



PROPARK

FOUNDATION FOR PROTECTED AREAS

2021

ANNUAL REPORT

Foto: Propark



WORKING WITH SPECIAL PEOPLE FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE



This year, despite the pandemics, was a very intense year for us, the Propark team for our partners with whom we implemented projects and for those who were participating at our intense, face-to-face programmes, i.e. the training events, educational programmes, study tours. We worked with more than 280 people from various entities, involved directly or indirectly in protected area management, people from the National Agency for Protected Areas, environmental protection agencies, representatives of local authorities and local leaders especially from the Făgăraș mountain area, protected area managers and teachers involved in nature education programmes. More than 2600 children had the opportunity to participate in the education programmes initiated organized by us with the support of our donors.

We closed some exciting projects, like the one through which we developed a model education programme about pristine forests, and we started new, even more exciting ones, like the project which aims to support young people to become active leaders for nature conservation and effective protected areas or the one aiming to establish the European Nature Academy

Our small team was strengthened by the arrival of two new colleagues, Renate Cornici-Dan, Alina Paraschiv and Ioana Duică, enriching us with their knowledge and experience brought from non-conservation sectors.

Our brief report, *structured by Strategic Themes*, should give you a good overview of the main activities and outputs of our team in 2021.

Tiberiu Chiricheș
Executive Director

1.Capacity building



LIFE edu

for Natura 2000 managers in EU 2018-2021

**Funding source: LIFE financial instrument
of the European Community**

Lead beneficiary: EUROPARC Federation

This year we produced a new episode of the People for Nature Series: a short movie about a Natura 2000 biologist, made with the aim to show how exciting and interesting is to work as a conservationist and to encourage young people to think about nature related occupations.

The online library of Propark is now enriched with 6 video presentations for the Applied Conservation Biology training program. Some of these will be used also not only for training events, but also as awareness raising tools for the general public through the social media channels.

Results:

- A bat conservationist - Szilard Bucs
<https://youtu.be/NvEYDhIlf50>
- 6 video trainings



LIFE ENABLE

European Nature Academy

2021-2024

Funding source: the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community

Lead beneficiary: EUROPARC Federation

This three-year project that started in September, and aims to build practical nature management capacity of Natura 2000 and other Protected Area managers. It aims to equip individuals and their organisations with the competencies required to meet the challenges and opportunities of nature management in the coming decade.

The project will develop practical ways to enable Natura 2000 and protected area managers to meet the complex and multiple challenges faced by nature in Europe. Project activities will support practical capacity building for effective nature management, including development of a competence-based learning programme, with new tools and learning quality standards. The project will create the new 'European Nature Academy', a European training programme for nature managers.

The Academy will provide innovative and creative online learning opportunities, combined with face-to-face learning. According to their learning needs and interests, participants will be able to progress through basic, foundation and practitioner level courses covering various subjects and including a 'train the trainer' course. The project will test blended learning tools and approaches essential to the long-term protection of Europe's biodiversity and our shared natural heritage.

TRAINING EVENTS

2021 was a challenging year for organizing training events because of the COVID pandemic restriction. Despite this, always with an eye on the safety requirements, we managed to organize a number of face-to-face training events.

Participants were coming from various entities : National Agency for Protected Areas, NGO's, Environmental Protection Agencies, National Park Administrations, County Councils, City Halls.

Dedicated trainer teams and enthusiastic participants made the trainings atmosphere relaxed and the learning experience intense. Together with them, the Propark team gained experience and developed its capacity to organize high quality trainings.

20 Rangers and 11 Protected Area Specialist were certified last year based on our training programmes



Results:

- Training events on request from various entities: 6 face-to-face trainings, 51 participants, 12 trainers
- Training events organized as part of the LIFE Făgăraș financed trainings: 2 face-to-face trainings, 31 participants, 9 trainers

TOPICS OF THE TRAINING EVENTS

- Monitoring techniques & insects ecology – 3 days, 20 participants
- Project management, financial legislation and communication – 2 days, 8 participants
- Risk management in projects – 3 days, 5 participants
- Public relation and communication – 6 days, 6 participants
- Protected Area Specialist– 10 days, 11 participants
- GIS mentoring – 10 days, 1 participant



