Removing Backgrounds from Images with CorelDRAW and PHOTO-PAINT

by CorelDRAW Master Ariel Garaza Díaz

In this tutorial, we are going to explore different methods for removing backgrounds from images in CorelDRAW and Corel PHOTO-PAINT.

Method 1: Removing Backgrounds with PowerClip in CorelDRAW

This is one of the easier and most popular ways to remove the background of an image. Here you will be placing one or more objects "inside" a vector object. This is especially useful if the image that you want to remove the background from has well defined edges. A good example would be a photo of the Earth.

Using the **Ellipse** tool, we can easily to draw an ellipse and then use the **Pick** tool to adjust it precisely to the shape of the planet. Next, select the Earth image and go to **Object > PowerClip > Place inside frame**. An arrow will appear, then click on the ellipse to make it the PowerClip frame/container.
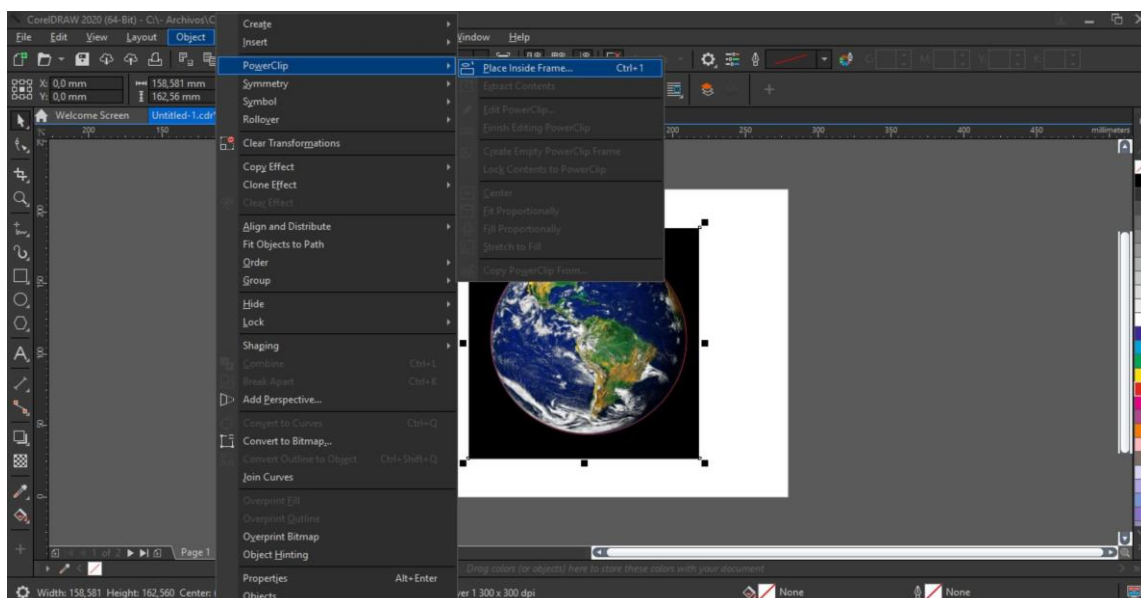
When you click, it will remove everything outside of the object you created. From here you can delete the ellipse outline and add another image to use as the new background.


The Earth image is a simple geometric shape with a single-color background, making it easy to remove the background. Now let's look at an image that is not geometric, like this flower.


The easiest way to create an outline around the flower is to draw it. You can use the **Freehand** tool (F5) and trace it. Within this tool group there are different tools you can use (Freehand, Bézier, Pen, etc.), but the final result will be the same for each option, so feel free to use the tool you're the most comfortable with.

To learn more about these drawing tools, watch the full tutorial How to Design Curves.
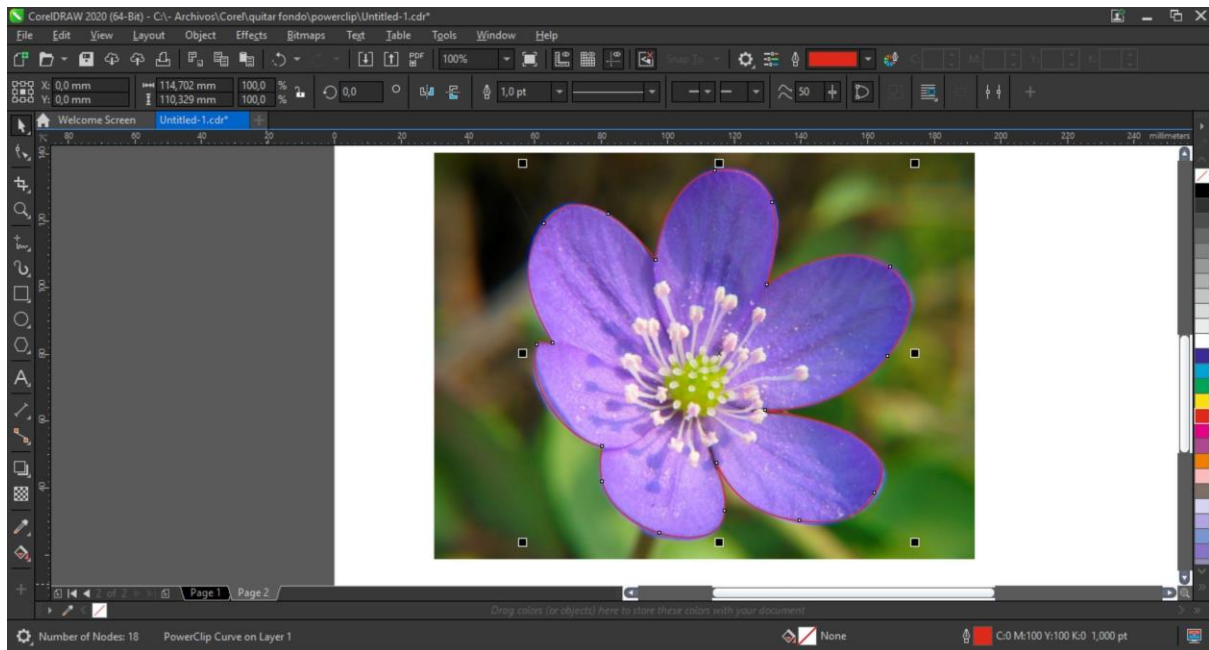
Once you have created the outline, follow the same steps as the previous example:

