



FIRELIFE
Erdőtűz-megelőzési
Projekt



LIFE+ Information
and Communication

FIRELIFE

FOREST FIRE PREVENTION AND TRAINING PROJECT

After LIFE Communication Plan
2019-2022



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1. Introduction

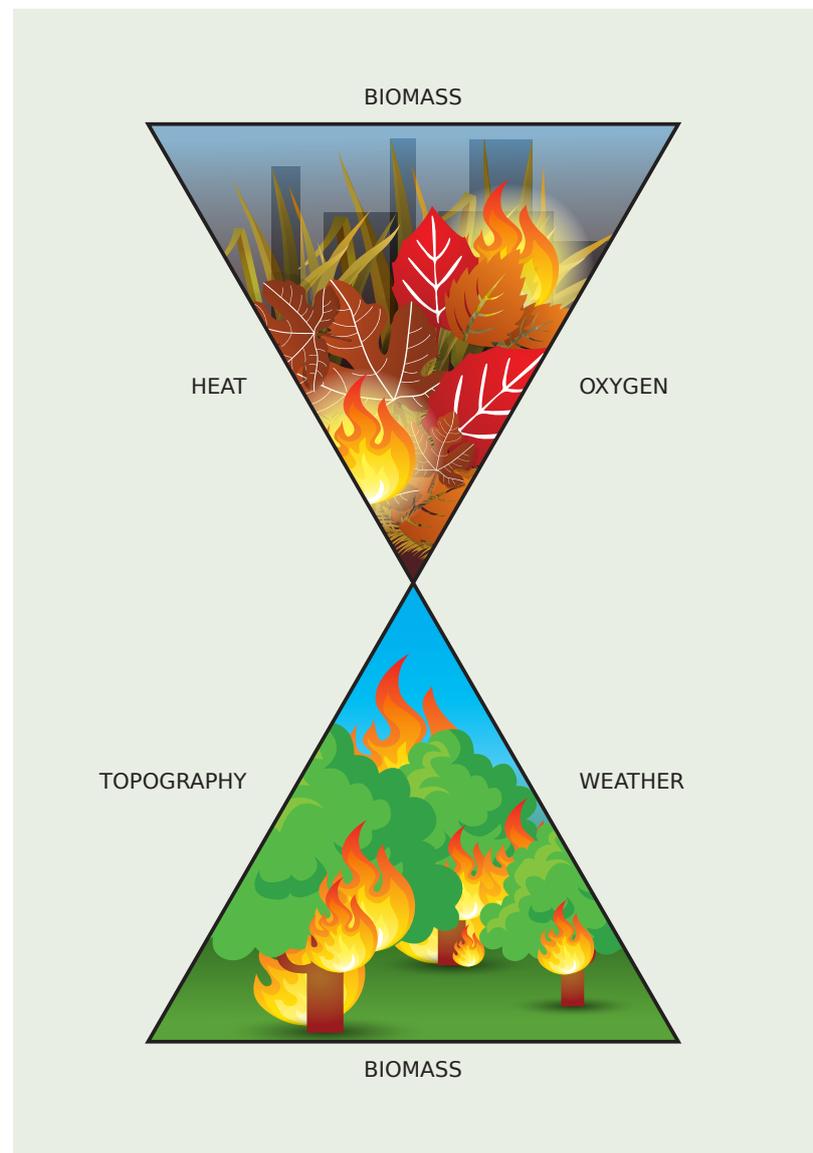
Although forest fires are classified – for statistical purposes and in everyday speech – as natural disasters, forest fires are unlike other natural disasters in that they are generally human-induced in Europe and thus in Hungary as well.

Of all fires, 99 percent originate from human causes, while biomass, landscape and land use are determined by human activities on 99 percent of Europe's and Hungary's territory. Although this is sobering, it also provides an opportunity to reduce the number, extent and damage of forest and vegetation fires, even in the short term. However, it should also be borne in mind that fire is not a problem everywhere, and in some areas, controlled burning is an important tool for forest and vegetation fire prevention.

