

# FIREBRAKE

*Fighting forests fire,  
a growing common threat*

**PROJECT TITLE**

**FireBrake - Development of forest fire risk assessment capacity and collaboration in the context of climate change**

**IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD**

04.10.2018 - 31.03.2019

**ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED**

Arbonaut Ltd (FI);  
State Government-financed Institution "National park "Vodlozerskiy (RU)

**PROGRAMME**

Karelia  
CBC 2014-2020

**TOTAL BUDGET**

50.000,00 €

## KARELIA

CBC // Cross-border cooperation



The project aims at increasing the knowledge and collaboration between Finland and Russia in the field of forest fire risk assessment and management. Project partners have joined forces to research the different entities operating with forest fire risk management on both sides of the border. The aim is to assess the resources, to identify bottlenecks and areas that need further development or reinforced capacity-building actions.



## RISKS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

# ENVIRONMENT



Project co-funded by  
the European Union



*“Forest fires do not care about the national borders. If there is a fire in Russia, it can spread to Finland, and vice versa. And not only the fire: it may be smoke, or any other effect of the fire. So, this is really a shared problem”*

Elisa Korpelainen, project coordinator from Arbonaut Ltd.

In the Karelia region, forest is the dominant ecosystem, stretching over thousands of square kilometers. The global climate change and extreme weather conditions, like draught and heat waves, have increased the risk of forest fires both in Finland and Russia. The fires not only threaten human lives, but also heavily affect the environment: the improvement of monitoring and modelling capacities could reduce threats to biodiversity, speeding up forest fire response and control, before blazes get bigger.

Though the problem is a common one, yet the cooperation on the issue between the actors across the border could be improved. Thus, the Finnish technology company “Arbonaut Ltd”, specialized in forest fire services and risk analysis, came up with the idea of collaborating with the National park “Vodlozerskiy” (Russia), an institution which deals with forest protection and fire prevention.

“FIREBRAKE” is a micro-project designed to improve knowledge and collaboration in the field of forest fire risk assessment, among the relevant Finnish and Russian

organisations. The project is implemented within the Karelia CBC Programme 2014-2020. “This framework creates a space where the organisations can cooperate, share knowledge and experience: in this sense - continues Korpelainen - it is unique”.

FIREBRAKE was launched in October 2018, bound to last only six months. “First of all, we wanted to study the field: how forest fires and wetland fires are handled in the border regions, how the organisations are working with that issue, what kind of resources and technologies they have in hand” – says the project manager. The first step was to identify the organisations dealing with forest fires and risk assessment both in Finland and Russia - 23 in total - and to analyze the resources available and challenges encountered. This part culminated in a comprehensive gap analysis report.

“After that, we conducted a study on the different tools, technologies and solutions available for forest fire monitoring, suppression and prevention – Elisa continues - that is what we know best”. This

study has laid the path for a reinforcement and implementation plan, showing how the Russian and Finnish stakeholders could put their findings into use.

Last but not least, all project conclusions were wrapped up in an information package disseminated among the stakeholders and published on the project website for further use. Any entity interested in the subject and working with natural resources can use it, looking for more effective tools to prevent and monitor wildfires.

“Technologies are moving forward, but the principles used in forest fire monitoring and prevention remain the same: thus, the project outputs can be used for years to come” – concludes Elisa.

The lead beneficiary believes that, due to ever challenging climate conditions, the topic of forest and wetland fires will be unfortunately very relevant in the upcoming years. FIREBRAKE has laid the ground for improved collaboration in the field of forest fire risk assessment, and management and coordination between both national entities and their counterparts across the border. Based on the results of this project, it could be now interesting to develop a tool for a more dynamic communication between entities: fed by weather conditions data and background data about the forests, it might enable organisations to faster react to what is happening on either side of the border, and to save time in spreading the essential information to fight this powerful enemy.