- Select the flower image.
- Go to **Object > PowerClip > Place inside frame**.
- Use the arrow to click on the outline you've drawn.
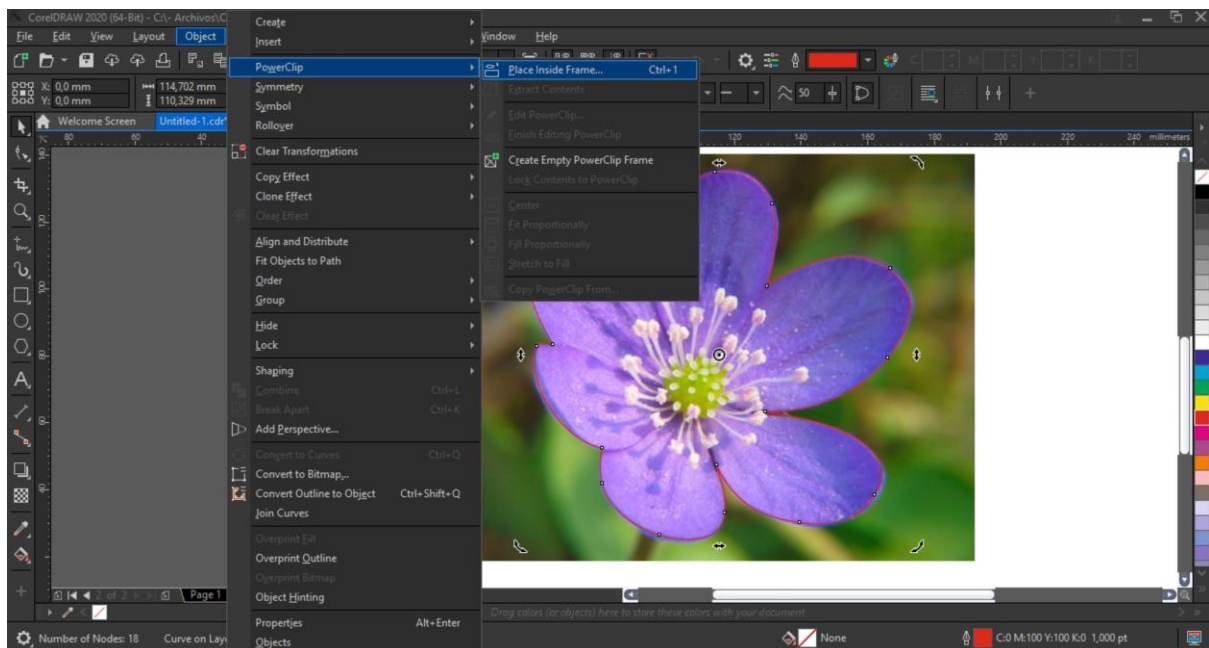
Now just like before you can add a new background to the image.

Learn more about the PowerClip tool in this tutorial [Clipping Objects into Other Objects with PowerClip](#).

However, it is not always so easy. Drawing the outline can sometimes take a lot of time and effort, especially for beginners. In that case, I have a little trick: vectorize the image using the **PowerTRACE** tool and then use the vector as a frame to create your PowerClip.

Method 2: Removing Backgrounds with PowerTRACE in CorelDRAW

To open **PowerTRACE** you can right-click on the image and select **Outline Trace > High Quality Image**, or on the property bar use **Trace Bitmap > Outline Trace > High Quality Image**.
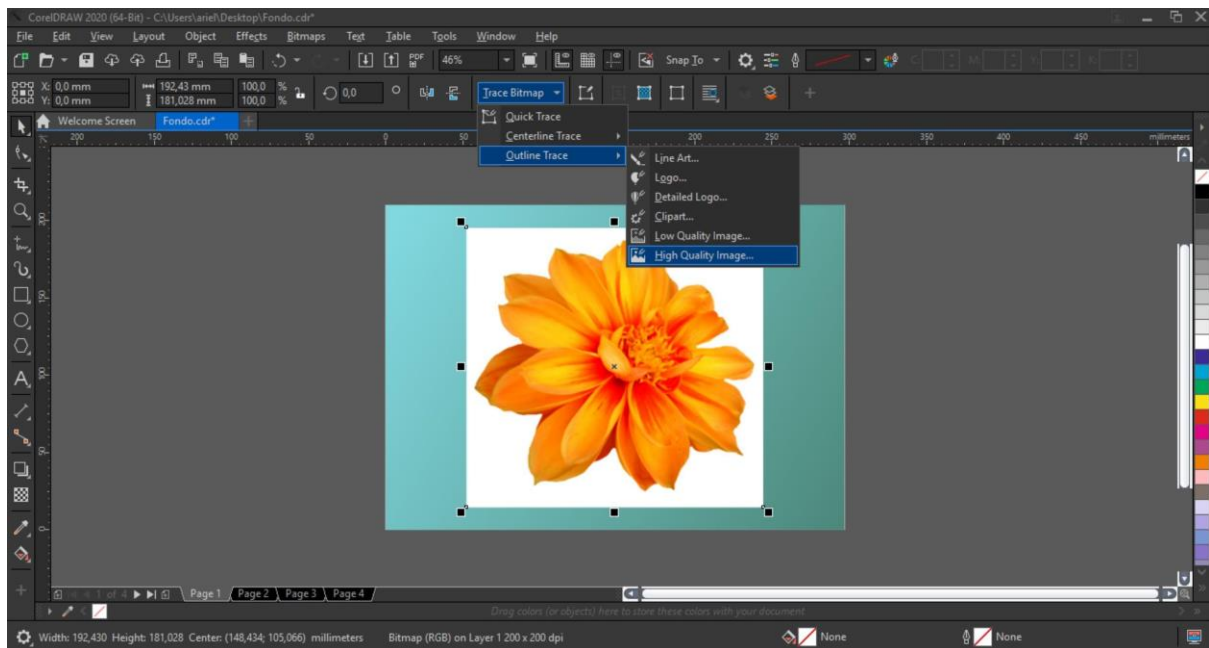

There are different configurations according to the type of image, from a high-contrast image (Line Art), a logo, clipart, etc. to a high-quality image. In this case you are only using the vector to create your frame, so you could also use **Quick Trace**. You can find it by right-clicking and selecting **Quick Trace**, or on the property bar **Trace Bitmap > Quick Trace**. I recommend using the **High-quality image** option because it gives you more flexibility and it can remove the background, either automatically or by selecting the color to eliminate.

On the **Settings** tab of the **PowerTRACE** window you have the option to remove the background automatically, or by specifying a color with the **Eyedropper** tool.
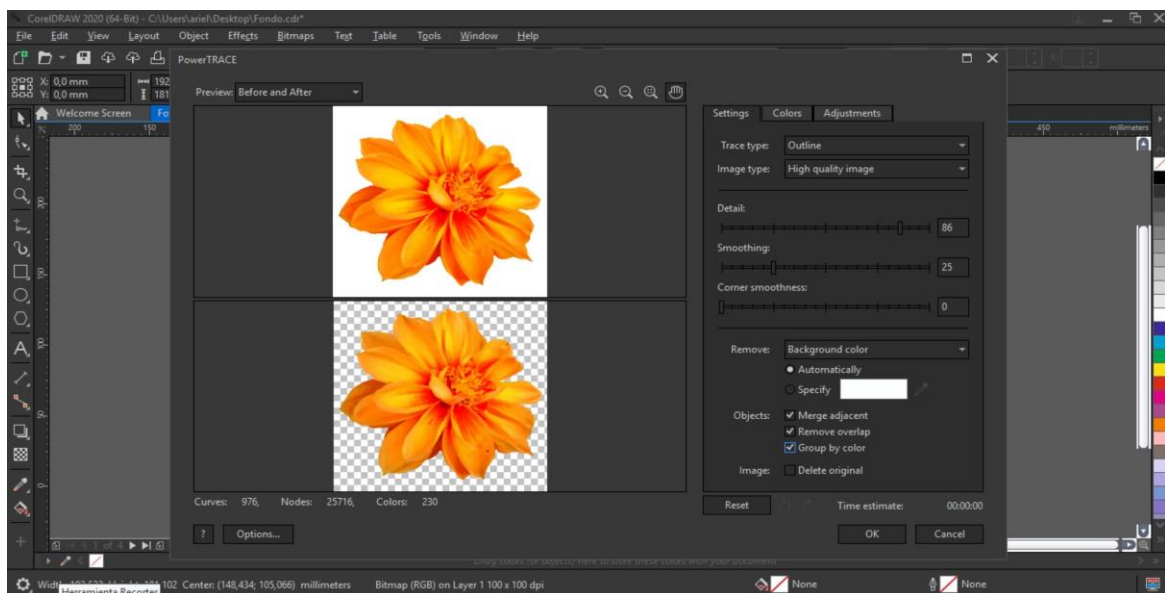
Once the background is removed, click **OK** to exit the **PowerTRACE** window. The **PowerTRACE** result is a group of objects that are on top of the original image – use the **Pick** tool to move the group off to the side. With the group still selected, go to **Object > Shaping > Boundary** to automatically draw the outline of your image.