2. Model approaches for efficient Protected Areas



A wilderness reserve in the Southern Carpathians

2019-2024

Funding source: Endangered Landscape Program and LIFE

Lead beneficiary: Conservation Carpathia

This project, initiated by Foundation Conservation Carpathia, the process of creating a world-class wilderness reserve in the Southern Carpathians, large enough to allow natural processes to take place, to benefit biodiversity and local communities, and to serve as a model for a future National Park movement in Romania. Our role is to develop and implement nature education programmes, to facilitate a zonation process for a potential national park and to contribute to the community outreach activities, with the aim to actively engage local communities. Last year we started, together with the Romanina Wilderness Society, to meet representatives from 22 communities and, based on our preliminary stakeholder analysis, we defined the priority regions for community outreach activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Results:

- Indoor lessons in 4 schools (Sibiu County) – 213 children
- 3 educational programs in schools
- 5 outdoor excursions – 1 day each for 100 children
- 6 Wilderness camps – 5 days each for 90 children
- 1 Nature Educator training (5 days) for 14 teachers

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Results

- the second edition of Făgăraș Fest – a three day festival organized together with the Nucșoara local community, promoting the values of the Făgăraș Mountains
- a stakeholder analysis covering 26 communes
- 22 information meetings in the project area
- 1 site visit organized in the project area for 3 politicians and the director of the National Environmental Agency
- study tour organized representatives of stakeholders from the Făgăraș Area to Bayerischer Wald National Park, Germany – 9 participants
- 1 training on Strategic Planning in the context of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) for 12 stakeholders



Management planning for Protected Areas

2018-2022

Funding source: Large Infrastructure Operational Program Romania

Lead beneficiary: Milvus Group Association

Propark provided technical expertise and facilitated the participatory process for the development of four Natura 2000 site management plans, for sites situated along the upper course of the Mureș River, in Transylvania: ROSCI 0210, ROSCI 0367, ROSCI 0368, ROSCI 369.

The first drafts of Management plans were developed and submitted to responsible authorities.

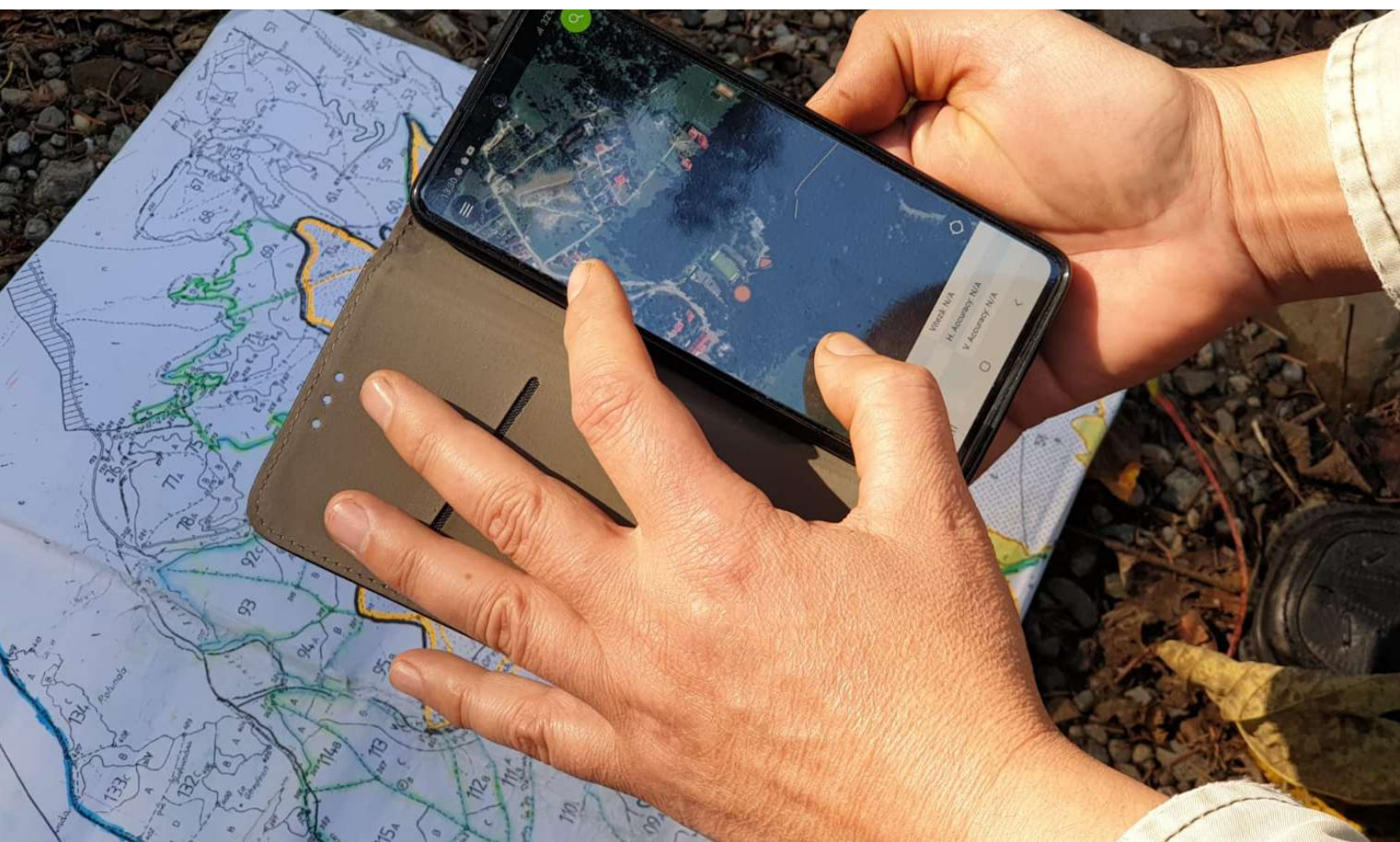
Results:

