



10 YEARS OF PEOPLE EMPOWERMENT SUCCESS

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*Dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme in Ukraine*



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

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Small Grants Programme in Ukraine*

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# INTRODUCTION

## GLOBAL LEVEL

The Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Established in 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, the GEF SGP embodies the very essence of sustainable development by “thinking globally, acting locally”. Providing financial and technical support to projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people’s well-being and livelihoods, SGP demonstrates that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental imperatives.

With a presence in over 130 countries, SGP has supported over 23,000 community-based projects on biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, prevention of land degradation, protection of international waters, and reduction of the chemicals impact, while generating sustainable income opportunities.

SGP promotes community-based innovation, capacity development and empowerment through grant projects of local civil society organizations (CSOs). SGP is rooted in a strong recognition that CSOs and local communities have a deep understanding and knowledge of their environment and community needs, and a unique ability to act as stewards of society’s assets. SGP empowers them to seek innovative solutions to global environmental challenges, and fosters their active participation in the development, testing, and application of such solutions, thus catalyzing transformational change in societies.

Moreover, the Programme provides the opportunity to upscale and replicate best practices and lessons learned, and expand the impact of its projects to contribute directly to local, regional, national, and international planning and policy processes.

## COUNTRY LEVEL

Since 2009, SGP in Ukraine has supported over 180 local community initiatives on climate change mitigation, prevention of land degradation, biodiversity conservation, waste and chemicals management. For optimal impact, the Programme focuses on two target landscapes: mixed forest zone Ukrainian Polissya and steppe zone with granite extractions.

SGP in Ukraine adapts global strategic framework to specific country conditions while SGP Country Strategy takes into account existing national

strategies and action plans. As a result, integrated country portfolio consists of the projects that are thematically and geographically linked to on-going full-size projects or successfully accomplished initiatives in related areas. Grant projects are designed in a strategic and coherent way so that the positive impacts go far beyond the community to the country and global levels.

SGP in Ukraine also promotes synergies, networking and partnerships, accenting on social inclusion and better livelihoods.

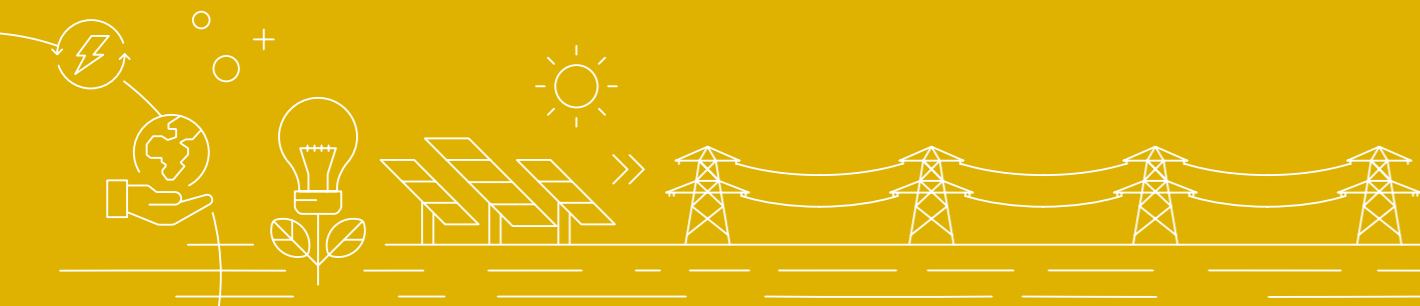
# LOW-CARBON ENERGY ACCESS CO-BENEFITS

Ukraine depends on imports for around 75% of its natural gas and 85% of its oil and petroleum products that poses a major energy security risk. It remains one of the world's most energy intensive countries due to energy-inefficient practices in key economic sectors. Carbon intensity of Ukraine's GDP is 1.9 times higher than the global figure and 3.3 times higher than that of 28 EU member states. The biggest energy consumption challenge relates to Ukraine's housing sector experiencing up to 50% energy losses in heat and electricity production, distribution and end-use. Heat generating facilities and electricity systems are mostly very old, obsolete and operate at low efficiency levels, while wear and tear of power grids and district heating networks have now reached 70-80%.

In this context, optimization of energy consumption along with diversification of energy sources are imperatives for Ukraine's sustainable

development and energy security to reduce the country's reliance on expensive and exhaustible fossil fuels. Increased deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies pursued by SGP contribute to the demand for energy and provide a variety of benefits for climate, livelihoods and health.

To this end, SGP in Ukraine has supported over 100 low-carbon energy access initiatives at the community level by working in alignment and coordination with larger policy and development frameworks. The modern and efficient bottom-up energy solutions provided by SGP contribute to the overall objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. They lead to reduced GHG emissions and provide co-benefits for local livelihoods while speeding up the implementation of energy sector reforms.





## “Chornobyl. Territory of change”: empowering local communities



**NGO Center Prypyat.Com**



**09.2016** — **08.2018**



To help manage and disseminate reliable information about Chornobyl legacy and opportunities, the Information Center “Chornobyl. Territory of change” serving some 80,000 visitors per year was established near one of the checkpoints in the Exclusion Zone.

The Center serves to raise public awareness about the results of the regular environmental monitoring of radiation, the condition of the ecosystem in the area, possible avenues for sustainable development, measures to protect the population from the remaining effects of the accident and the results of scientific research.

The project conducted a core refurbishment and retrofit of the Center building which is now the first autonomous building in the Exclusion Zone as well as in the district designed in line with low carbon and energy efficiency principles. As a result, it was given a “class A” rating, the highest energy efficiency label, avoiding 23 tons of GHG emissions annually.



**Dytyatky village, Ivankiv district, Kyiv region**





## Oleksandr Syrota

*Infocenter coordinator, local activist,  
head of NGO Center Prypyat.Com*

Over 5 years my supporters and I have tried to involve all parties concerned, get the support of the Exclusion Zone Management and initiate an Infocenter for local communities and visitors. Thanks to SGP we have been able to bring this initiative into reality. This is the first visit-center that is open to all comers since the Chornobyl accident.

Moreover, this is a story about partnerships with the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management, SCOs and local communities that helped to restore and equip the building. A number of low carbon technologies were applied, including solar power plant and heat pump, envelope insulation, energy saving windows and doors, ventilation system with recuperation, LED lighting, etc.

Now qualified specialists are ready to support every visitor of the Center. Informational events are carried out regularly along with continuous knowledge sharing via on-line platforms.





## Support to rural community sustainable development through innovative renewable energy models



**NGO Ecoclub Zaporizhya**



**05.2017 — 03.2018**



The project was aimed at mobilizing community actions towards low-carbon energy initiatives as many small cities and villages in Ukraine face a problem of obsolete and inefficient street lighting.

Within the initiative, the street lighting infrastructure of two remote villages was modernized by installing 28 autonomous solar systems, which allowed to light up some 25 kilometers of streets and roads.

Accompanied by an information campaign and supported by local authorities, activists and community-based organizations, the project also raised public awareness on the benefits of alternative energy sources. Thus, over 460 local citizens participated in knowledge sharing events.



**Novouspenivka and Novoivanivka villages, Vesele district, Zaporizhya region**



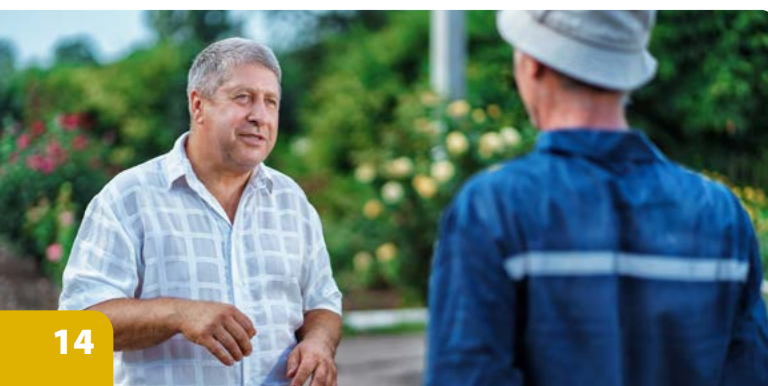


**Anatoliy Mishechkin**  
*Infrastructure specialist  
 in Vesele District State Administration,  
 former head of Novouspenivka  
 village Council*

From dusk till dawn our village is illuminated by means of energy efficient LED lights. That makes locals feel much safer.

In addition, a new system helps to reduce electricity consumption by 14.22 MW annually that lowers the community's electricity bill by 359,000 UAH per year. It allows us to use the money saved for other needs of the community.

I have also been happy to learn that the new lighting decreases GHG emissions by around 15 tons per year.





## Development of electromobility on the affected areas



### *NGO Pro-Dobrobut*



08.2018 — 06.2019



The main goal of the project was to establish effective ecomobility infrastructure and promote the use of electric vehicles in the conflict-affected areas of eastern Ukraine.