The result will be an object in the shape of your image, it can be adjusted if you need to make corrections or modifications.
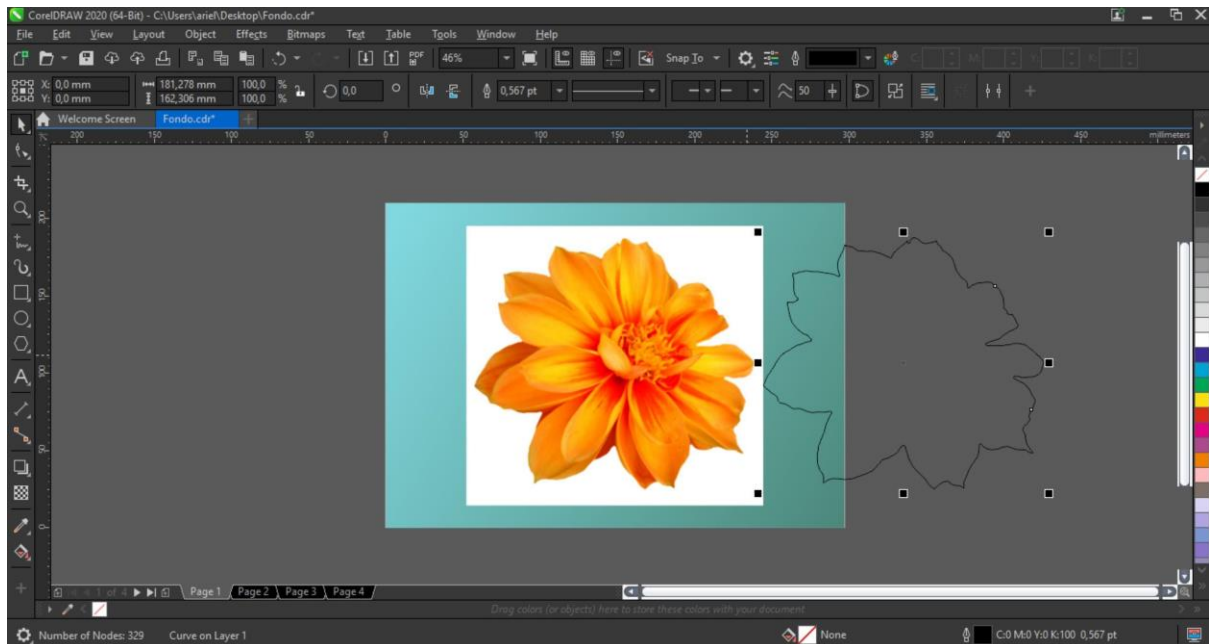
With the **Pick** tool, move the outline object over top of the original image. Select the original image, go to **Object > PowerClip > Place inside frame**, then use the arrow to click on the outline you created.

With that you will have eliminated the background of the image, but also perfected the edges of it, helping to increase the quality. You can delete the outline if you wish.
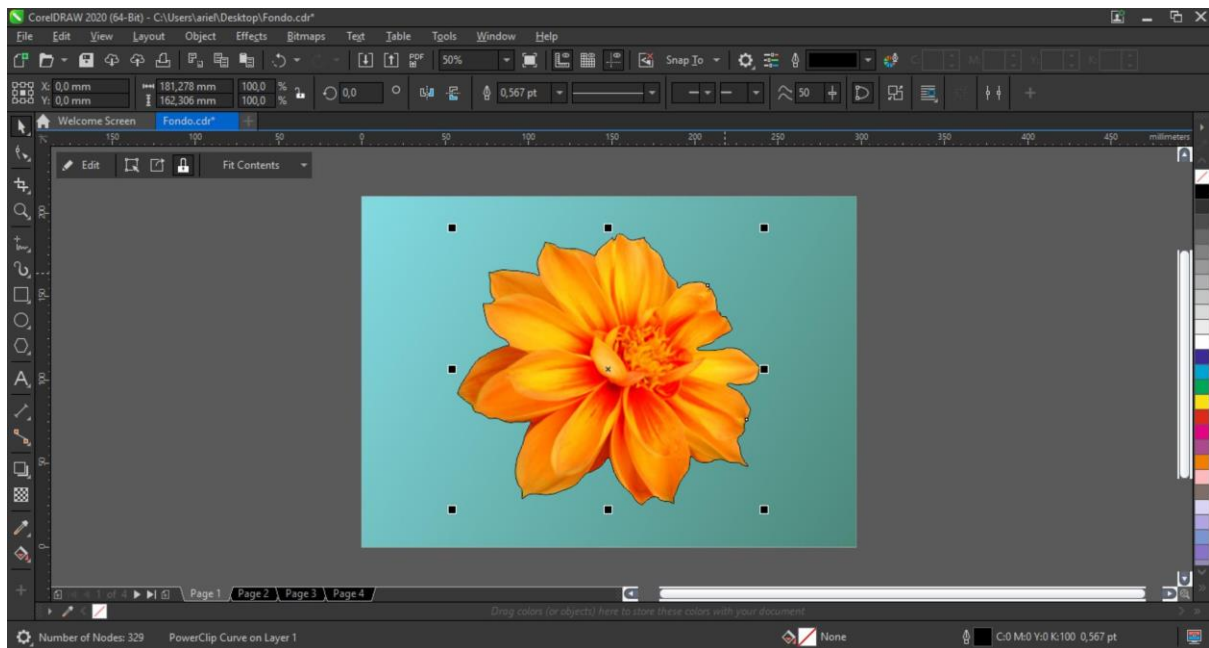

To learn more about PowerTRACE, watch the full tutorial How to Convert JPG to Vector with PowerTRACE.

## Method 3: Removing Backgrounds with Mask Tools in PHOTO-PAINT

PHOTO-PAINT is a powerful image editor that is included in CorelDRAW Graphics Suite. It has some helpful tools for removing backgrounds from more complex images.

You can open your image in PHOTO-PAINT directly from CorelDRAW. Select the image and click on the **Edit Bitmap** icon on the property bar. The advantage of doing it this way is that when you finish the editing the image in PHOTO-PAINT and return to CorelDRAW, the image will be in its original position, at its original size.
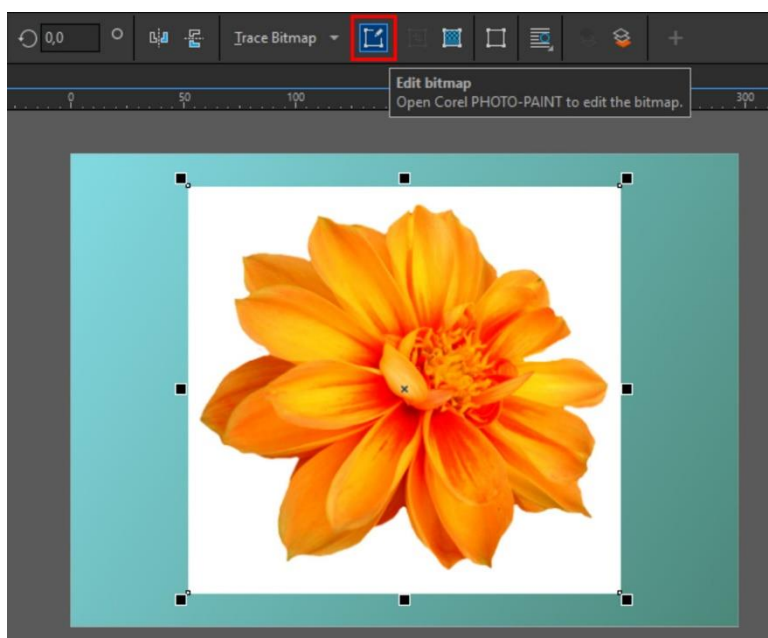
Once your image is open in PHOTO-PAINT, select the **Magic Wand** tool, which can be found in the **Mask Tools** group on the toolbar.