– 4 draft Management Plans



Promoting SMART for Protected Area monitoring and reporting

The management team of the Ceahlău National Park embarked with us on a road of experimenting this online, open-source tool. After weeks allocated for the planning work and for setting up and testing the system, the team decided to adopt this tool as part of their national park management system. Ranger patrol plans are developed now using SMART, field reports are collected and compiled from the rangers' mobile phones and the 2021 report was produced using the data collected with this the platform.



Propark Adventure Race

A complex competition, with a high level of difficulty, to promote protected natural areas as ideal destinations for outdoor sports activities.

The 6th edition of Propark Adventure Race was organized during the second edition of Făgăraș Fest.

The competition means:

- Distance: 200-300 km
- Team: four persons, at least one girl
- Time: maximum 50 hours
- Trials: mountain biking, trail running, tourist orienteering, kayaking, rock climbing, speleology and others.

12 teams had been on the start but only 4 of them had finished the entire competition. During the 50 hours of race, the 48 participants had accomplished 4 sports and 5 nature related tasks. Everything in total respect with the environment and specially tailored for the Făgăraș Mountains protected areas.



3.Education and awareness raising



Pristine forests for future generations

2020-2021

Funding source: NABU Foundation (Naturschutzbund Deutschland) and VGP Foundation

Lead beneficiary: Propark

The aim of the project was to increase the level of awareness of children and young people with regards to pristine forests through an environmental education program and to prepare them to become responsible adults, willing to support nature protection in the Carpathian.

We developed an educational program for schoolchildren and a thematic trail in the Șinca Pristine Forest, an UNESCO World Heritage Site. The program was implemented both in schools and on the field. We built capacity of the forest administrators to implement the educational programs using the thematic trail and we promoted this case study to all UNESCO World Heritage pristine forest managers from Romania through an interactive training session.

Results:

- 1 educational program on pristine forests
- 1 thematic trail for Șinca Veche pristine forest
- 1 game developed for children – "Find me"
- 1 webpage developed for the trail
- 16 classrooms of IV-VIII school children enrolled in the programme
- 8 excursions with children from local communities
- 2 educational stands at Făgăraș Fest and at the Green City Forum festival with more than 1100 children participating
- 1 training event aiming to develop capacities of Guides specialized in Pristine Forests, with 10 rangers participating from the partner organizations
- 1 training sessions Pristine Forest Management for 19 managers of UNESCO World Heritage Pristine Forests in Romania
- 1 promotion campaign covering press trips, articles in local and national press, radio and TV coverage with the project news

Biosferis

Resources allocated by volunteers from the conservation community and from a group of nature photographers (Forona)

The Biosferis online Journal was launched in June and contains information and articles relevant to practical approaches to nature conservation.

It is being developed in with the voluntary contribution of Forona, an association of nature photographers, keen to work in close cooperation with nature conservationists.