Considering the role of transportation in GHG emissions and deterioration of air quality in Ukrainian cities, the project supported an accessible charging solution for electric vehicles and introduced a network of six charging points in Sloviansk city.

Further, to enable a real development of electromobility in the region, the project has initiated an effective dialogue among local authorities and civil society organizations to facilitate sustainable transport policy making and conducted a broad awareness raising campaign. Other activities related to lobbying, communication and networking included organization of public forums, roundtable discussions, dialog group meetings, workshops and training that addressed a variety of target groups and covered over 3000 local citizens.



**Sloviansk, Donetsk region**





**Oleksandr Volyk**  
*Taxi driver, electric car owner*

The project has given a push to the development of ecomobility in our region as it helped to increase the number of electric cars in use that benefits human well-being and contributes to the reduction of GHG emissions.

As a person who cares about the environment and as a driver of an electric car, I personally benefited from this charging infrastructure project that provided a simple but viable solution to ensure sustainable development for the transport industry. A charging point network has made my daily life more comfortable and my work more efficient.

Now other drivers and I have new income opportunities that are precious in the region affected by conflict and depressed by unemployment.





## Energy Saving Building in affected community of Kreminna



**NGO Energorozvytok Maibutniogo**



**04.2019** — **02.2020**



The main goal of the project was to raise awareness of local communities on energy efficient and environmentally friendly solutions demonstrated while supporting a stable work of the local fire department.

As reliable fire service and timely emergency assistance are among the top priorities for the area affected by the on-going armed conflict, a solar power system was installed to provide the fire station with autonomous access to energy and hot water. While improving the energy security, the project helped to reduce the fire station energy bill by around 2,000 USD annually and decrease related GHG emissions by 66 tons per year.

In addition, the project was to promote low carbon energy initiatives in private and public buildings to reduce energy consumption in the target area through the information campaign that covered over 1500 local citizens with a special focus on youth.



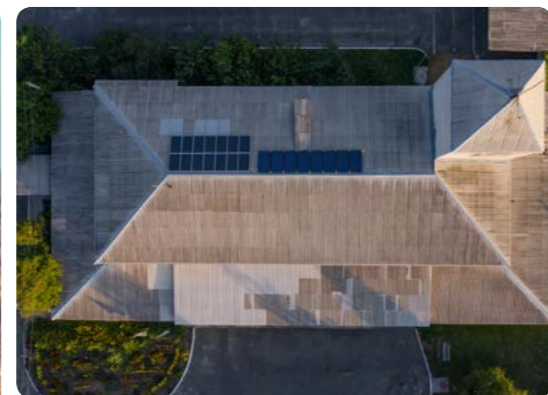
**Kreminna, Lugansk region**



**Andriy Pavlov**  
*Head of the District Department  
of the Main Directorate  
of the State Emergency Service  
of Ukraine in Lugansk region*

The installed low carbon energy equipment enables our self-reliance in terms of energy and water supply. This is extremely important for the fire department working 24/7 for a fire-safe society. Citizens can now quickly reach our emergency services, and our operators stand ready to receive and handle emergency calls without unexpected power outages.

In my opinion, such projects are extremely important for public buildings, especially those providing emergency and utility services.





## Low-carbon community development



### *NGO International Economic Committee*



08.2018 — 05.2019



The initiative was aimed at promoting solar energy for water heating as well as raising public awareness on low-carbon energy access co-benefits.

A solar power plant was installed to ensure smooth hot water supply to the Veterans Regional Hospital that provides health services to over 500 war veterans and Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) combatants. New system helps to reduce electricity consumption by 17.6 MW per year. Along with increasing the hospital's energy independence, the project helped to reduce the hospital energy bill by around 80,000 UAH annually and to decrease related GHG emissions by 19 tons per year.

Accompanied by an information campaign and supported by local authorities and community-based organizations, the project also raised public awareness on the benefits of alternative energy sources. Thus, over 5,000 local citizens, including some 1,500 children, participated in various knowledge-building events.



**Sviatogirsk, Donetsk region**





## Ivan Tokhtoev

*Doctor-neuropathologist*

I work in the Veterans Regional Hospital that is now equipped with the solar power plant to ensure stable hot water supply. This system is highly beneficial to our institution as it allows to improve energy efficiency and to provide better work conditions for the personnel and comfort for our patients!

The use of solar energy in the hospital significantly reduces our expenses for electricity. The savings give the Sviatogirsk city Council and hospital management an opportunity to improve the hospital conditions, increase the capacity and the number of services. It is extremely important as for the last few years the hospital has been overwhelmed with patients – combatants and local citizens affected by the armed actions in the eastern region of Ukraine.





**Yevgen Volya**  
*Anti-Terrorist Operation combatant,  
driver*

Our Veterans Regional Hospital is vitally important for the region taking into account the current situation in Ukraine.

SGP project brought many benefits to our community, including reduction of energy use and saving money for other needs of the hospital. Moreover, health service has improved significantly as hot water is essential for patients' needs.

I expect the project to have a demonstration effect and to be replicated in other buildings in the city.





# COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES TO AGRO-ECOLOGY

The agricultural sector plays a major role in the Ukrainian economy as it accounts for over 30% of Ukraine's export and 12% of its GDP. Ukraine has approximately 42 million hectares of agricultural land including cultivated land, gardens, orchards, vineyards, permanent meadows and pastures, together constituting 70% of over 60 million hectares of the country's total land area.

For decades, Ukrainian agricultural land was overused because of Soviet-era land management practices involving the use of aggressive chemical fertilizers, pesticides and industrial machinery that brought about substantial diffused pollution in agricultural landscapes. In recent years, the situation became critical as the farms were forced to struggle with crippling cash shortages, crumbling agricultural infrastructure and skyrocketing quality fertilizer prices. These challenges heavily affected agricultural production, leading to soil fertility decline, lesser yields, low quality crops, and, finally, contributed to global climate emergency, biodiversity losses and increase of poverty.

Ukraine, however, has all necessary conditions for developing sustainable agriculture able to meet high environmental standards and to bring economic benefits. This is a key reason why agro-ecology is among the country's priorities today.

Supporting agro-ecological practices, SGP in Ukraine aims at improving ecosystem functions, as well as at capacity development of the local communities to promote sustainable use of land, to enhance food security and to ensure better decision-making. SGP has already supported over 30 local initiatives mainstreaming innovative agro-ecological technologies to reduce GHG emissions and strengthen resilience in critical landscapes. These bottom-up initiatives contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.





## Mainstreaming innovative agro-ecology practices on steppe landscape for the benefit of local communities



### NGO Household farming



09.2016 — 09.2017



Agro-ecology is a cornerstone for the resilience of Ukrainian steppe as it delivers advantages that are complementary to conventional approaches. While based on local knowledge, agro-ecology combines traditional agricultural practices with methods of modern science.

This is why the initiative was aimed at demonstrating the benefits of modern agro-ecological techniques and their promotion among rural communities. On the basis of scientific analysis of the soil characteristics on five pilot plots, local scientists have identified the most effective agro-ecological practices for the particular landscapes. Further, local farmers have applied them, including natural fertilizers, root nutrition and drop irrigation, at some 19 hectares of degraded land that resulted in about 10-20% increase in yields per hectare.

In addition, the project carried out a wide knowledge sharing campaign: over 180 local farmers participated in workshops; ad hoc guidelines have been developed for upscaling and replication purposes. As a result, innovative agro-approaches were utilized by over 1000 farmers in the target region.



Zaporizhya region





**Yevgen Parasochka**  
*Local farmer, scientist-agronomist*

My colleagues and I have tested modern agro-ecological practices and promoted organic farming in the region. Due to the improvement of soil properties and better yields, we have found new income opportunities while taking care of our lands. Now our families can continue working on our land without the necessity to search for a better life somewhere in Europe.

It is valuable that SGP supports agro-ecology, which is a catalyst for economic growth in general and the well-being of rural population in particular. I also observe some additional benefits such as better managed lands, higher productivity, safer food and water.



**Nadiya Kompaniets**  
*Head of NGO Women farmers Council  
of Zaporizhya region*

Some 80 women farmers took an active part in the initiative. We were introduced to new tools, knowledge, equipment and technologies that respond to the needs of women farmers. Thanks to SGP we had an opportunity to learn best practices and share our knowledge. I would also like to emphasize that the project supported networking and has built a fruitful partnerships, in particular with the Ukraine Horticulture Business Development Project. This helped to increase the productivity and ensure broader engagement of women farmers.





## Cluster initiatives for innovative agro-ecological methods to protect steppe landscape



### *NGO Apiculture Cluster Bees without borders*



08.2018 — 05.2019



Ukraine is the biggest producer of honey among European countries and the 4th in the world, but only 6% goes to export. At the same time sustainable beekeeping is very important for the resilience of the Ukrainian steppe ecosystem.

