену деревину
15:32 16-04-2022	За день на Львівщині висадили 50 тисяч дубів та сосен
13:00 08-04-2022	Мер міста на Рівненщині попередив про заміновані ділянки в лісах
17:33 05-04-2022	Мешканцям Львівщини заборонили в'їзд в ліси транспортом та розведення вогню
14:38 21-02-2022	Екологи виявили масштабні вирубки пралісів на масиві Свидовець
11:49 18-02-2022	Лісівника з Волині посадили на 4 роки за смертельну ДТП з мотоциклістами
15:22 16-02-2022	Браконьєр заплатив 18 тис. грн за застрелених козуль у нацпарку на Хмельниччині
13:45 27-01-2022	Лісівник з Волині заплатив 34 тис. грн штрафу за нелегальний продаж деревини
11:49 17-01-2022	Депутата Тернопільської райради затримали на хабарі у 25 тис. грн

- 13:55 13-01-2022 35-річний лісоруб загинув на Тернопільщині внаслідок падіння дерева
- 15:37 10-01-2022 Трьох закарпатських лісників звинуватили у незаконних рубках на 4 млн грн
- 14:03 10-01-2022 Затриманий за хабар директор підрозділу «Галсільлісу» відсудив 985 тис. грн**
- 17:14 31-12-2022 Біля Бродів протестувальники знову перекрили трасу Київ – Чоп
- 13:38 30-12-2022 Працівники лісгоспу перекрили рух трасою Київ-Чоп біля Бродів
- 11:35 26-12-2022 Крадії лісу на Закарпатті під час втечі перекинули вантажівку у потічок
- 15:58 14-12-2021 Двох лісників із Закарпаття затримали за торгівлю посвідченнями мисливців
- 12:40 10-12-2021 Буковинського лісника оштрафували на 34 тис. грн за неналежну охорону лісу
- 13:42 02-12-2021 На Закарпатті виявили масштабні незаконні рубки лісу на 30 млн грн
- 17:28 01-11-2021
- 

Врятувати рядового бурого 🇺🇦

В українських Карпатах скорочується популяція ведмедів
- 11:17 13-10-2021 ДБР викрило волинського лісника на хабарі у 29 тис. грн
- 17:38 12-10-2021 Працівників Яворівського національного парку підозрюють у розкраданні лісу
- 17:33 04-10-2021**
- 

ДБР викрило масштабну схему поборів з лісгоспів на Тернопільщині

Заступник начальника управління стратегічних розслідувань Віталій Кравчук був затриманий під час отримання траншу в сумі \$5000
- 16:40 23-09-2021 У Мукачеві директора лісгоспу затримали на хабарі у 7 тис. грн
- 13:05 23-09-2021 Закарпатський лісгосп звинуватили у вирубці пралісів
- 15:21 20-09-2021 Двох підприємців з Львівщини затримали за організацію масштабної схеми експорту лісу**

Annex 3. Scandal in Volyn Region

The Volyn Forestry Department refused to comment on the corruption scandal

20 листопада 2021 | 12:01

У Волинському управлінні лісового господарства відмовилися коментувати корупційний скандал



Подобається Поширити 16

У Волинському управлінні лісового та мисливського господарства уникають коментувати корупційний скандал навколо директорки ДП "Волинський лісовий селекційно-насінневий центр" Тетяни Наводнічик, яку 24 листопада затримали на хабарі.

"ВолиньUA" намагалося сконтактуватися з пресслужбою відомства, але нам відмовили у коментарі. Це не вперше в управлінні лісового господарства Волинської області намагаються уникати розмов щодо незручних тем.

Зазначимо, що директорка ДП "Волинський лісовий селекційно-насінневий центр" Тетяна Наводнічик 24 листопада була затримана на хабарі розміром 10 тисяч гривень. Ці гроші посадова особа отримала як неправомірну вигоду за реалізацію селекційних сортів саджанців дерев за заниженими цінами.

Наразі вирішується питання про підозру за статтею 368 Кримінального кодексу України.