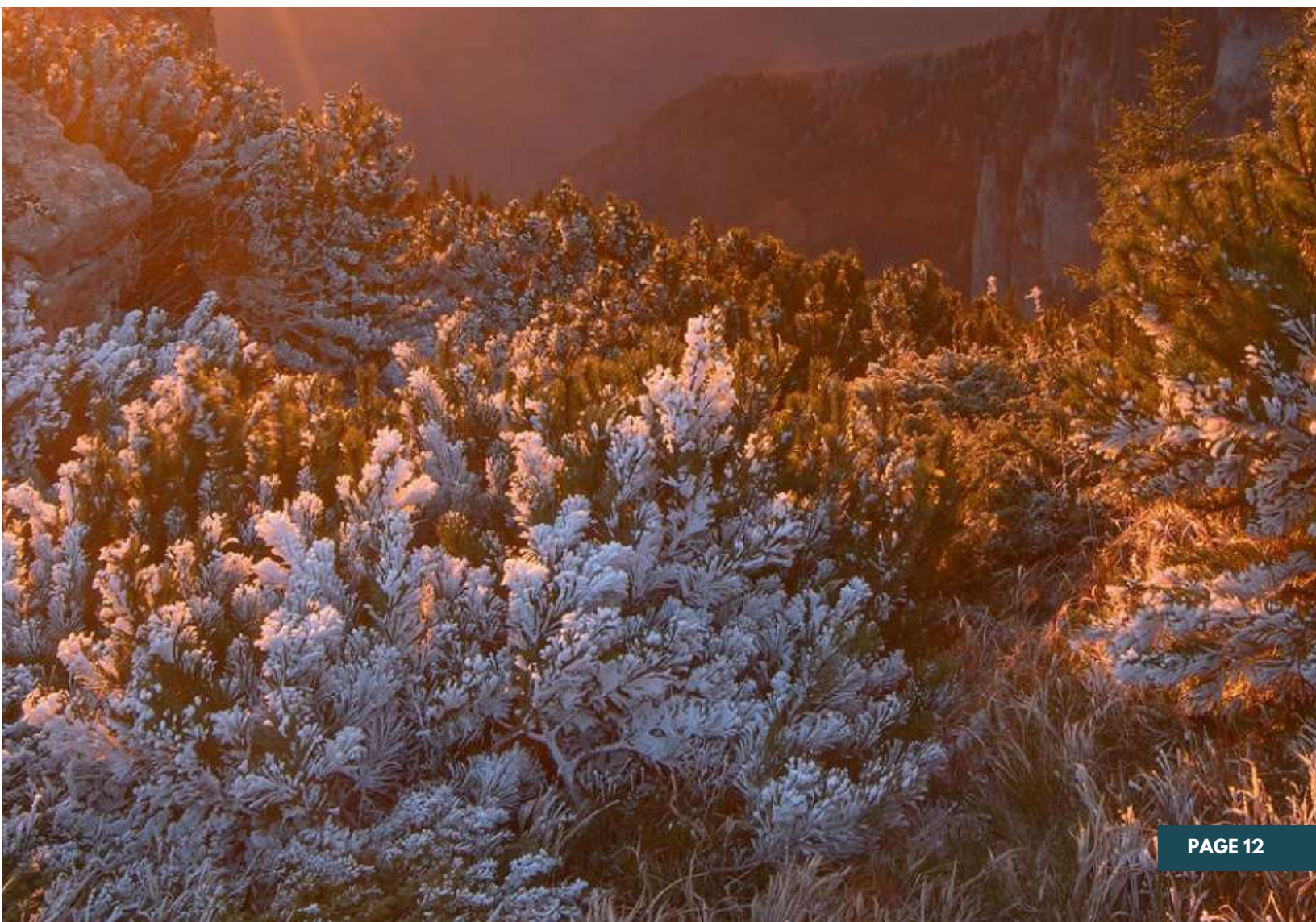
The target audience of this magazine are specialists in the field of nature conservation from non-governmental organizations, universities, entities with responsibilities in the field of environmental protection and nature conservation, protected area managers, individuals persons interested in nature conservation.

We hope that in the future Biosferis Journal will be not only a source of information, but also a common platform for collaboration between specialists, photographers, nature lovers and other relevant actors.