Thus, the project has applied and promoted the benefits of the cluster model of organic beekeeping development on steppe landscape. It is a new model, structured by the chain “education - science - production - market”, which aims at creating a competitive product. To do that, four demonstration apiaries of organic beekeeping were established, and supplied with innovative equipment and solar panels.

Major attention was paid to the educational and knowledge sharing activities. As a result, 25 young beekeepers passed 15-week training course and over 230 beekeepers participated in five educational workshops.



**Zaporizhya region**



## **Mykola Andrushchenko**

***Associate Professor  
of Tavia State  
Agrotechnological University***

Tavia State Agrotechnological University, as a partner of the project, has provided scientific expertise and research. We have explored the benefits and promoted cluster model.

For educational purposes, one of the demonstration apiaries was established on the basis of our University, with the total territory of 2 hectares. There we apply innovative methods of organic beekeeping, learn how to improve the quality of bee families development and train beekeepers. Moreover, the installation of equipment and solar panels allowed to provide renewable energy for apiaries and contributed to the reduction of GHG emissions. It also allows to work on the field even at night!

To sum up, the project became a very powerful tool in promoting sustainable beekeeping in the region as well as improving competitive potential of local farmers.





## Prevention of land degradation: best practice to restore lands contaminated with radionuclides



**Charitable foundation  
Yedyna sprava**



08.2018 — 06.2019



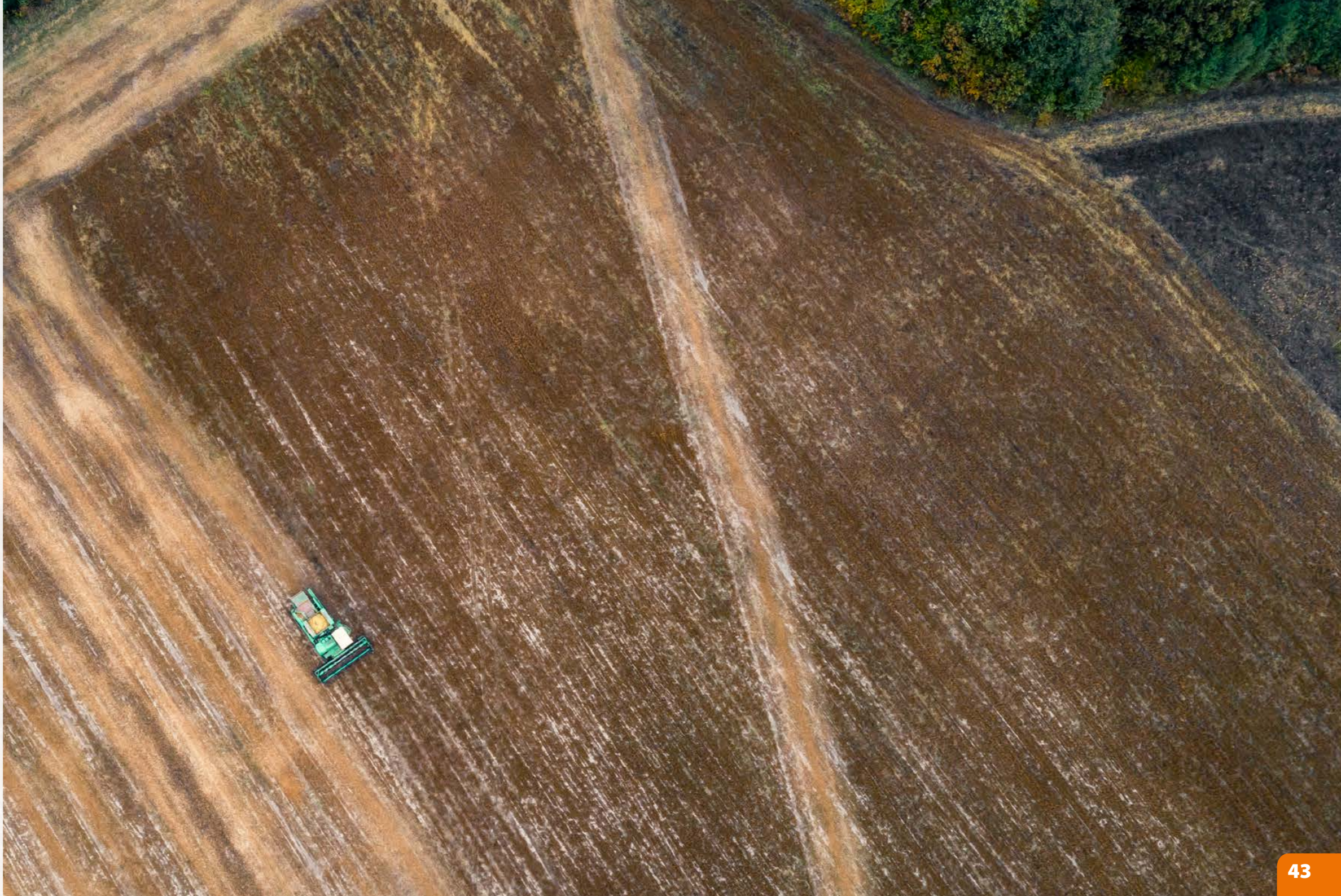
Ukrainian Polissya landscape is characterized by a low amount of humus and insufficient availability of nutrients in the soil. Moreover, the lands still suffer from the consequences of Chernobyl disaster. Therefore, local scientists have developed an innovative approach on how to increase economic efficiency and improve the environmental balance. They promote cultivation of niche crops, for example, black cumin, milk thistle, amaranth and others.

Niche crops cultivation is an integrated approach to resolve the situation of problematic, eroded and reclaimed lands that not only supports their self-healing and self-regulation, but also through the selection of certain species of plants provides highly efficient and economically attractive lands.

Within the project 125 hectares of degraded lands were restored due to the cultivation of multiyear grasses and niche species. Over 200 local farmers acknowledged the benefits of new technology and apply it on agricultural lands.



**Zhytomyr region**





**Yuriy Dragan**  
*Head of NGO Association of farmers and private landowners of Ukraine in Zhytomyr region*

It is very valuable that international organizations support local initiatives and contribute to the development of agro-ecology in Ukraine.

The project helped to demonstrate and disseminate innovative agro-technologies in the conditions of Zhytomyr Polissya. It should be mentioned that scientific research of the methodology of growing perennial grasses and niche cultures in conditions of degradation and radioactive contamination played a major role in introducing new technologies.

As a result, local farmers applied and tested technology of niche crops cultivation on 100 hectares. While perennial grasses technology was applied on 25 hectares establishing sustainably managed pastures.



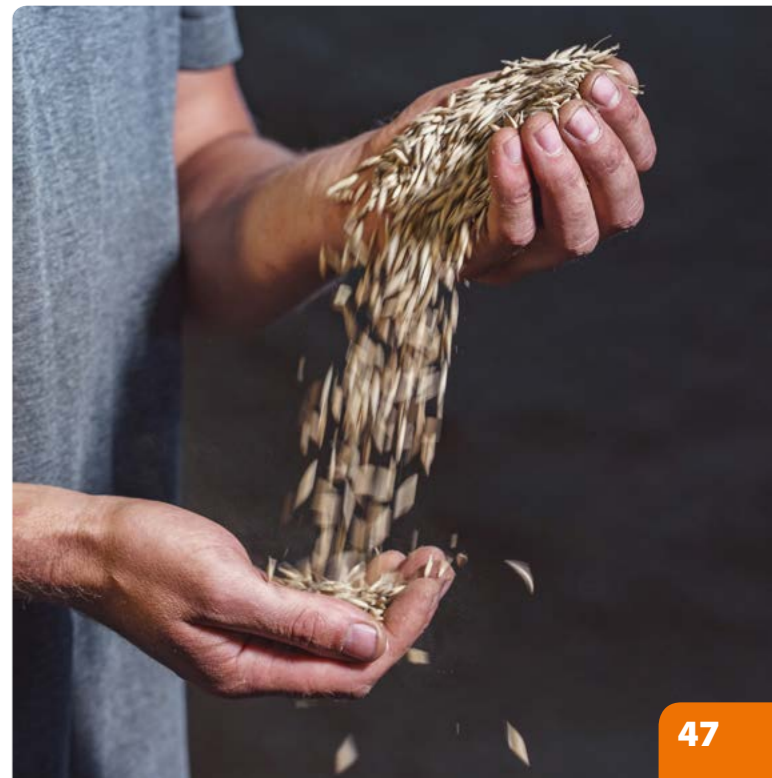
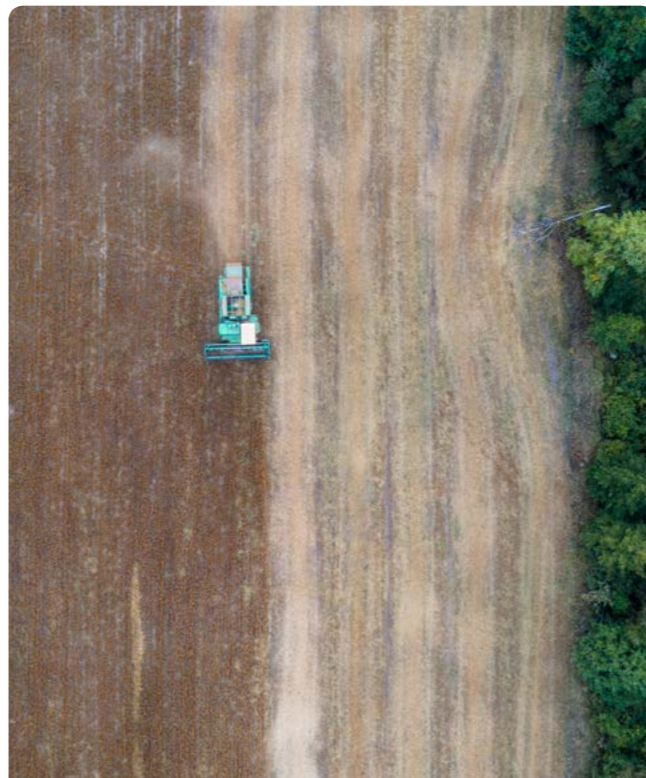