Due to changes in land use, society and weather in Hungary, larger forest fires began to appear in the 1990s, while the number of fires and the affected area also rose sharply. In 2012, two forest fires affected about 14,000 hectares of forest, besides 13,137 wildland fires on 76,546 hectares of non-forest areas.

As we all know, fires (including forest and vegetation fires) need three things to burn: fuel or biomass, oxygen, and heat; this is called the Triangle of Fire. What is less widely known is that the spread of the forest fire is also affected by three factors: biomass, topography and weather. These parameters constitute the fire environment triangle. There are sides on both triangles that are determined by nature –

such as oxygen, topography and weather – leaving the aspects of heat and biomass to be dealt with through prevention.



2. A *FIRELIFE* Projekt

The FIRELIFE Forest Fire Prevention Communication and Training Project targeted both the sides of the triangle that can be directly affected by humans.

It sought to, on one hand, draw attention to the risk of forest fires through broad, target group-specific communication, as well as to teach people about the proper use of fire in the forest; and on the other hand, to acquaint professionals in the area with the synergies and methods of forest fire prevention and biomass management.



With appropriate and effective communications, it is possible to make people cause less fires. The education and training of professionals, forest owners and farmers, as well as proper regulation and targeted subsidies can help to create land use and biomass conditions that slow down, limit and localize the spread of the forest and vegetation fires.

A special feature of the project was that some groups took part both as training and communication target groups and as stake-

holders. It is important to emphasize that FIRELIFE is a communication project where education and awareness raising are not auxiliary objectives but primary purposes.

The precondition for launching the project was that the data collection systems of the forest authority and the fire brigade have been unified and re-organized since 2010, and this provided a basis on which we were able to make several socio-economic applied research projects exploring the causes of vegetation fires.



Events

Within the framework of the project, we highlighted the importance of forest fire prevention at various events. We worked with traditional print media at forestry industry events, but we tried to draw attention either with special tools (e.g. drip torch) or deliberately incorrectly printed roll-ups (e.g. depicting a deer with roe antlers) that made experts in the field take notice. When they came to us to report the error, they took a leaflet at the same time.

Our participation in retail, tourism, villages, forest schools, schools and other children's events were more successful than expected. We built a mobile forest fire prevention adventure trail that could easily be packed on a trailer and installed anywhere - whether in Budapest or next to a forest. At some stations on the adventure trail, we introduced children to forest fire prevention and the dangers of forest fires with drawing, creative, logical, skill-developing and other fun activities. About 700 to 800 children a day can visit the adventure trail. Its central elements are the forest fire bouncy castle and the watering wall. The bouncy castle attracts children like a magnet at any event. If you have a forest warden standing on a barrel, only one or two children pay attention, but if they can jump up and down and play with water guns, everything changes. Children and school classes who visited the adventure trail were awarded a Forest Patrol certificate, which they could remind them in the future as well of their experiences.

Direct Communication

In the framework of direct communication, we visited people living on farms and regularly visited the forest rest areas around Budapest. Personal communication is very effective even in the short term. No later than in the second year, we saw that everyone made sure to have enough water with them to extinguish fires. Over the four-year-period we saw that, after the initial reaction of surprise, people were always very friendly and welcoming. In addition to many friendly words and BBQ invitations, personal communication results in a lot of feedback on the effectiveness of some communication tools and handouts, and provides useful ideas for additional developments.

Integration of Forest Fire Prevention into Public Education

The project and the forest authority do not have enough resources to reach every student, so we considered it important to incorporate information about forest fire prevention into the school curriculum. To this end, we have prepared lesson plans, background papers, tutorials and fun activities, and finally, the topic of forest fires was included into 4th and 10th grader textbooks. Tips and advice for setting and extinguishing campfires in the forest were included in the curriculum and textbooks of teacher trainings on environmental and forest-related issues.