**TIP**: if you press the **W** key, the **Magic Wand** tool is automatically activated.
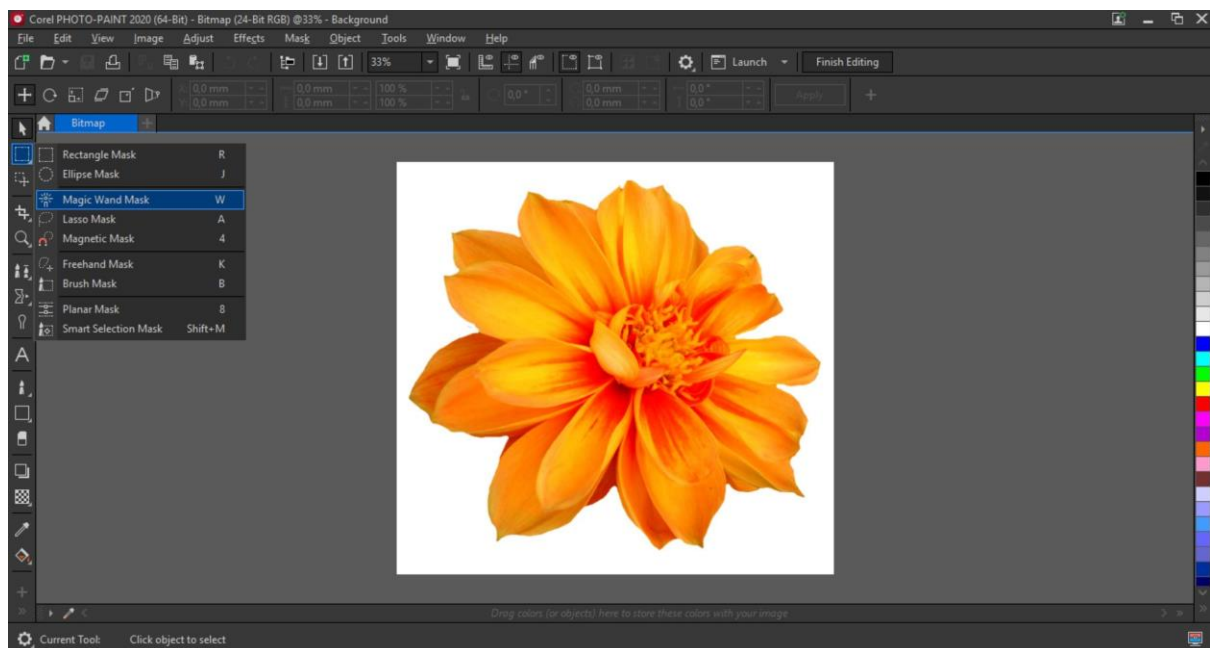
In this example, we want to mask the flower. But since the background is a uniform color, it is much easier to select than the flower, which is made up of many colors. Once the background is selected, all we need to do is invert the mask using **Mask > Invert Mask** (**Ctrl** + **Shift** + **I**).
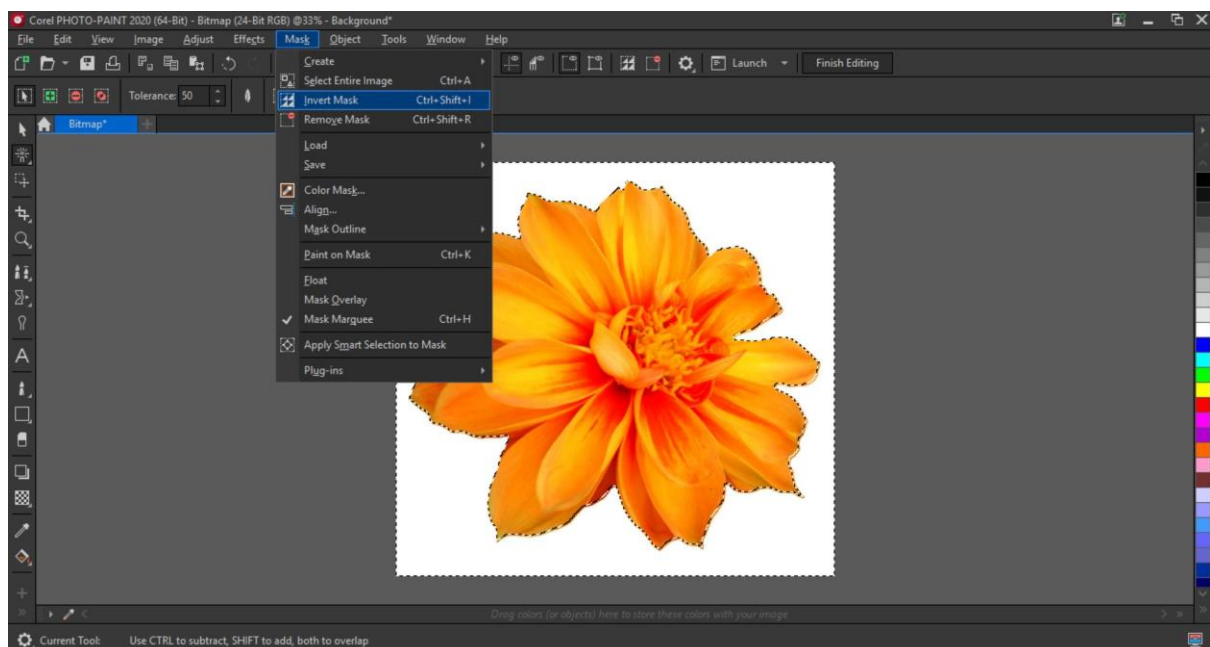
You can refine the selection using the different **Mask** tools if necessary. Once you're happy with your selection, simply click the **Finish Editing** button on the property bar to exit PHOTO-PAINT. You will be prompted to save your changes, click **Yes**.
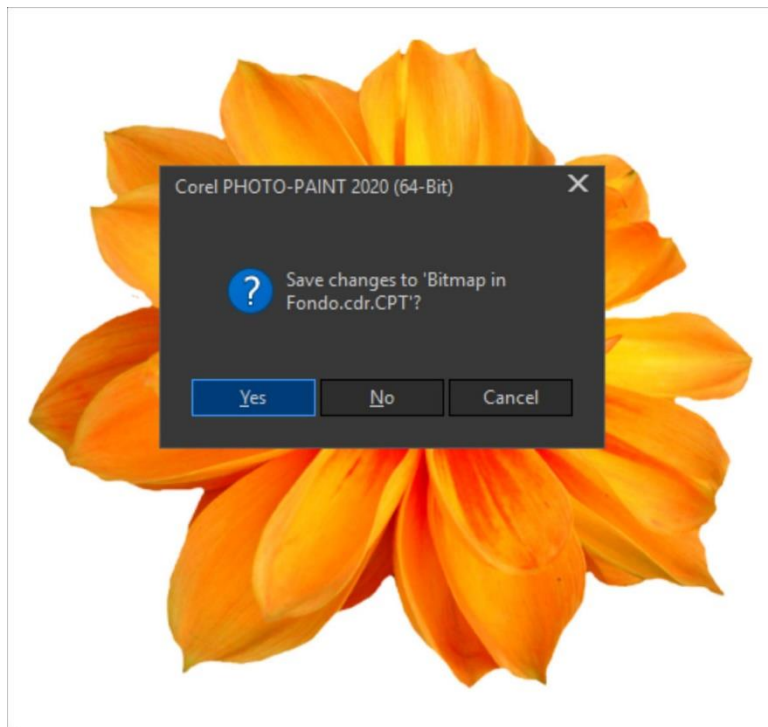
That will return you to CorelDRAW, with your edited image ready to add a new background or apply other effects (for example, with the **Drop Shadow** tool). It's important to remember that the weight of the image does not change, since the background is no longer visible, but the image has been cropped.
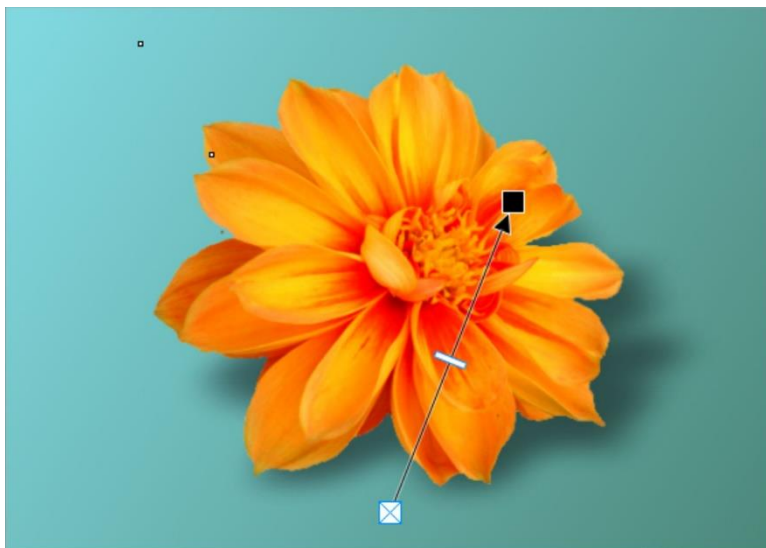
Now, as you know, it is not always so simple nor is the background always a uniform color. If the background is clearly separated from the object you want to crop, we can still use the above method.

