

Consortium Meeting Report

The city of Braşov hosted the Small4Good Consortium Meeting between 20 and 22 May 2025, convening project partners, researchers, forest practitioners, and stakeholder representatives to advance the objectives of the Small4Good initiative—namely, the development of multifunctional forest management approaches adapted to small-scale forest ownership, with contributions to biodiversity, climate resilience, and sustainable rural development.



Field Visit: Demonstrating Forest Ecosystem Services in Practice

The meeting commenced with a full-day field trip across the Braşov region (Living Lab East), designed to provide participants with direct exposure to the diverse types of forest ecosystem services relevant for small forest owners. Each thematic stop offered insight into local management contexts, stakeholder engagement models, and the practical delivery of ecosystem services under varying conditions of ownership and land-use pressure.

Stop A: Livada Poştei, Braşov – Gathering Point

Braşov, situated at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains and surrounded by extensive forest areas, served as an ideal setting to contextualize the multifunctional role of forests in Romania.

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The city's historical links to forestry and its proximity to Natura 2000 sites underlined its relevance as a host region.

Stop B: Reci – Cultural and Regulating Services in Protected Areas

At Mestecănişul de la Reci, participants examined the challenges of managing protected riparian forests under fragmented private ownership. Management activities focus on ecological restoration and the control of invasive species. Discussions emphasized the difficulties encountered by smallholders—such as limited technical capacity, administrative complexity, and insufficient financial incentives—when managing high-value ecological areas.



Stop C: Reci – Provisioning Services and Industrial Integration

The visit to the HS Timber production facility in Reci highlighted the provisioning function of forests and the role of industrial actors in regional development. The plant, among the most technologically advanced in the country, integrates sawing, drying, planning, pellet production,

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and energy recovery. Participants explored the potential for establishing inclusive value chains that ensure fair engagement of small-scale forest owners as suppliers.



Stop D: Teliu – Smallholder Management and Ownership Models

At the “Cetățuia” Common Ownership Association in Teliu, participants learned about the governance of shared forest resources by over 400 individual owners. Presentations addressed the constraints faced in timber harvesting, market access, and the retrocession process. The field discussion underscored the importance of collaborative models and capacity building for effective smallholder participation in multifunctional forestry.



Stop F: Lempeş Hill Forest – Supporting and Cultural Services

The final stop included a guided walk and practical demonstration in a marteloscope, a training tool used to evaluate habitat trees and support biodiversity-sensitive management decisions. The visit facilitated reflection on the integration of ecological criteria into forest planning,

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highlighting the need to preserve habitat features that are often undervalued economically but critical for biodiversity.



Consortium Meeting: Strategic Planning and Integration

The consortium meeting continued over the following two days at the Rectorate Building of Transilvania University of Braşov, offering a structured setting for reviewing project progress and discussing implementation priorities.





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Key elements of the agenda included:

Project Overview and Status Reporting

The coordination team delivered a comprehensive update on administrative, financial, and technical progress, with reflections on challenges encountered and lessons learned in the first project phases.

Living Lab Presentations and Exchange

Each Living Lab coordinator shared recent activities, highlighting engagement strategies with forest owners and the co-development of innovative business and management models. Cross-site comparisons enabled mutual learning and refinement of methodologies.

Breakout Sessions (WP2 to WP5)

The consortium divided into focused work package discussions to deepen technical work:

WP2: Tools for assessing and mapping forest ecosystem services

WP3: Business models tailored to smallholders and local conditions

WP4: Monitoring frameworks incorporating remote sensing and field data

WP5: Policy recommendations and pathways for implementation

Dissemination and Exploitation Planning

The DEC session (Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication) focused on enhancing project visibility and uptake, including the preparation of outreach materials, stakeholder dialogue mechanisms, and long-term exploitation strategies.

General Assembly and Crosscutting Sessions

The final sessions of the meeting addressed governance matters and promoted integration across work packages, with a particular emphasis on coordinating technical outputs, aligning communication efforts, and planning upcoming project milestones.