Documentary and educational film about forest and vegetation fires in Hungary

The film serves two purposes. On the one hand, it presents the causes of forest fires in Hungary and the damage they do, and on the other hand, it reviews the possibilities for prevention, e.g. it teaches the viewer where, when and how to make a campfire in the forest and, more importantly, how to extinguish it properly. The film can be broadcast free of charge by television stations, but it is also an important aid in education, as the 20-minute film provides a good basis for learning the most important first steps of forest fire prevention. The film provides a basis on which the issue can be easily discussed outdoors or in the classroom.

Storybooks

Children are receptive to many topics, and especially to information about fires and forests, thus they can convey information about the careful use of fire to their entire families. Within the framework of the project, two storybooks were created: one for small children who are not yet able to read and for their parents, and one for those who are already reading independently. We have also prepared a sticker booklet because, in our experience, all children love stickers, especially if the stickers are used to solve the exercises based on a story.



FIRELIFE Prevenção e gestão de incêndios

C6 – Audiovizuális ismeretterjesztő anyag 12 éven felüliek részére



Jelenleg nincs erdőtüz-megelőzés témájában semmilyen audiovizuális eszköz, amellyel hatékonyan elérhető lenne az egyik legfontosabb célcsoportunk: a fiatalok. Ezt az űrt pótoljuk a várhatóan jövő év elejére elkészülő kisfilmmel, amellyel terveink szerint jelen lennénk számos rendezvényen és oktatási segédanyagként is funkcionál majd.

M5 Mindenki Akadémiája



Signs and billboards

About 2,000 thematic information signs in different sizes were produced in the framework of the project, all meeting the same quality and safety standards as public road signs. These boards were placed on forest paths and in rest areas by forest owners and national park patrols. The forest authority placed them at highway car parks, but the signs were given to zoos and arbo-retums as well, where people learn about nature. The boards have the same colours and logos, so not only the 2x1 meter board,

but also the 600 mm road sign sized board remind people of forest fires. Several foresters have prepared additional signs using the unified content and form that we designed.

During the most high-risk summer period, we have expanded our awareness-raising activities to include billboards beside motorways. For communication and traffic safety reasons, only a short message can be placed on these surfaces, but it effectively complements other communication tools.



Gifts and handouts

Children are always more enthusiastic about tasks if they know that there is a gift at the end, no matter what or how small. However, we have seen that adults are very much the same. We tried to choose handouts that are different from typical project gifts and that are both useful for the target group and carry the fire prevention message as long as possible. Thus, in addition to the usual pencils and pens, we also gave out gym bags, reflective vests and matches.

Training axis

Preventing forest fires is an interdisciplinary issue that requires a lot of collaboration between various professions and organizations. The purpose of the trainings was to present the causes of forest fires, the factors influencing fires and the widest range of tools for prevention. Different professionals have contributed different aspects of knowledge, some parts are a novelty for everyone, and each professional promotes forest fire prevention in their own way in their separate fields. We are convinced that well-designed support systems, a supportive forest fire prevention legal environment, cost-effective and professional prevention techniques for field forestry and nature conservation professionals, as well as fire-protection professionals who are familiar with the special characteristics of the forest are crucial for effective prevention.

In addition to on-site trainings, the materials were divided into modules and incorporated as e-learning units into the training curriculum for forestry, nature conservation and fire-fighting professionals.



As part of the project



250,000 leaflets and information sheets were printed



5 million brochures and flyers included forest fire information



36,500 story books were published



31 radio- and **11** tv interviews were given



25 articles on forest fire prevention were published



875 different online platforms cited the articles



59 000 people have been contacted directly



60 events in which we participated (117 event days in total)



32,000 children have completed the adventure trail



2000 information signs and **73,000** posters have been put up



950 officials have attended our trainings



4. What has been the impact of the project?

Compared to 2012, the number and area of fires fell to 1/3 by the end of the project period, despite the fact that in 2018, both the number of fire-risk days and the extent of fire hazard areas were about 20 percent higher than in 2012 in Hungary and Europe.