As in the previous example, we select the image in CorelDRAW and click on the **Edit Bitmap** icon, and that will open the image in PHOTO-PAINT. Unlike the previous example, if you click with the **Magic Wand** tool, it does not select the entire background.
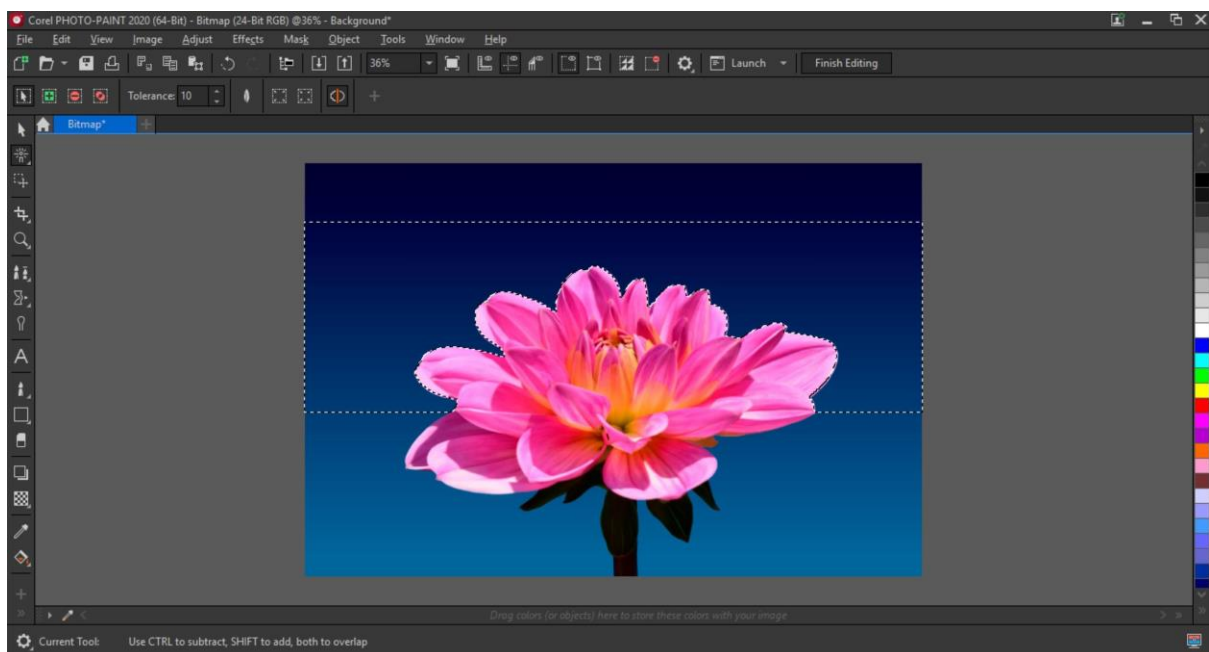
In this case, you can use the **Magic Wand** tool in **Additive mode**, which means that each new color you click on will be added to your selection. Click on the **Additive mode** icon on the property bar and then click on all the colors in the background to complete your selection.

TIP: You can increase or decrease the tolerance (the degree of difference between one color and another) that the **Magic Wand** tool identifies. Just be careful that when you select colors in the background that they aren't also included in the object you want to keep.
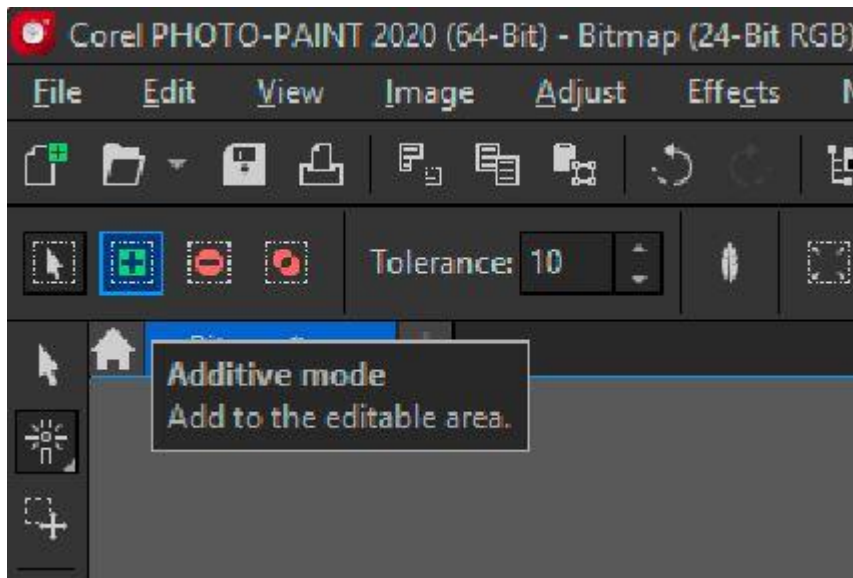
Once you have finished your selection, follow the same process as before: **Mask > Invert Mask**, then click the **Finish Editing** button. You can now save and close the file.

To learn more about PHOTO-PAINT's mask tools, watch the full tutorial <u>Using Masks in PHOTO-PAINT</u>.