**Bogdan Fliachynsky**  
*Local farmer, machinist*

This project helped to achieve great results! We started to work on lands, we had not even used before, and we hope that we will continue working with on this way and involve even more lands to the restoration.

Cultivation of niche crops is a new technology for us, which really helps to restore and develop degraded lands of the region. I see a special value in educational campaign that supported the process of new agrotechnologies introduction. Expert consultations helped to raise knowledge and skills of local farmers, which is extremely important for our future work.



# ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION: COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

While occupying only 5.7% of the European territory, Ukraine holds about 35% of its biodiversity. Ukrainian biota includes over 25,000 species of plants and fungi, and about 45,000 species of animals, including globally endangered species. The latest list of nationally protected species contains 826 species of flora and 542 species of fauna. Further, 8,296 territories and sites with a total area of 4.8 million hectares belong to the Nature Protection Fund of Ukraine that constitute 6.6% of the country's territory.

However, increased human-induced pressures considerably modified natural ecosystems within the past decades. Ecosystems are threatened by habitat fragmentation, agricultural practices, growing infrastructure and often conflicting goals of agricultural and forestry production and environmental protection.

SGP in Ukraine therefore contributes to the objectives of the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity. The Programme supports activities related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and involves the ecosystem integrity maintenance. Focusing on selected landscapes, local communities are given opportunities to effectively interact, share knowledge and lessons, replicate and scale up the best practices. In the past ten years, the SGP has supported over 30 community initiatives positively influencing the conservation of some 35 protected or significant biodiversity areas covering approximately 400 thousand hectares.





## Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation on steppe landscape



### NGO Kovylovyi step



09.2016 — 06.2017



The initiative was designed to cover multiple objectives of sustainable steppe management: to protect a virgin Ukrainian steppe ecosystem, improve protected areas (PAs) management and promote National Nature Parks (NNPs) among local communities and researchers.

In close cooperation with the NNPs *Pryazovsky*, *Dzharylgach* and *Meotyda*, the project implemented several ecosystem rehabilitation activities. Nine research expeditions were held to explore potential threats and register endangered flora and fauna. Around 50 trees and bushes were planted to improve a river estuary water flow and provide endemic fish species with spawning sites. The project also strengthened the infrastructure of the PAs by installing 32 information signs, 22 boundary signs, and four information boards.

Special attention was paid to the information component. All-Ukrainian Conference on Steppe Zone Rehabilitation and environmental lessons in local educational institutions helped to raise public awareness. Three promo videos were produced and broadcasted to promote PAs among over 25,000 local residents.



**National Nature Parks *Pryazovsky*, *Dzharylgach* and *Meotyda***



## Oleksandr Antonovsky

*Deputy Head of Scientific Department  
of the National Nature Park Pryazovsky*

The National Nature Parks *Pryazovsky*, *Dzharulgach* and *Meotyda*, with a total area of approximately 100,000 hectares, are the settlements for many species of waterfowl, the spawning grounds and nurseries for valuable fish populations, and the habitats for 14 rare species of plants and animals listed in the Red Book of Ukraine.

Any support provided to the protected areas is valuable, as we permanently face the lack of regular budget resources.

Moreover, supportive local communities are the cornerstone of effective PAs management and rehabilitation activities. It is therefore essential to help the local population understand the significance of high conservation value ecosystems.



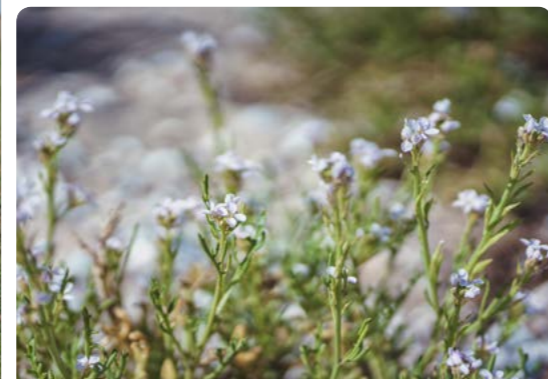


**Olena Dyadicheva**  
*Senior Researcher of the National  
Nature Park Pryazovsky,  
member of NGO Ecomove*

Our National Nature Park Pryazovsky is quite young – we will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year. The lack of funds and equipment has recently been main obstacle for the Park development and infrastructure improvement. Luckily, the project supported the creation of the necessary material base for the PA.

Now we can conduct much-needed research, continue developing our five scientific and protection departments and organize training sessions for our protection inspectors, as multimedia equipment allows to visualize animals of our Park.

Besides, we interact with the students of the Tavria State Agrotechnological University. In our facilities they obtain training on research methods, and new equipment has significantly improved the quality of the training.





## Establishment of natural protected area for conservation and rehabilitation of forest ecosystem in Kreminna district



### **NGO Biological Shield**



07.2013 — 04.2014



The territory of Kreminna district is a unique ecosystem comprising a rich diversity of endemic flora and fauna. Natural floodplain lakes and forests of the district are extremely important for the national eco-network.

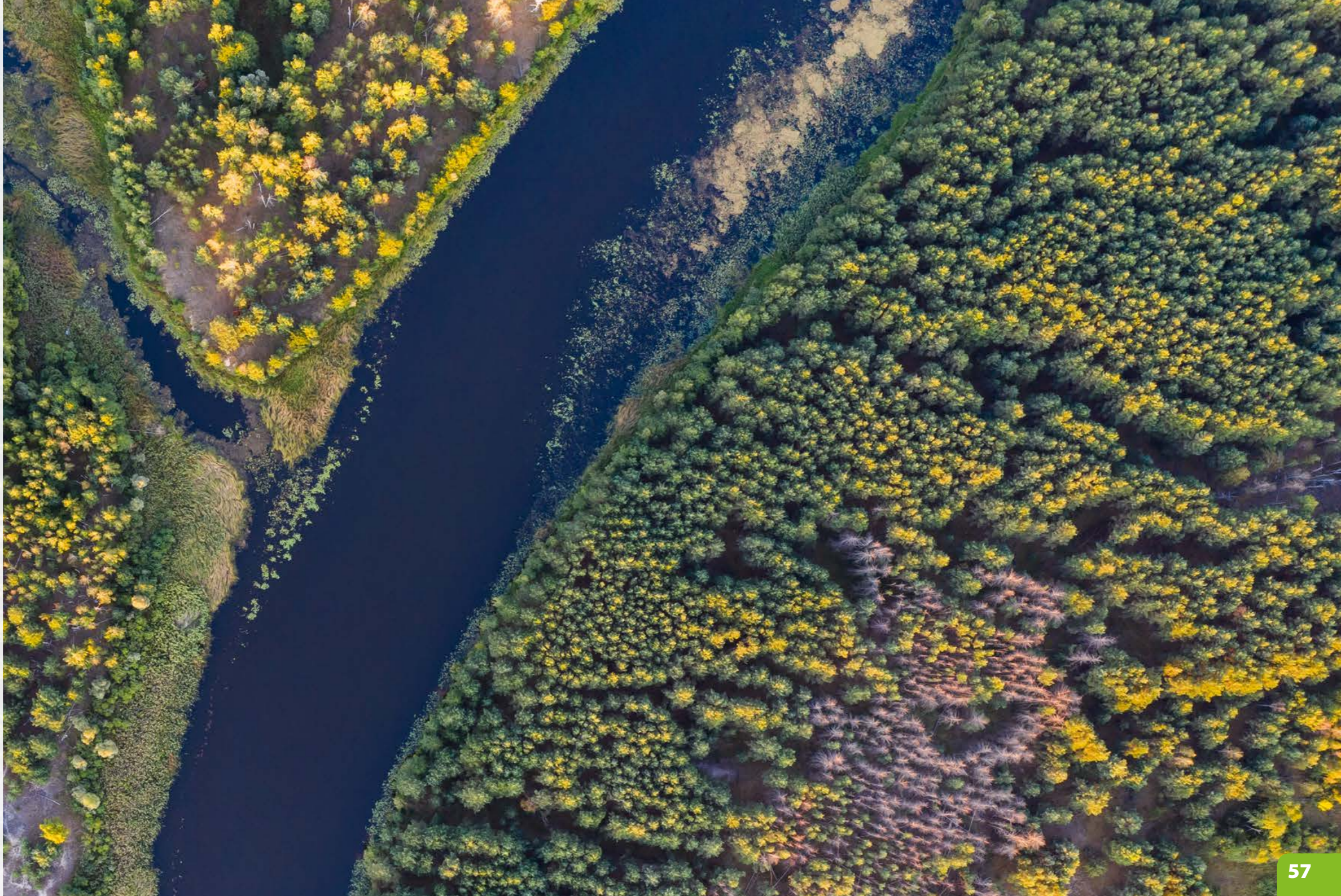
The project was aimed at conserving and rehabilitating this endangered territory by establishing a protected area. To do this, the project involved leading specialists to conduct a comprehensive analysis and site reconnaissance survey, develop necessary cartographic and cadastral plans, initiate and accompany conciliation activities, organize knowledge sharing events, and maintain a protracted dialog with decision-makers continued even after the project closure. In particular, project knowledge activities involved over 7,775 participants.