The communication project drew attention to the forest fire problem and restarted many forest fire prevention processes that had been abandoned. For example, the use of controlled burning as a biomass management tool has become possible again.

On the basis of the information received during the implementation of the project, we have improved the fire prohibition system, which now operates more flexibly and faster, using forest fire indices calculated by the EU JRC. Daily updated fire-prevention maps have been placed on the project's website, where related leaflets can be accessed immediately.

Many people have learned that forest fire in Hungary is also a growing risk that originates from human causes, and that it is not just something you see on TV, but which could also happen nearby.





5. What lessons can others learn from the project?

Involving children can help transfer forest fire prevention knowledge to communities and families which are otherwise not interested in the topic. In order for this to work, the knowledge transfer should involve experience-based learning and the ratio of new knowledge to fun should be about 1 to 4.

It is worthwhile to involve the stakeholders (forest owners, disaster management, national parks) and target-group related organizations (farmers associations, hiking groups, teacher associations) into the dissemination of information material. This, in addition to being cost-effective, significantly increases the delivery rate of materials on the one hand, and on the other hand, the dissemination participant identifies more with project goals.

It is important to use a uniform design and logo for forest fire prevention so that viewers immediately recall the message from the board and the poster. For communication materials, we suggest including a lot of fun activities and attractive diagrams instead of text only.

With regards to communicating about events, it is better to join a well-known event instead of creating one for ourselves (children's events, village festivals, events related to forestry or nature protection, sporting events or trade shows), which enables us to reach far more people and also to limit expenses on organization, administration and marketing. Of course, good communication materials always increase the willingness of the public to get involved, such as an interesting presentation, or perhaps a fire prevention adventure trail with a bouncy castle.

There are companies that market their products to a target group that we consider important. If we manage to convince them of the importance of forest fire prevention, and they offer us even just a tiny space in their newsletter, catalogue or website, they can help to spread our message to a broad audience. Stihl, for example, informed gardeners and farmers with a brief heading in their catalogue

including a reference to the project website, but several supermarket chains have also added project information to their websites on barbecuing. In addition to our information booklets, the Decathlon sports store also posted our posters in their department stores. These firms helped to save hundreds of hectares of Hungarian forest with their environmentally conscious and cooperative attitude.

As a result of the news and communication generated by the project, editors and journalists have also begun to deal with the issue of forest fire prevention, which is a major step forward, as until now, only major fires were reported. During the project

period, newspapers have been able to raise awareness of forest and vegetation fires at the beginning of the season, and many articles and radio news pieces have been made using the background material, interviews, and films published by the project.



6. Afterlife Communication Plan



After project communication shall be divided into two parts. Some elements have been designed to be continued after the project period without any financial background, and there are some for which the funds are sought to be provided or raised by the applicant.

ACTION 1 – Printed material

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Type of printed material	Period/ number of copies	Dissemination method
Posters	3,000 copies per types were planned to be printed in 2019 and in 2021	By forest owners, disaster management authorities, governmental offices, public education institutions, on events and on teachers' training courses. Via post – on demand
Storybook – The world of forest fire	10,000 copies in 2019 and in 2021	School programmes, school events and science fairs
Integrated information leaflets for children and hikers	100,000 copies per year, with new exercises every second year	By forest owners, disaster management authorities, governmental offices, touristic offices, holiday camps, school programmes and events
Articles on forest fire prevention published in the free magazine "Konyhasziget"	400,000 copies once a year before barbecuing season (spring or early summer)	Grocery stores and restaurants
Information on forest fire prevention in Stihl catalogues	2,000,000 copies divided between the Spring 2019 and Spring 2020 issues	By Stihl dealers, lumberjack contests, forest and gardening fairs, directly to post boxes
A5 timetables for schoolchildren with the following slogans: "Prevent Forest Fires" and "Cool and Useful"	200,000 copies per year	Attached to schoolbooks; given at events, forest school programmes or disaster management authorities
Information on forest fire prevention included into science and nature schoolbooks	Reprinted every school year, according to the number of classes	Disseminated through the school textbook provider