## Method 4: Removing Backgrounds with the Cutout Lab in PHOTO-PAINT

What about more complex selections, like hair? Or when it is very difficult to select the background? The answer is PHOTO-PAINT's **Cutout Lab**.
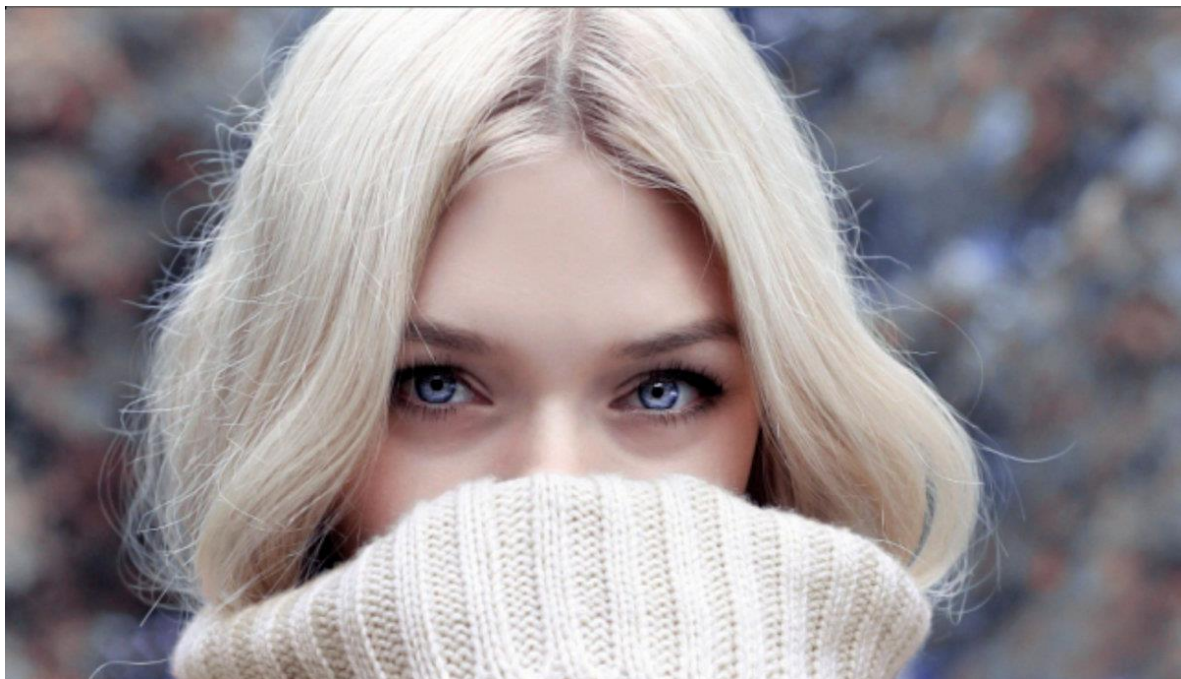
Again, select the image in CorelDRAW and click the **Edit Bitmap** icon. When your image opens in PHOTO-PAINT, go to **Image > Cutout Lab**. The **Cutout Lab** will open in a new dialog box. By default, the **Highlighter** tool is activated (top right).
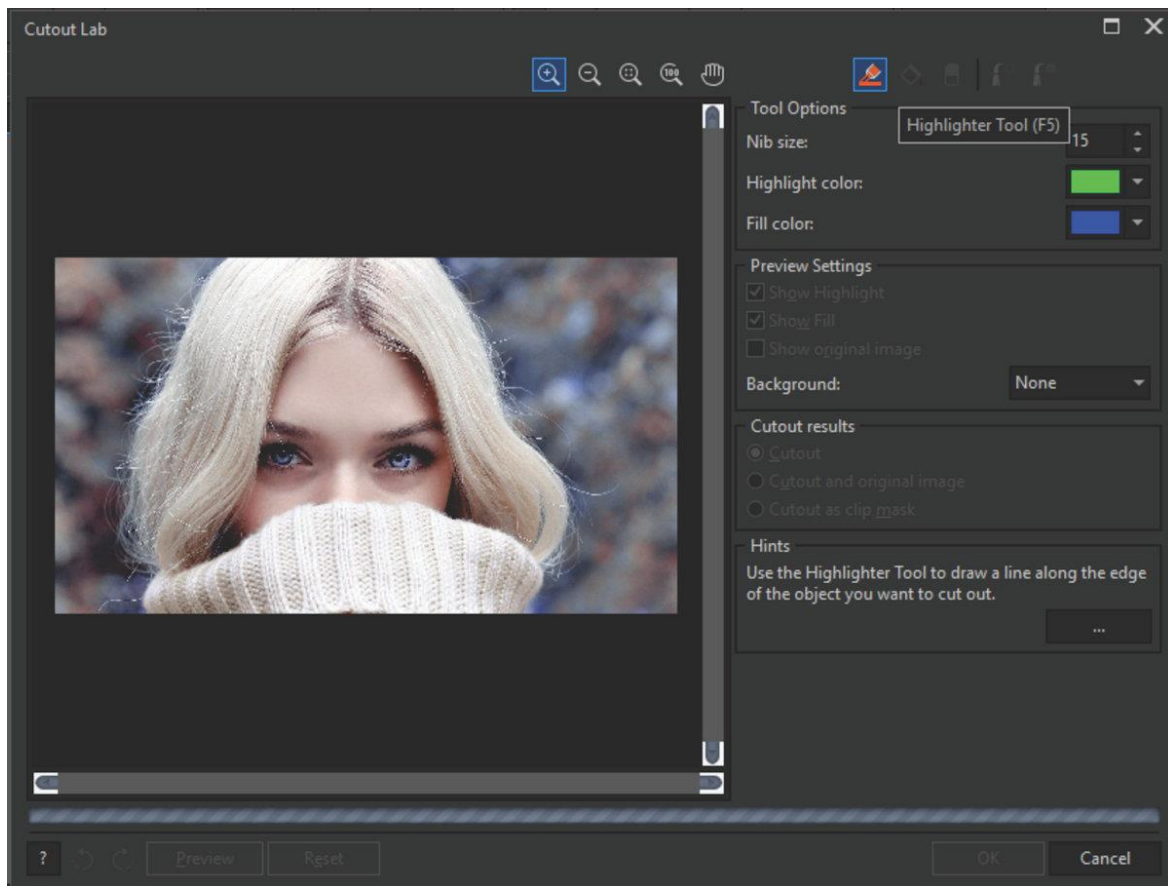