Five years after the project completion, the National Nature Park *Kreminna Forests* covering 7269 hectares was eventually established in 2019.

The Park is expected to create some 100 new jobs and provide a variety of ecosystem services and benefits for the local communities.



### **National Nature Park *Kreminna Forests***

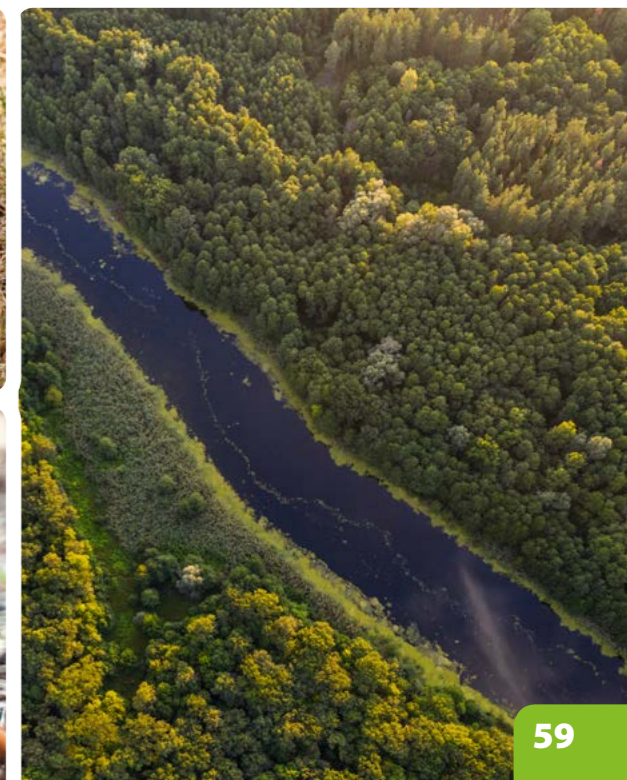
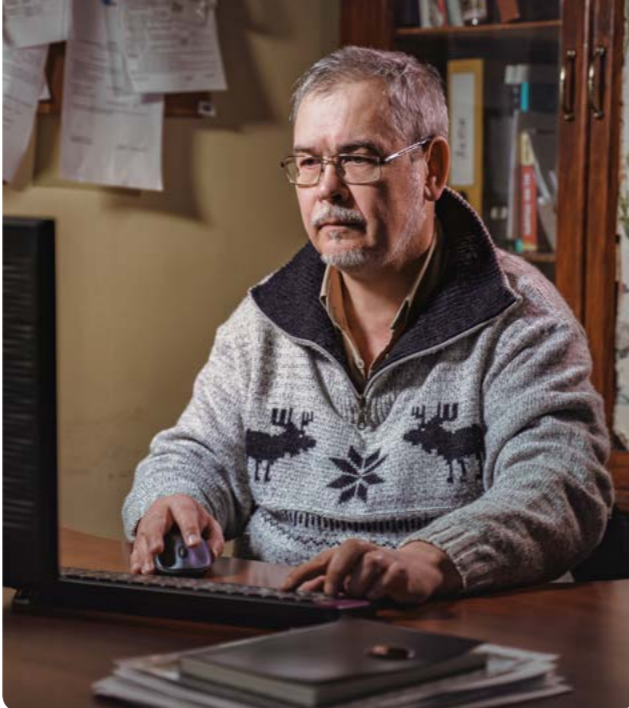




**Igor Zagorodnyuk**  
*PhD, Associate Professor,  
Senior researcher at the National  
Museum of Natural History*

The idea to establish the National Nature Park *Kreminna Forests* had been maturing for over 70 years, but only the GEF SGP gave rise to hope for its realization as it brought together more than 10 high-skilled professionals, including forest scientists, zoologists and botanists. The project experts conducted territorial surveys and meetings with authorities and local CSOs, prepared necessary scientific reports and summaries, informed the media and communities about the benefits of establishing a protected area. Of course, the grant did not cover even 1/10 of the preparatory work required under the PA establishment procedure, but the idea developed thanks to a strong impetus from the GEF SGP.

Finally in September 2019, after some seven years of active work, the NNP was established by the Decree of the President of Ukraine. Our efforts were not in vain, and our achievements are obvious as we contributed to the expansion of the Nature Protection Fund of Ukraine!





## Rehabilitation of forests affected by the armed conflict in Lugansk region



**NGO Molochay**



**04.2015** — **12.2015**



Military actions in the eastern region of Ukraine presented a huge environmental challenge for the country as they negatively influenced a variety of significant ecosystems and resulted in forest fires on thousands of hectares.

The objective of the project was to mitigate the negative environmental consequences of the conflict through reforestation and fire protection measures to lay the basis for sustainable management of forests.

The area of 40 ha was planted with pine tree seedlings to protect lands in Novoaidar district from wind and water erosion, raise public awareness on forest related issues and involve local communities in the rehabilitation of the affected lands.



**Novoaidar district, Lugansk region**





**Oleksandr Mohylny**  
*Forester at Novaidar Forestry*

Armed actions caused huge damage to a large tract of forest that can potentially lead to dangerous water and wind erosion. According to the latest statistics, the amount of forest area swept by large-scale fires has increased by 70% since the beginning of Anti-Terrorist Operation in the district.

The project helped to resume forest planting in the area and provided new technical equipment for forest cultivation. This good practice has a big potential for replication as thousands of hectares in the eastern Ukraine suffer from forest lost caused by military fire.

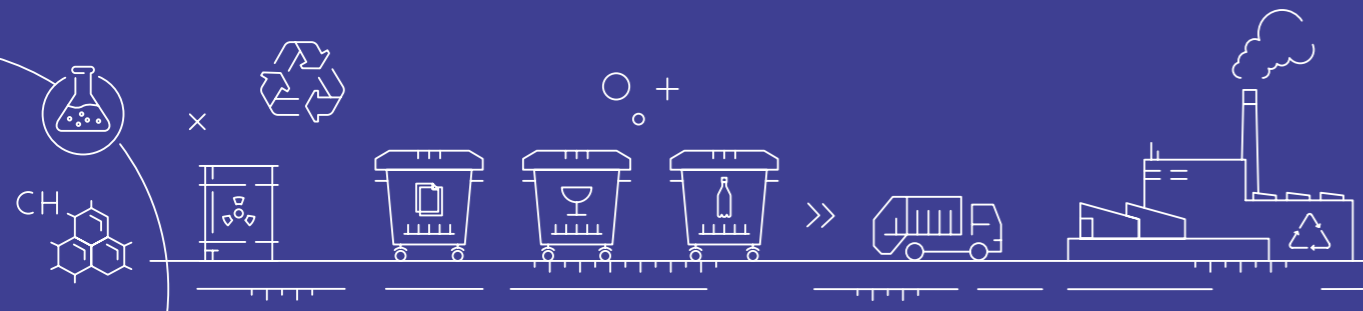


# CHEMICALS, WASTE AND MERCURY MANAGEMENT

Ukraine is in the TOP10 list of countries producing the largest volumes of waste with estimated annual waste total of 17 million tonnes and waste treatment recycling at less than 5%. The remaining 95% are disposed of in landfills covering an unbelievably huge area of over 160 thousand hectares. Moreover, Ukraine generates enormous amount of hazardous waste. Waste management is among the most urgent and critical issues to be addressed in Ukraine and one of the most challenging environmental concerns in general.