ACTION 2 – Events

2/1 Forest fire prevention adventure trail

We plan to operate the adventure trail 15 days a year in the future. We both aim to return to our former host events [Gyereksziget (“Kids’ Island”, fire prevention day at Budakeszi Vadaspark, Biztonság Hete (“Safety Week”), Erdők hete (“Forest Week”), Erdővarázs (“Miraculous Forest”), Muzsikál az erdő (“Music of Forests”)] and visit the educational institutions of the towns which were affected by the most forest and wildfires in the year before.

2/2 Contribution to teachers’ training courses

We would like to present at or hold three training courses per year with a special programme on forest fire prevention and outdoor education.

2/3 Participation in disaster management, social, forest and game management, nature preservation events and training courses

We would like to join three training courses per year with a special programme on forest fire prevention and provide a forum for exchange on forest fire prevention information.

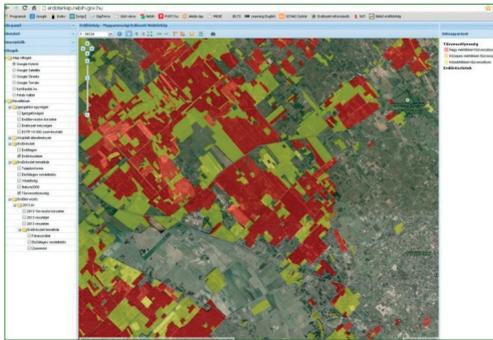
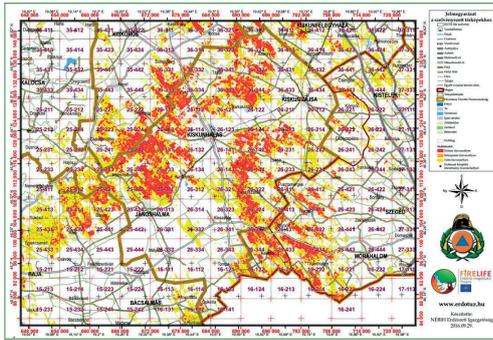
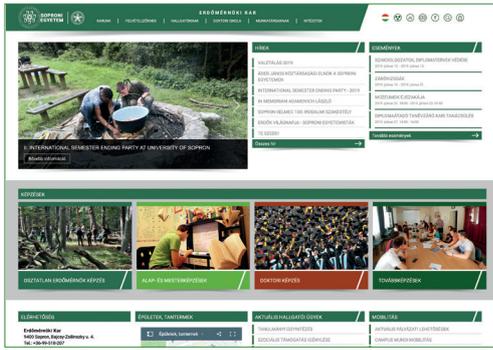
ACTION 3 – Website

The daily updated forest fire ban system will be continuously operated through the project website, offering relevant downloadable information and maps for other online providers. Project outcomes and other up-to-date information will also be available on the site.

ACTION 4 – Outdoor signs

The expected lifespan of the 2,000 outdoor signs is about 10-12 years, which facilitates further long-term communication after the project. Damaged signs will be replaced.





ACTION 5 – Training and education

5/1 University of Sopron – Faculty of Forestry

Training on forest fire prevention at the University of Sopron’s Faculty of Forestry will continue after the end of the project as well, and we are also planning to launch a course in English.

5/2 National University of Public Service

Forest fire prevention has been incorporated into the curriculum of disaster management studies at the National University of Public Service, and this training will continue as well.