Use the **Highlighter** tool to trace the edge of the area you want to separate. It doesn't have to be exact, but the better defined, the better the result. We can change the thickness by adjusting **Nib** size, and you will also have an **Eraser** tool to correct the selection.
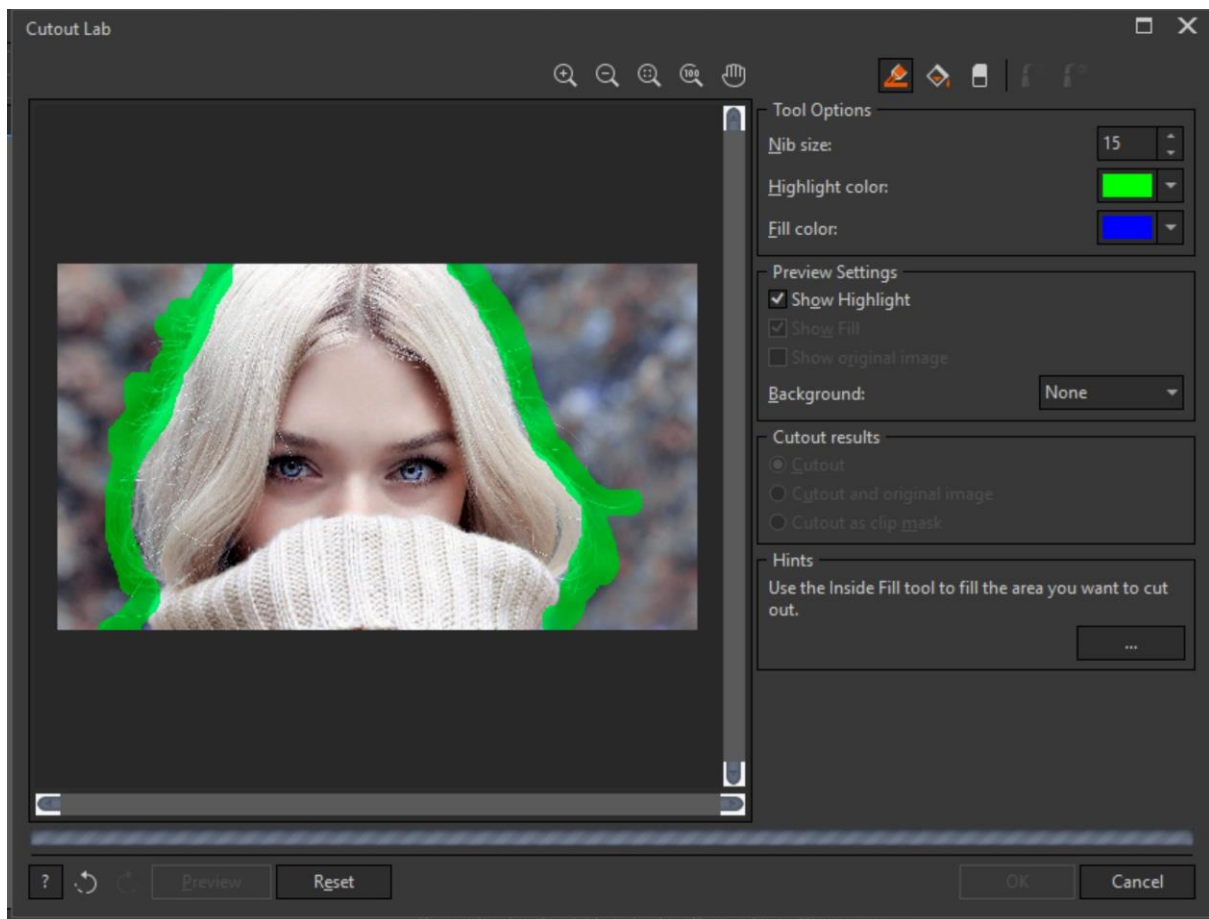
NOTE: It's important that the selected area is a "closed" area, since next you are going to be filling it in. If there is an open area, the fill won't apply correctly.

Once you're happy with your outlined area, select the **Inside Fill** tool and click in the interior of the area, which will fill it with blue.
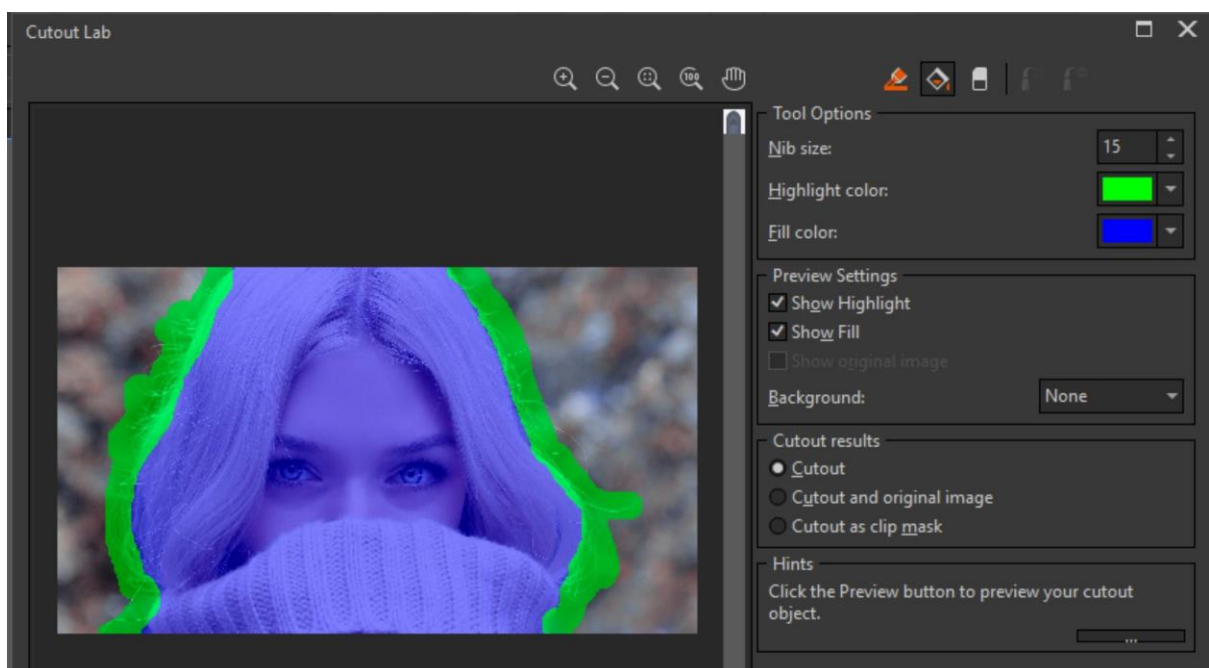
TIP: You can change the **Highlight color** and **Fill color** to fit your preference. For example, if your image has a lot of blue and green, you might want to change the **Highlight** or **Fill color** so that it is easier to see.

The **Cutout results** section offers a few options:

- **Cutout** (default option) will cut the image and discard the original so the actual size in pixels will be smaller and therefore the image file size will be lower.
- **Cutout and original image** will create an object from the cutout and preserve the original image, keeping the image size the same.
- **Cutout as clip mask** will make the cut by generating a layer mask (similar to what you get with the **Mask** tools).
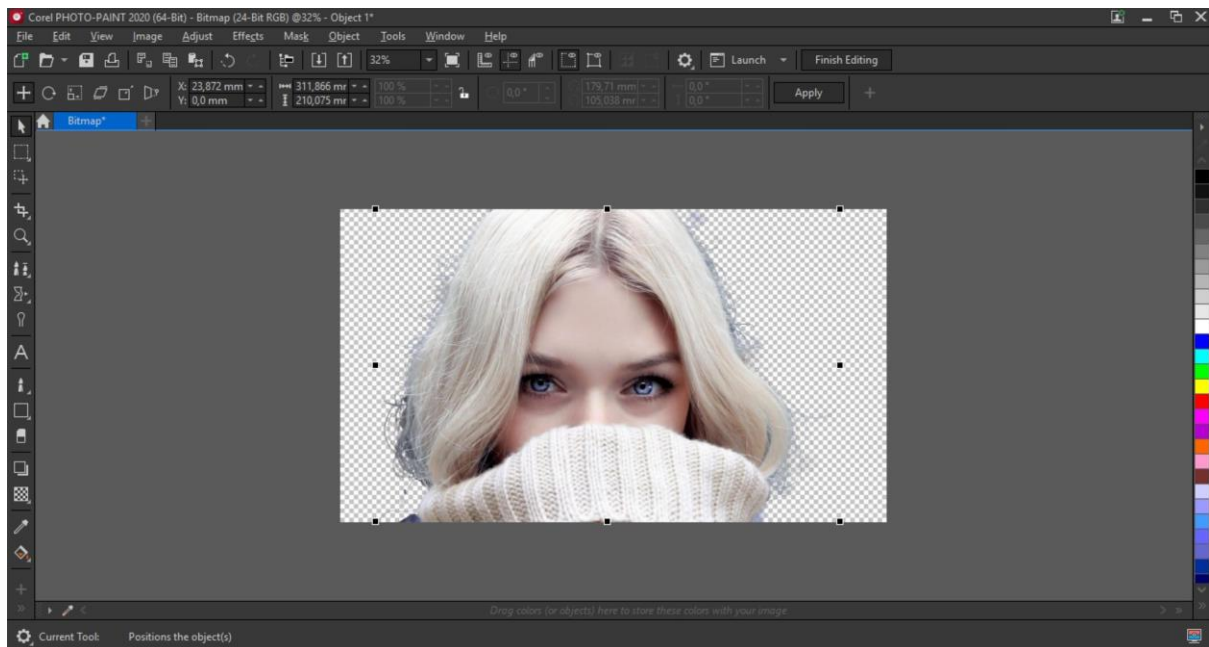

