

EANS-News: Lenzing launches sustainable reforestation project in Albania

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Reforestation of 20 hectares of degenerated land in North Albania

Company Information

Lenzing/Shkroda - As part of its sustainability strategy "Naturally positive", the Lenzing Group strives to ensure an intact environment and the protection of forests as an important part of the ecosystem. Against this backdrop, Lenzing initiated a project in Albania designed to promote sustainable forestry and improve local living conditions. As a best practice example, 20 hectares of degenerated land will be recultivated with forest and fruit trees in cooperation with the local population and various NGOs. Moreover, concepts for sustainable forestry will be developed with local schools.

Zwttl.: Important measures benefit Albanian forests

Albania's forest areas rank among the European regions with the most extensive room for improvement. New approaches to manage the forests are necessary in order to effectively cope with environmental problems and to fulfil the current needs of society with respect to the sustainable use of natural resources. Lenzing is supporting this process with this reforestation project. In this way, it is moving ahead with implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations to which the company is committed.

"Lenzing has longstanding experience in responsible wood sourcing and extensive forestry expertise. This project shows that the Lenzingers passionately stand up for the viability of trees and forests and champion the interests of people above and beyond their daily business and fiber production. The idea for this project at this site came from Lenzing's wood procurement team. Our forest experts have underlined the important role reforestation can play, especially in this area", says Robert van de Kerkhof, Chief Commercial Officer of the Lenzing Group.

The project launched by Lenzing is being co-financed by the Austrian Development Agency, which brings together Albanian and Austrian experts as a means of improving forest management skills, enabling an exchange of know-how among vocational schools and revitalizing degenerated land in Albania.

"We very much appreciate Lenzing's decision to be actively involved in Albania. The objective is to support local communities and work together to deal with the problem of deforestation in Albania as well as to promote an exchange of know-how between Austrian and Albanian schools", states Simone Ungersböck, Head of the Office of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in Albania.

Zwttl.: More than 3,000 trees planted

There is a great need to take action in the Ana e Malit region in North Albania. 50 percent of the official forest areas do not contain any forest vegetation. The results are erosion and annual floods, which in turn make life hard for the local population, who primarily earn a living from agriculture. For this reason, 3,660 fruit, deciduous and conifer trees were planted in the western part of the Municipality of Shkodra at the foot of the Tarboshi Mountains and in close proximity to the Buna and Drini rivers. In addition, erosion protection measures were installed such as stone walls and double fences.

Zwttl.: Cooperation with local communities and NGOs

Within the context of the project, the local community will be actively involved in the process in order to ensure a comprehensive transfer of knowledge. The pupils at the Forest School of Shkodra will actively take part in the entire process as a means of learning more about reforestation. Employees of Eco-Social Farm, a facility for people with disabilities located directly below the reforestation area, will take care of the irrigation of the seedlings. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary cooperation will be carried out with the Austrian school in Shkodra. The reforestation project will serve as the basis for the diploma thesis of the pupils there. In turn, this will contribute to sustainably raising the awareness of pupils and the general public with respect to current challenges in forest management.

The project underlines the commitment of the Lenzing Group to promoting sustainability and enables the company to establish best practice examples for the industry and at the same time to learn for future projects and similar CSR-related activities.

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