5/3 Training for consultants

We would like to incorporate one module per year on forest fire prevention into the credit system for consultants on agriculture and forestry, and we have offered to develop e-learning courses on this issue as well.

5/4 Forestry Professionals

Forest fire prevention training material will be available for the obligatory forestry professional training courses.

5/5 Disaster Management training courses

Project training materials have been incorporated into the disaster management training system. In addition, we plan to organise two conferences or training courses per year in close cooperation with the National Fire Prevention Committee.

5/6 Public Service Training System (Pro Bono)

Forest fire prevention has been incorporated into the training system as a course which requires personal attendance and which has been very popular. We would like to obtain accreditation for this so-called mixed course as well which is divided into e-learning and in-person sessions, and make it available once a year.

Controlled burning

AKCIÓ 6 – FIRELIFE Bicycle

We have managed to keep the FIRELIFE project bicycle in good condition, so it will continue to carry on the project message in Budapest between 2019 and 2022.



Estimated Annual Budget for 2019-2022

Action		Expenses (Euro)
1	Printed materials	
1/1	Poters	2000
1/2	Story Book - "The world of forest fires"	3000
1/3	Integrated information leaflets for children and hikers	6000
1/4	Article on forest fire prevention in the "Konyhasziget" magazine	0
1/5	Forest fire prevention information in the Stihl catalogue	0
1/6	A5 timetables for schoolchildren with the following slogans: "Prevent Forest Fires" and "Cool and Useful"	1000
1/7	Forest fire prevention information in science and nature studies school textbooks	0
2	Participation in events	20 000
3	Website operation and updates	3000
4	Replacement of damaged outdoor signs	500
5	Organization and integration of training courses	3000
Total		38 500

Because the applicant is a public authority, the budget has to be approved every year



Project Data

Place of implementation: Hungary

Project ID: LIFE13 INF/HU/000827

Project start date: 1 July 2014

Project finish date: 31 January 2019

Project period: 55 months

Total budget: 943.830 €

Website: www.erdotuz.hu

Email: nagyda@nebih.gov.hu

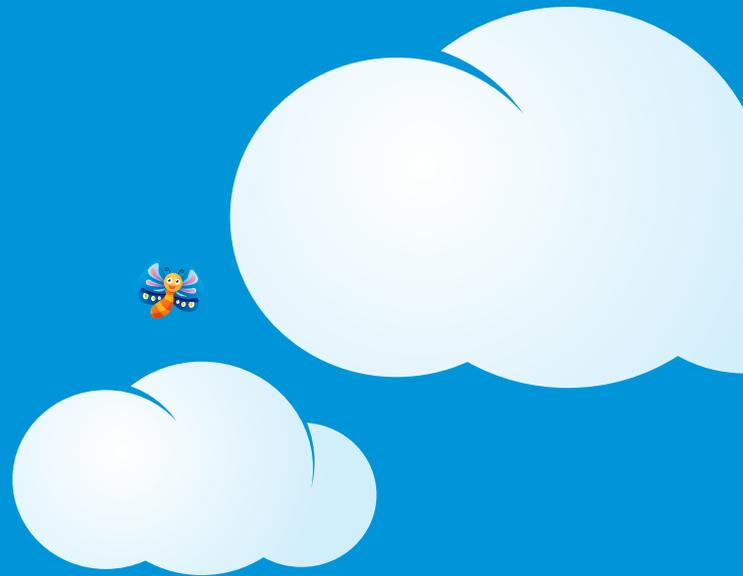
Project beneficiary: NÉBIH

Main sponsor of the project: European Commission's LIFE + program

Co-sponsor of the project: Magyar Fejlesztési Bank Zrt.

Sponsors of the project:

- Ministry of Agriculture
- National Directorate General for Disaster Management
- University of Sopron Faculty of Forestry
- National Fire Prevention Committee
- National Forestry Association
- Association of Private Forest Owners and Farmers
- Stihl Magyarország Kft.





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