Click **Ok** in the **Cutout Lab** to apply your changes. Then like in the previous examples, just select the **Finish Editing** button or close the program. If you have not saved your image, the program will prompt you to do so, in which case click **Yes**.

And now your image is ready to be applied on a different background in CorelDRAW, which can be vector, or it can be another image.
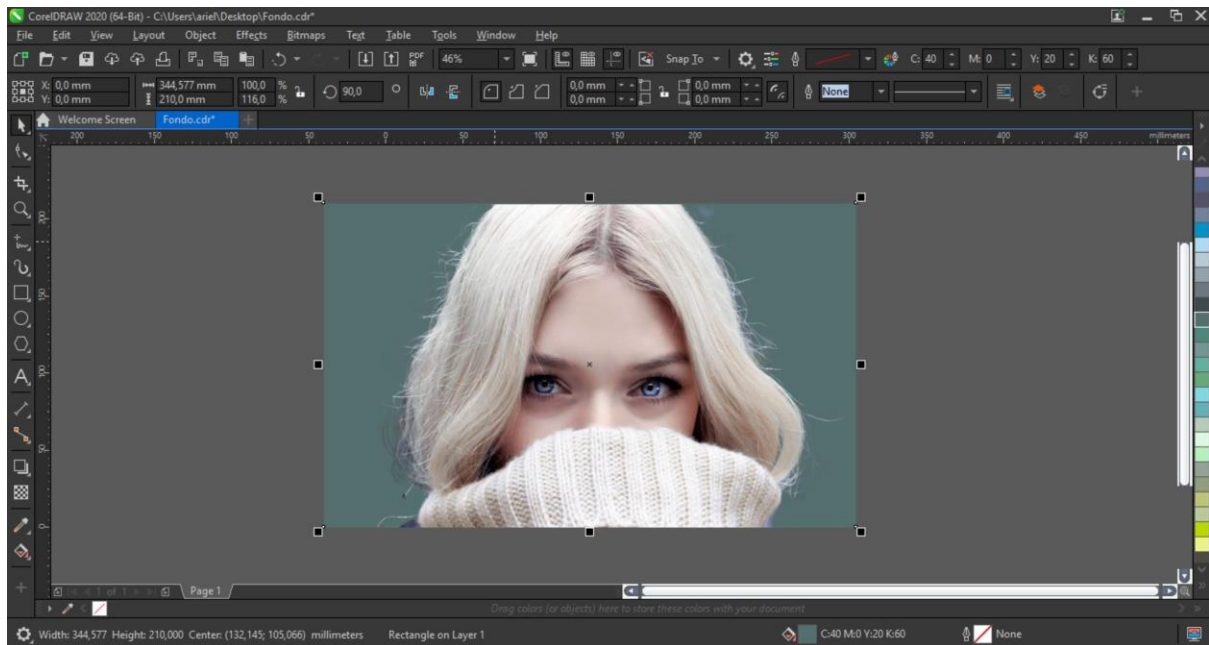
However, if you want the result to be more realistic, the best option is to use PHOTO-PAINT to apply the background. Select the whole image (**Mask > Select Entire Image** or **Ctrl** + **A**), then copy it (**Edit > Copy** or **Ctrl** + **C**). Open your new background image (**File > Open** or **Ctrl** + **O**) and paste the cutout image (**Edit > Paste** or **Ctrl** + **V**). That will place it as a new object, and you can adjust the size and position as needed.

TIP: I recommend that you select images that are as close in size and resolution as possible, so that the fusion of images is more realistic.
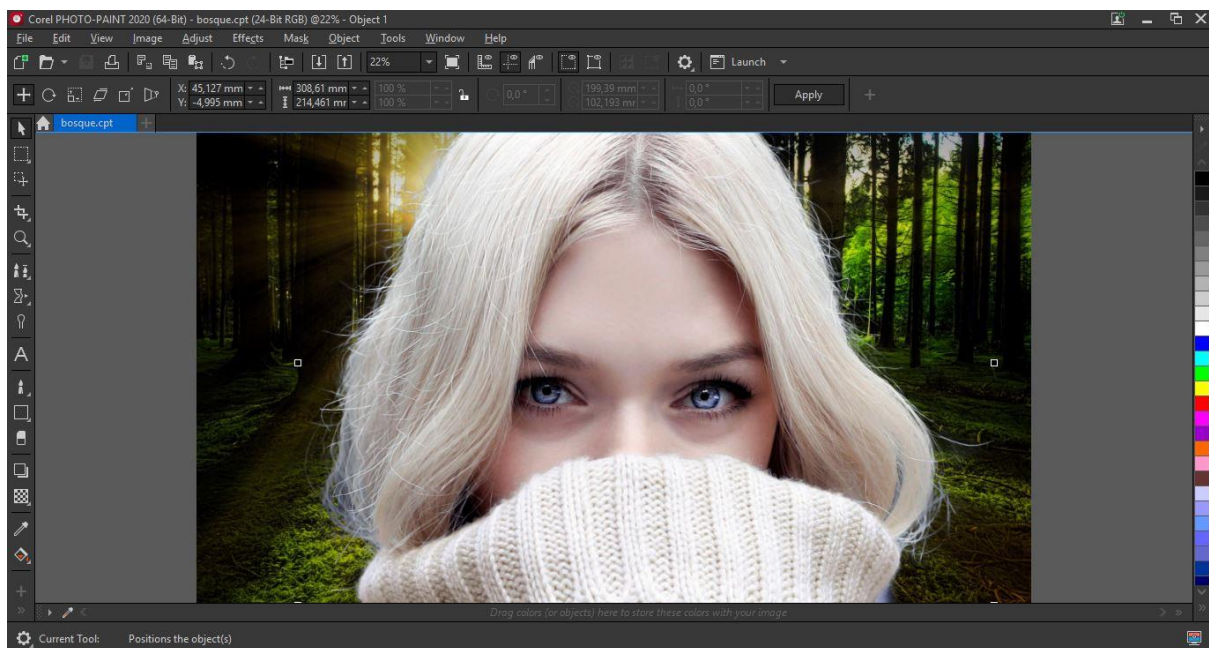
To learn more about the Cutout Lab, watch our full tutorial [Photo Background Removal in PHOTO-PAINT](#).

As you can see, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite gives you multiple options for removing backgrounds, from the simplest to the most exact. There are a wide range of options available to solve all kinds of problems and situations with professional results.