Within this focal area, SGP in Ukraine supports the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and the Minamata Convention at the community level. The Programme aims at promoting safe and effective management of chemicals to minimize negative effects on human health and the global environment. SGP applies a bottom-up approach and works on the ground so that local communities play a key role in advocating for better waste management and environmental protection.

SGP in Ukraine has supported 13 waste management initiatives that helped local communities to demonstrate, deploy and transfer innovative tools and mechanisms for managing waste and chemicals, including persistent organic pollutants, pesticides and mercury. SGP also promotes awareness and networking at local, regional and national levels that are the key tools to promote sound waste management and reduce the risk of exposure to toxic and hazardous substances.





## Establishment of system for mercury lamps disposal



**NGO Dzherelo-3000**



**08.2018** — **05.2019**



Overloaded landfills and absence of waste recycling mechanism are common and urgent issues for every city and town in Ukraine.

The project was aimed at solving the problem of centralized collection and proper disposal of hazardous waste in households of Sloviansk, with a focus on class 1 hazardous waste like mercury vapor lamps.

With the support of local authorities, the project has established an efficient and safe infrastructure for mercury vapor lamps collection, transport and disposal. As a result, 11,000 lamps and 7,16 kg of batteries were collected and safely disposed of during one year.

Additionally, a wide awareness raising campaign for the local population was conducted to promote safe disposal of mercury-containing lamps and to encourage the use of energy efficient lightning. Some 20 volunteers disseminated informational materials to involve over 10,000 citizens into waste management activities.



**Sloviansk, Donetsk region**





**Roman Zhurba**  
*Youth activist, citizen*

Thanks to the SGP project I have discovered that responsible management of mercury-containing waste is crucial for our environment. Now we have a proper collection and disposal mechanism for hazardous waste in my city.

My family, friends and I, as well as other citizens of Sloviansk bring hazardous waste to collection points, where it is safely stored and then transported to disposal facilities.

It is great that our City Council has supported the hazardous waste management system which continues operating even after the project completion.



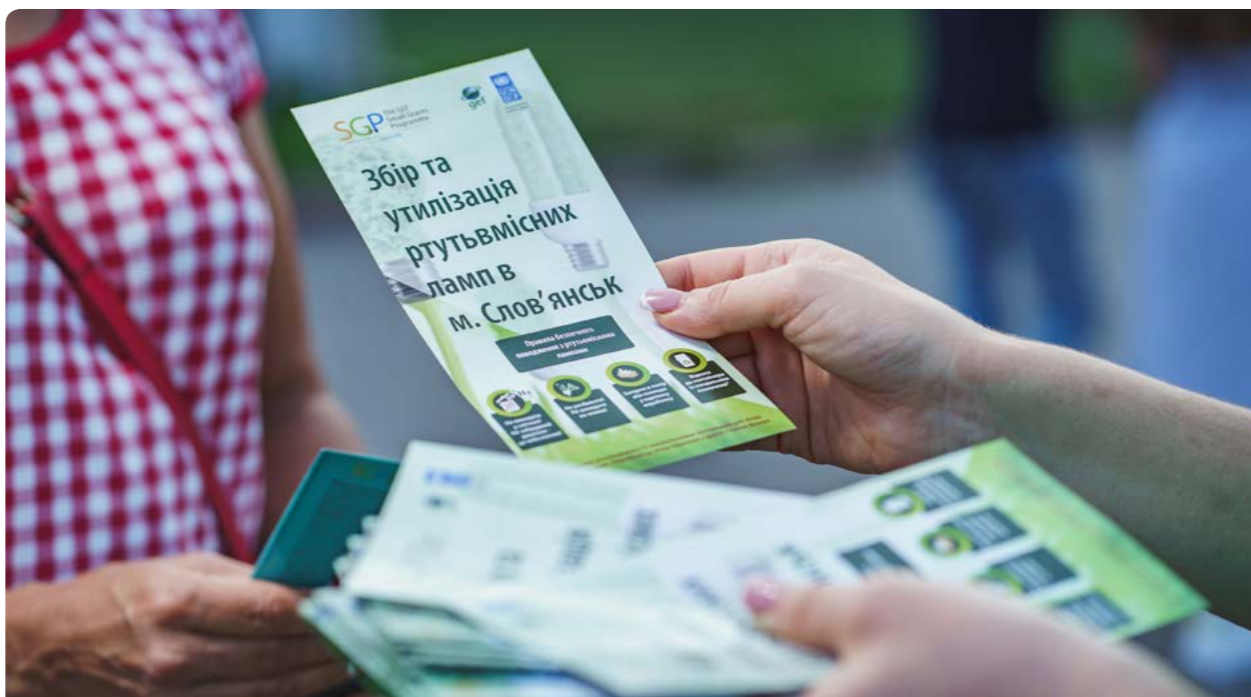


**Mariya Kada**  
Volunteer

Mercury vapor lamps and most household batteries are harmful for the environment if we don't dispose them the right way. Sloviansk used to be a small city without a proper waste management system.

I think that this project was extremely useful and essential for our community, so I was happy to join it and to help building the knowledge of local citizens. During my volunteer work, I communicated with some 500 citizens and almost everyone supported the initiative and provided a positive feedback.

I hope my tiny input has contributed to better soil and water quality in the region.





**National forum:  
“Waste management programmes  
for communities:  
best practices and challenges”**



**National Youth Center  
Ecological initiatives**



**08.2018 — 03.2019**



GEF SGP supported a number of CSOs in their initiative to organize the National forum: “Waste management programmes for the communities: best practices and challenges”, and provided its financial, information and technical assistance.

From 2013 to 2018, the forum was organized for several years in a row and aimed at identifying the most pressing issues and finding solutions to the critical situation with waste management in Ukraine. The Forum was instrumental in designing environmental initiatives and projects, promoting investments, discussing environmentally friendly solutions, developing recommendations and programs for integrated solutions to municipal waste management problems, fostering collaboration, and sharing best practices for sustainable development.

In 2018, more than 300 representatives of national and local government, territorial communities, scientists, CSOs, waste management businesses, manufacturers of specialized equipment and media participated in the Forum.



**Zhytomyr, Rivne, Kyiv, Donetsk, Zaporizhya  
and Kherson regions**



**Tetyana Tymochko**  
*Head of NGO All-Ukrainian Ecological League, environmentalist*

For many years, our team has been working hard to ensure that all requirements of EU waste management legislation are implemented in Ukraine. The most important steps of ensuring sustainable waste management are the development of strategic documents and the implementation of appropriate financial, economic and legal instruments.

The Forum has become a powerful mechanism for discussions, finding solutions, lobbying for improving legislation and practice in this area. As for now, I can already observe some major achievements. The Forum developed a clear roadmap and identified proper tools and mechanisms of waste management in Ukraine that resulted in the elaboration and the amendment of dozens of laws and legislative acts on waste management. Moreover, some local authorities have applied the best recycling and waste disposal practices.

However, it is a long-lasting and complicated process that requires constant attention and coordinated action by all stakeholders to lead the change.

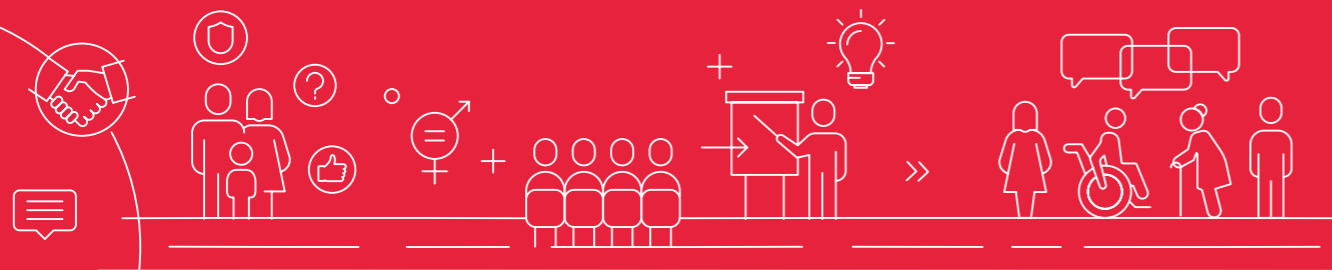


# SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT

Social inclusion is a cornerstone of SGP's activity in Ukraine to foster equality, promote fairness and access through active engagement of women, youth, internally displaced persons and persons with disabilities.

In practice, it is done by providing equal opportunity for women and men to participate, work together and benefit from the results of the projects, and through promoting women-led initiatives to support women's empowerment. Addressing environmental issues often requires both the expertise and experience of elderly people and some innovative and dynamic inputs from youth. SGP privileges the participation of children and young people as the bearers of future commitments and efforts for the global environment and sustainable development. The Programme also supports projects designed by and for persons with disabilities and internally displaced persons.