Results:

<https://propark.ro/ro/biosferis/revista-biosferis-01-iunie-2021-658.html>

<https://propark.ro/ro/biosferis/revista-biosferis-02-decembrie-2021-665.html>



Future Leaders for nature conservation

2021-2024

Funding source: Active Citizens Fund Romania program

Lead beneficiary: Propark

The project aims to develop an educational programme through which we prepare young people for active involvement in the decision making process related to protected areas, by shadowing Scientific and Consultative Councils of National and Nature Parks. Competencies related to nature conservation and advocacy will be developed through the project for 5 groups of 20 young people living nearby a national or nature parks and one group living in Bucharest, next to the national authorities and agencies with an important say in the nature conservation domain.

The educational programme is structured around five case studies from partner protected areas: Defileul Jiului National Park, Piatra Craiului National Park, Lunca Mureşului Natural Park, Gradistea Muncelului Cioclovina National Park, Putna Vrancea Natural Park, which are facing pressures and threats that need innovative solutions.

Results:

- 5 case studies documented
- 5 short videos (3D) developed for the teaching toolkit
- 1 nature education program for youth (14 – 16 years category), aiming to motivate participation in the project
- 770 high school students have so far participated in the educational program.



4. Organizational development and management



Eco Spații Verzi

The Eco Greenspaces Ltd (Eco Spații Verzi) was established in 2019, with support from a Start-Up program. This company is meant to be a fundraising tool for the Foundation, promoting nature-friendly approach in the establishment and management of urban greenspaces.

In 2021, the company activities` generated a neutral cash-flow by the end of the year.

We have been involved in few conservation projects, like:

"Tiny Forest Brașov" – planting 1250 seedlings and 265 medium-sized seedlings in a very polluted urban area;

"WeWilder Armeniș, by WWF Romania" – Romania's first rural hub, a blueprint for developing self-sustaining pockets of wilderness.