Mainstreaming social inclusion, SGP enables active participation of vulnerable groups in community efforts, allowing to fulfil their potential and improve their livelihoods while promoting effective environment and development practices that reflect the multiple dimensions of sustainable development.







## Biodiversity conservation on steppe landscape with granite extractions



### NGO Clean environment of Zaporizhya



09.2016 — 06.2017



The project was aimed at protecting virgin steppe landscapes and involving local communities, people with disabilities and youth in the development of green, rural and cycling tourism.

The project team in close cooperation with Union of Green Rural Tourism Development, youth and disabled persons organizations has developed two cycling routes called “Melitopol city – Stone Graves (Archeological Reserve)”. The length of the first eco-route is 36 km, the second one – 47 km.

Another component was dedicated to the development of eco-routes' infrastructure. The project donated trekking and tandem bicycles to local community-based organizations. The routes were equipped with road signs, information stands and parking stations. All information products were also made available in Braille. As a result, over 600 young people and 120 people with disabilities can enjoy eco-routes every year.

Moreover, the project conducted an extensive information campaign that included a cycling race during City Day celebration, press-conferences and seminars.



Melitopol district, Zaporizhya region



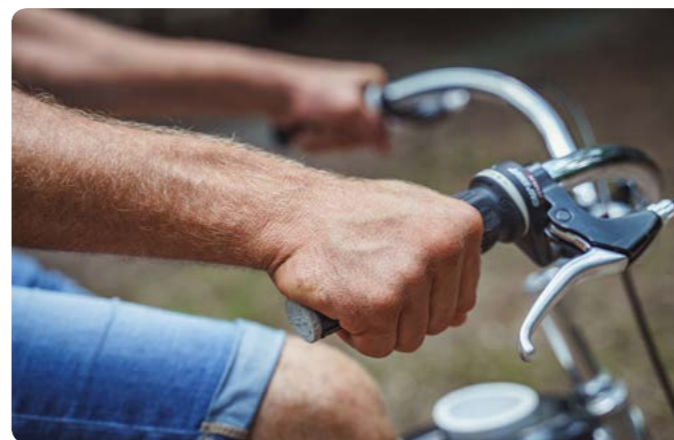


**Natalia Surmanidze**  
*Member of Melitopol Union  
of Blind People*

Cycling route “Melitopol city – Stone Graves” is the first one in the area, and definitely the only one for blind people in Ukraine!

Owing to the project, I have a stunning experience of riding a tandem bicycle as a co-rider and an amazing opportunity to explore the unique nature and culture of my district. The route stopovers included green tourism households, recreational zones in the protected areas and an archeological reserve. It is precious to visit those places and get some fresh air!

The routes were authorized by the Melitopol District State Administration and listed as tourist destinations of the district. I would like to invite locals, Ukrainians and foreigners to explore this splendid opportunity.





## Modernization of heating system for internally displaced children's camp



**NGO Ecodream**



**09.2016** — **06.2017**



The on-going armed conflict in eastern Ukraine has caused tremendous local economic collapse and societal meltdown affecting millions living in or close to the conflict area. More than five years into the conflict, over 1,414,000 people have been registered as internally displaced persons (IDPs) forced to search for new or temporary homes.

The initiative was aimed at modernizing heating system at the Children's Rehabilitation and Recreation Camp "The Dream" that temporarily hosted IDPs since 2014. As the region is rich in wood and wood waste, it was decided to install two biomass-fired boilers which allowed to reduce GHG emissions by 68 tons per heating season and significantly save on fuel costs.

As a result, the project has improved living conditions for over 200 IDPs including children while demonstrating the benefits of alternative energy sources, particularly local waste wood solutions.



**Kreminna, Lugansk region**



**Mariya Kononova**  
*Child, camp resident*

Since the start of the military actions in eastern Ukraine, in 2014, we moved to the camp that became our home. It was difficult to get used to a new place, especially during the cold season as the heating system was unstable and it felt not like a cozy home. With the installation of new heating equipment our life has become more comfortable, and the atmosphere around has got literally warmer. Now it is much easier for me to call this place "home".

I have also discovered many benefits of alternative energy sources. Now I know they can help reduce GHG emissions and fossil fuel consumption thus saving our planet, our money and health.





## Genadiy Kremenchutsky Stoker

I am glad that obsolete gas boilers were replaced with two modern biomass-fired boilers. It is a pleasure to operate and maintain the new equipment!

Apart from this, upgrades are necessary to address the ageing of equipment and safety concerns. It was vital to replace old boilers before they broke down that could make the premises an unsuitable place to host people during wintertime.

I think it is a common issue for hundreds of thousands of public buildings. As such, we were just lucky to receive such a support.





## Children and youth capacity development and best practices to combat global environmental challenges



**NGO Poliskyi kray**



**08.2018** — **08.2019**



Within the project, a Youth Center for Sustainable Development was established for public awareness raising and capacity development of children and youth to implement the principles of sustainable development and thus contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Center is located in the premises of Snovydyvychi secondary school and demonstrates the benefits of modern environmental solutions, including energy efficient equipment, agro-ecological practices, waste management and environmental monitoring, to the community. Taken together, the implemented measures helped to decrease GHG emissions by around 30 tons per year, recycle over 3 tons of waste annually and sustainably manage school garden and nearby lands.

Moreover, the Center is focused on knowledge sharing, networking and partnerships. It is servicing four neighboring village communities by regularly organizing training and study visits involving some 2,500 community members per year.



**Snovydyvychi village, Rokytno district, Rivne region**





## Oksana Starukha

*Teacher of biology and ecology  
at Snovydyvychi Secondary School*

Despite the fact that we live in a remote area, we always try to be in line with modern tendencies and provide our children with high-quality education. Obviously, education for sustainable development is a key priority as it shapes an understanding of recent environmental challenges and potential solutions.

Since the establishment of the Center in 2018 we received a variety of new opportunities and tools. Now I can use interactive equipment or agro-ecological plot for my educational course. It is easier for children to understand and learn when they can test, try and explore the advantages.

The Center also serves as a social, cultural and networking platform for some 600 children likely inspired to bring new creative initiatives and solutions.





**Daryna Lopuga**  
*1st-year student-ecologist  
at National University of Life  
and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine*

I grew up in a small village. I went to the village school and inherited the love to nature from my teachers. As far as I can remember, I took part in different environmental actions and events held at the school. At that time, I learned about existing environmental challenges and the importance of addressing them. That's how I decided to become an ecologist. Therefore, I am thankful to the Youth Center for Sustainable Development as it helped me to make a decisive choice about my future profession.

Taking into account my experience, I am convinced that sustainable development education is extremely important for the future environmental changes. Children and youth are the future decision-makers and they need to take care about our planet.







## Energy access co-benefits for disabled people in the Center for social rehabilitation



### NGO Association for rural development



08.2018 — 06.2019



The initiative was aimed at promoting low carbon energy solutions to deliver tangible benefits to special needs people.

The project installed 36 solar photovoltaic modules providing cost-efficient electricity to the laundry unit of the Radomyshl Psychoneurological Rehabilitation Center and equipped the territory of the Center with outdoor LED lamps. These measures resulted in energy savings of 9550 kWh per year and reduced the facility's energy bill by 1,026,625 UAH annually.

Local authorities, communities, educational institutions and media supported the project and served as useful channels for messages on the benefits of solar energy to the community and private users.



Radomyshl, Zhytomyr region



**Olga Ignatova**   
*Former director of the Radomyshl  
Psychoneurological Rehabilitation  
Center, community leader,  
honorary citizen of Radomyshl*

SGP provides incredible opportunities for improving livelihoods and protecting the environment that is vital for every community, institution and individual. The Radomyshl Psychoneurological Rehabilitation Center is now hosting 220 women with disabilities and requires a major retrofit. The installed solar energy system helps to reduce energy consumption and to save money for other needs of the Center. The installed outdoor LED lighting significantly improves working and living conditions of our personnel and patients as any perimeter lighting has been absent before.

It should be noted that the SGP project became a catalyst of sustainable change in our Radomyshl community, and the Center is now a great example of alternative energy solutions for electricity production that can be easily replicated in other buildings and communities around Ukraine.





**Liubov Buryakova**  
*Laundry operator*

I work in the laundry of the Radomyshl Psychoneurological Rehabilitation Center challenged by the heavy workload related to servicing a large number of patients. We used to consume a lot of energy and obviously required urgent energy efficiency improvements.

The installed solar photovoltaic modules supply power for washing machines enabling us to reduce electricity consumption from a regional energy grid. The use of alternative energy also enhances our operations capabilities and performance, and eventually makes my work easier.





## Support to the Centre for community sustainable development and safety



**NGO Ecologichne dyvo**



**08.2018** — **05.2019**



Everyone wants to live in a safe environment in all its dimensions. Global environmental problems, their reflection in national strategies and action plans, tools and opportunities at the local level, roadmaps for every community member, discussions and decision-making processes are in the focus of the activities of the newly established Centre for community sustainable development and safety in Irpin.

The catalyst for the Centre creation was the successful cooperation of local community, police and government within the grant program of the EU-funded project "Support to Police Reform in Ukraine".

In cooperation with the Irpin City Council and local CSOs, the Centre was set up and equipped, a number of infrastructure initiatives were implemented and interactive tools (a game and a toolkit) developed to raise awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, some 40 trainers were educated, and a Sustainable Development Space was launched in the format of the knowledge fair. Since its opening in 2018, over 2,500 residents have participated in the informational events of the Centre.



**Irpin, Kyiv region**





**Oleksandra Boyko**  
*Primary school teacher  
of Irpin Anton Makarenko school  
with an artistic profile*

In April 2019, students and teachers of our school hosting the Centre participated in the knowledge fair devoted to a Sustainable Development Space. I was interested to learn from the experiences of other regions and to facilitate the sharing of best practices in networking, involvement of different stakeholders from farmers to scientists, participating in national and international events and presenting their experiences.

“Now most of the community members are familiar with the safe disposal of batteries. But previously they were throwing batteries away together with their garbage that resulted in contaminated water and soil we observed for many years”, – it is just one of the examples my students mention when describing the Centre’s activities. It is very important to systematize environmental challenges, discover their consequences, as well as ways of solving by working together in the community.





**Andriy Kolesnyk**  
*Student of the 10th grade  
at Educational Association Irpin Lyceum  
of Innovational Technologies*

Nowadays it's extremely important to keep pace with the times. In this regard, Irpin is a young forward-looking city that quickly develops and needs active youth with fresh ideas.

Of course, the idea of using non-motorized transport is not new, but the approach to creating safe and accessible cycling infrastructure plays a major role in promoting environmentally friendly lifestyles and supporting comfortable living and leisure conditions.

I think that a safe and sustainable way of living must be supported everywhere: in public space and transport, at school, in families, outdoors, while traveling, etc. We should live in a way that will secure a good future of human life on this planet. That's why the world leaders have adopted the SDGs that should be achieved by 2030, and each state and community contribute to it. This is what I learned during the Centre's events!





## Solar energy for local community development



### NGO Energy-saving technologies



11.2017 — 09.2018



The initiative was focused on promotion of energy efficiency and alternative energy sources, and demonstrated the benefits of solar energy for the local community.

The project has provided support to the Center for Complex Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons under the Melitopol City Council. This social institution was chosen to support over 360 people with temporary and permanent disabilities annually, and to promote inclusive education for children. A 5 kW solar power plant system and 336 LED-lamps were installed to provide stable and cost-efficient internal and external lighting for the Rehabilitation Center. It allowed to reduce GHG emissions by 48 tons annually and to save 62,000 UAH per year for other needs of the community.

Additionally, the project was focused on effective partnerships for broader impact. Local authorities and Poroshenko Foundation have supported and scaled up the initiative. As a result, the Rehabilitation Center was renovated and transformed into a modern zero emission building providing high-quality social services.



Melitopol, Zaporizhya region



**Sergiy Logvin**  
*Patient of the Center  
for Complex Rehabilitation  
of Disabled Persons*

The Center for Complex Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons is an essential institution for ensuring the effective rehabilitation of numerous people with disabilities in our region.

After my illness, I need a constant multipurpose rehabilitation, so I feel very fortunate to have access to rehabilitation services in my home city.

SGP project has provided a valuable support to the Rehabilitation Center by installing a solar power system and organizing an information campaign that both brought environmental and economic benefits and helped to improve access to health services to those in need.





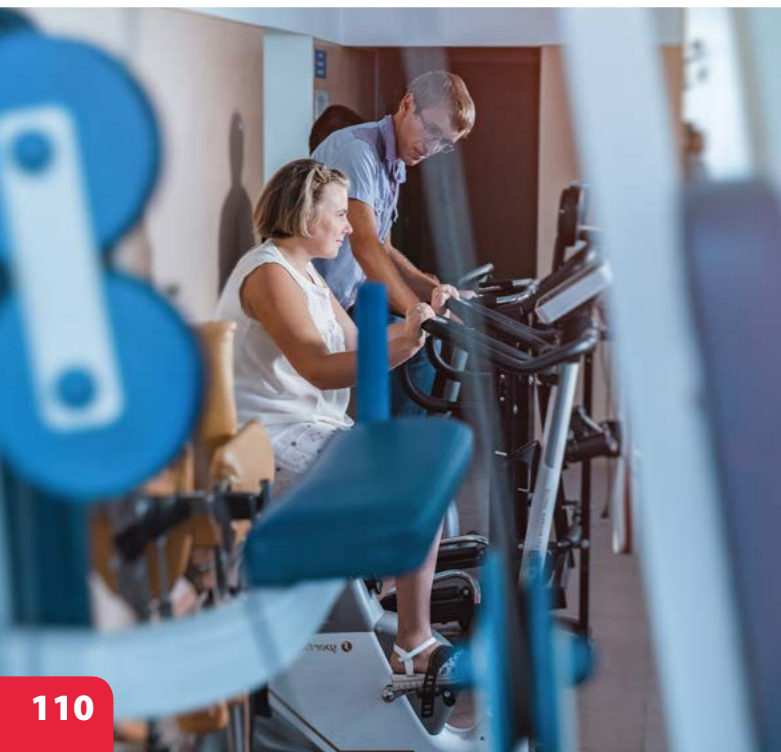


**Julia Astafieva**  
*Patient of the Center  
for Complex Rehabilitation  
of Disabled Persons*



The Rehabilitation Center is a place where we can receive necessary health services and excellent care to feel like at home. For some people it is even better than their home. The Center regularly organizes some interesting and inspiring events. A few years ago it also became a platform for inclusive education for children with disabilities. But as any state-owned institution it continuously suffers from the lack of adequate funding. Thus, every support is important, especially when it helps to decrease costs and provides multiple benefits.

I believe the initiative should be replicated in every town and city all over Ukraine.





## Renewable energy for sustainable development of local communities



### All-Ukrainian Children Union Ecological Guard



11.2017 — 07.2018



The project established the Knowledge center of sustainable development practices in Ukraine to promote and implement the Sustainable Development Goals. The Center provides open access to information on best practices and prospects for implementing sustainable development principles.

The Center encourages the practical application of ecological principles based on harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature. A solid fuel boiler and energy efficient windows were installed along with solar panels and energy saving light bulbs to reduce electricity bill. An organic farming plot and an energy willow plantation were established to promote sustainable land use and renewable energy. Domestic waste sorting was organized, and "green office" principles were applied.

These measures, together, ensure the successful operation of the Center and contribute to its cooperation with governmental organisations, local authorities, NGOs and educational institutions, thus providing an opportunity to reach different target groups and raise awareness at the local, regional and national levels.



Vygraiiv village, Korsun-Shevchenkivsky district, Cherkasy region





**Olena Pashchenko**  
*Coordinator of the Sustainable  
Development Center,  
environmentalist*

The Center was established in Vygraiv village, in the premises of a rural school built in 1914. The retrofit of the old building included modern “green” technologies combined with the preservation of identity and historical elements. Besides, a number of environment-friendly models have been introduced to demonstrate the efficient use of natural resources. For over 20 years of operation of our organization, a powerful network has been created to cover all administrative regions of Ukraine, so the Center has become an effective tool for our educational activities. They include trainings, dedicated events and seminars for various target groups, including children, young people, educators, government officials, business representatives and civic activists. In 2019, the Center was visited by some 2,500 people from all over Ukraine.





## LOOKING AHEAD

For over 10 years now, SGP in Ukraine has been supporting community-based projects and empowering people to contribute to the achievement of global environmental goals. Every initiative has its own heroes with their life-changing stories, and this book reveals only a tiny portion of them.

SGP leads by example, promotes mutual trust and commitment, creates an enabling environment for civil society and local communities. Yet there is much more to be done as the Programme continues to incubate, test and implement innovative solutions, and scales up its good practices through policy influence, replication, partnership, networking, and other mechanisms.

Based on the experience gained and lessons learned, SGP in Ukraine aims at strengthening its strategic focus, promoting more integrated approach, and enhancing partnerships by working closely with governments, local authorities, CSOs and the private sector.

With a focus on people's needs, the Programme will continue to serve as a key mechanism for implementing provisions of global environmental treaties, protocols and conventions at the local level, and ensure sustainable development by empowering civil society and local communities.

# 10 YEARS OF PEOPLE EMPOWERMENT SUCCESS

DEDICATED TO THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY'S  
SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME IN UKRAINE

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