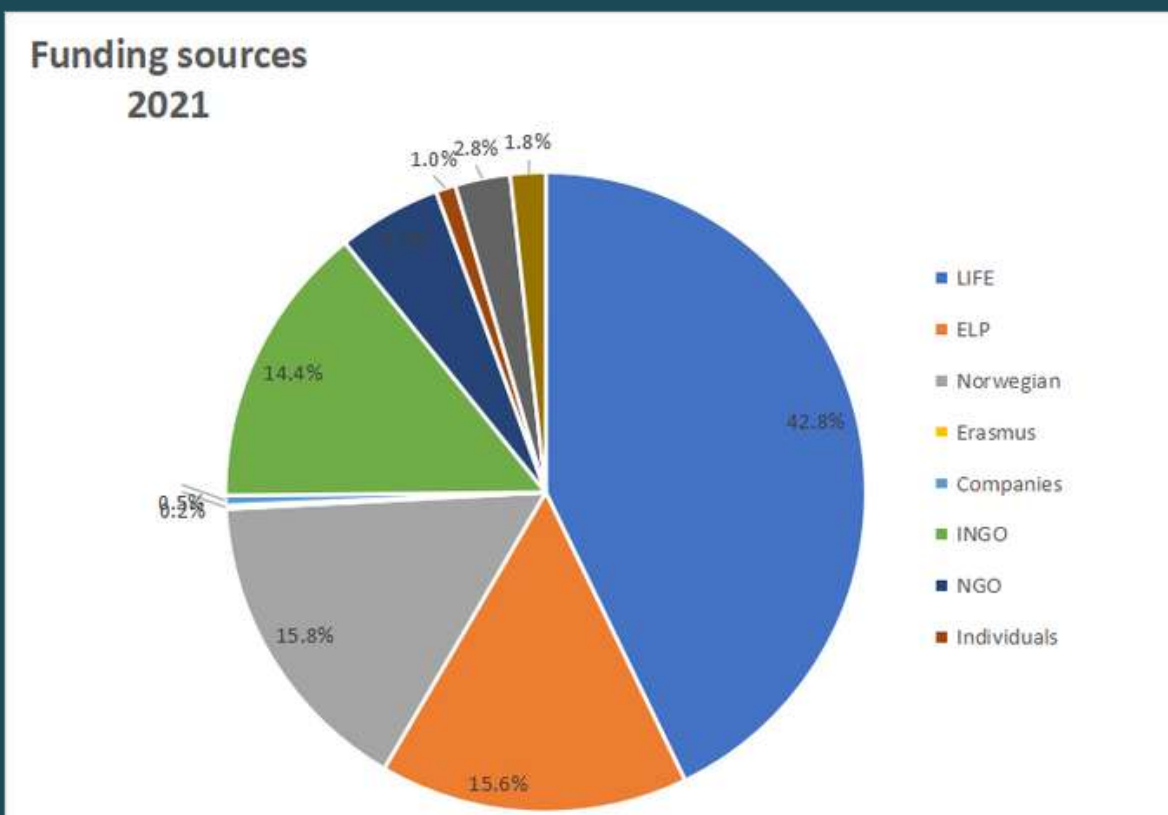
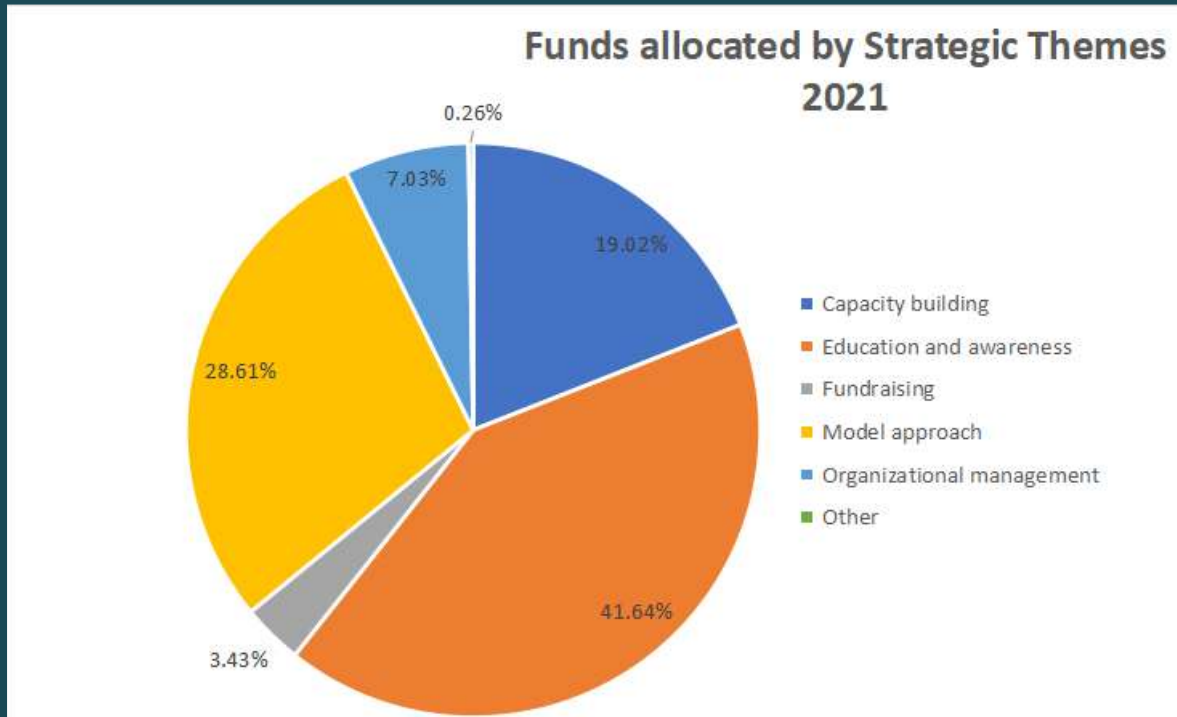
THE COMPANIE'S PROFIT WAS REINVESTED IN PROPAK ACTIVITIES:

- Contribution of the Eco Spatii Verzi` team in organizing Făgăraș Fest 2021
- Contributing to the educational activities for children from Nucșoara Village and Lerești Village organized in the ELP Project
- Contributing to the educational activities for children from Șinca Village and Perșani Village
- Developing the educational trail in Sinca Pristine Forest ("Pristine Forests for Future Generations" Project)



Financial Overview

We spent 416.666 Euro for our activities in 2021. The allocation of money by Strategic Themes and the overall picture of the funding sources are presented below.



Our Team



Tiberiu Chiricheș
Executive director



Erika Stanciu
Protected Area Specialist



Laura Florescu
Financial director



Andra Croitoru
Coordinator of Model
Projects Department



Mara Bulea
Capacity Building
Coordinator



Roxana Iordăchescu
Project Manager



Ioana Duică
Coordinator of the Ecological
Education Department



Alina Paraschiv
Asistant Director



Renate Cornici
Fundraising Technical
Support

Our Board Members



Paul Hotham
President



Tobias Garstecki
Board member



Roger de Freitas
Board member



Cătălin Gheorghe
Board member



Bogdan Micu
Board member

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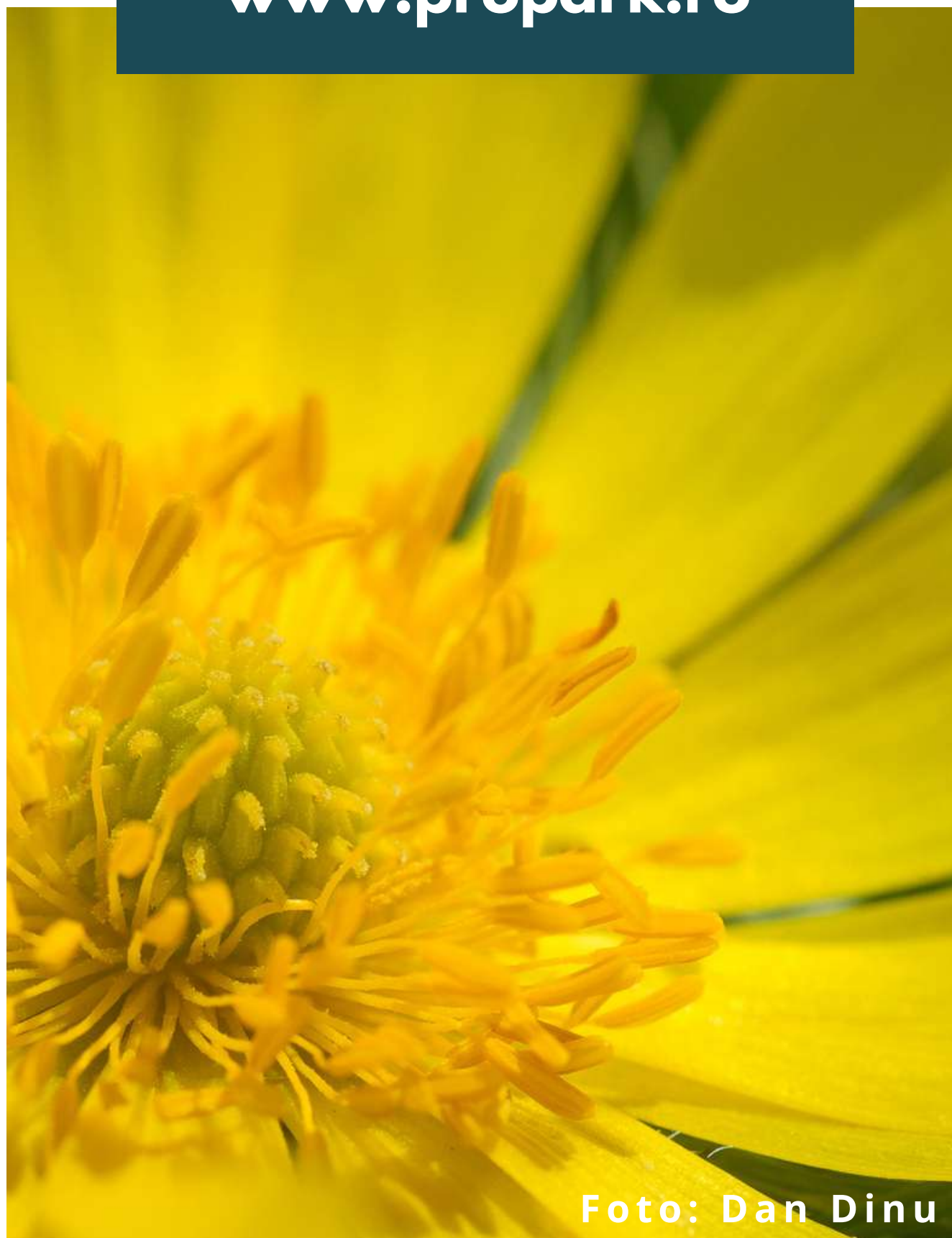


Foto: Dan Dinu