



STIPA - Tarnava Mare SCI: Saving  
Transylvania's Important Pastoral Ecosystems  
LIFE09 NAT/RO/000618



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#### Project description:

##### Background

The Sighisoara-Tarnava Mare Natura 2000 site covers 85 374 ha of one of the largest lowland areas of high-nature-value farmland in the EU. Following the collapse of the traditional rural economy, cattle grazing in particular was greatly reduced on around 1 000 ha of these habitats, with the less accessible grassland abandoned altogether. In addition, areas that are grazed by sheep are badly managed. As a result, scrubland has spread into former grassland areas and pastures have degraded, threatening several European priority habitats to the point of their disappearance.

##### Objectives

The STIPA project aimed to improve the conservation status of two priority dry grassland habitats in the Sighisoara -Tarnava Mare SCI: semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) with important orchid sites, and sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands. Both of these habitats are included in Annex I of the Habitats Directive. The project aimed to create conservation action plans for the two habitats, by establishing a priority zone in the area and five micro-reserves in certain hotspots that include simple and practical management agreements with land owners. It was also foreseen to include payments for certain private owners where necessary. The project would moreover support local communities to ensure that they continue or revert to

traditional grassland management. To encourage long-term habitat conservation, the project aimed to contribute to the development of an integrated management plan for the broader combined SPA/SCI and to the design of national and regional agri-environment schemes for 2013-2019.

## Results

The project achieved its overall objectives, though these objectives were adjusted during the project. After thorough and innovative mapping of the project area, the beneficiary found that the targeted habitats cover only slightly over half of the initially estimated area. The priority habitats covered a total of 5 895 hectares. As a result, targets were adjusted, while still addressing around 80% of the previously targeted habitats. The project applied three methods of habitat restoration: clearing of scrub with the Brielmeier mower, clearing of invasive species at sheepfolds and improving grazing management over a large sheep grazing area. In total, payments were made for the restoration of 327.72 ha. This contributed to the creation of six micro-reserves in the area, four of which are located at biodiversity hotspots. (Eight information panels were erected in Romanian and English)

The locations where dry grassland habitats occur were further assessed, and a conservation action plan for the two specific habitat types was developed. These plans also considered other significant habitats that form a fine mosaic of species in the area, adding to its natural value. The participatory process of drawing up this plan raised the awareness of local communities and farmers of the value of these habitats and what they need to do to preserve them. Furthermore, many school activities were held in all the eight communes of the project area, and educational materials about the dry grasslands were published to be further used by local teachers.

One of the main outcomes of the project was the development of good relations with the local population through networking. A large number of meetings with landowners and local administrations and associations were held, and the beneficiary became involved in the Local Action Group. More than a thousand local people were reached through meetings and workshops about the value and management of dry grasslands. A range of publications and information materials (such as newsletters) were distributed. In addition, a modern Brielmeier mower was purchased and demonstrations staged in the project area to show farmers how the equipment can be used to better protect dry grassland habitats during mowing. (28 demonstrations presented the mower to around 700 farmers and around 100 individual farm visits were carried out.)

Though media engagement was a low priority at the start of the project, its awareness campaign was ramped up towards the end. Two indicator species guides (one for flowers and one for butterflies) and one brochure presenting the two targeted habitats were produced. In total, 6 000 copies of these publications (in Romanian and English) were distributed in the area and elsewhere in Europe. The beneficiary's approach was also to communicate the overall approach to nature protection rather than the specific aims and results of the project. The website, which wasn't regularly updated after a while, attracted only a low number of visitors. Record keeping could also have been improved and some timeframes for actions were over ambitious.

The beneficiary has drawn up a new agri-environmental package that was already being implemented during the project's duration. It also managed to include a few important amendments to existing agri-environmental schemes. The project led to an increase in the value of dry grasslands that are already part of an agri-environmental scheme or that are able to enter agri-environmental measures in Romania, and owners/administrators can receive such payments for these lands. As a result of the project, more local farmers have entered agri-environmental agreements, and around 7500 hectares of land are now included in such schemes. Moreover, conservation actions also contribute to an increase in the productivity of these lands and thus an increase in the quality of associated products (mainly dairy).

Further information on the project can be found in the project's layman report and After-LIFE Conservation Plan (see "Read more" section).

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Habitats - Grasslands

Keywords

management contract, agricultural method, grassland ecosystem, grazing, restoration measure

Target EU Legislation

- Nature protection and Biodiversity
- Directive 92/43 - Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora- Habitats Directiv ...

Target Habitat types

- 6210 - Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (\* important orchid sites)
- 6240 - Sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands

Natura 2000 sites

SCI ROSCI0227

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania
Type of organisation	NGO-Foundation
Description	The ADEPT Foundation is a non-profit organisation working to conserve the biodiversity of the manmade landscapes of Transylvania.
Partners	None

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE09 NAT/RO/000618
Duration	01-OCT-2010 to 30-SEP -2013
Total budget	356,330.00 €
EU contribution	259,515.00 €
Project location	Associated Romania(Romania)

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Read more:

Newsletter	Title: "Natură și Prosperitate într-un peisaj istoric: Numărul I - Ianuarie 2011" (2.54 MB) Year: 2011 Editor: Fundația ADEPT Transilvania No of pages: 4
Newsletter	Title: "Natura si Prosperitate într-un peisaj istoric: Numarul IV - Iunie 2012" (3.05 MB) Year: 2012 Editor: Fundația ADEPT Transilvania No of pages: 4
Newsletter	Title: "Natura si Prosperitate într-un peisaj istoric: Numarul III - Ianuarie 2012" (2.51 MB) Year: 2012 Editor: Fundația ADEPT Transilvania No of pages: 4
Newsletter	Title: "Prosperitate prin protejarea biodiversității: Numărul II - Iunie 2011" (3.01 MB) Year: 2011 Editor: Fundația ADEPT Transilvania No of pages: 4

Newsletter	Title: "Natură și Prosperitate într-un peisaj istoric: Numarul VI - Septembrie 2013" (3.68 MB) Year: 2013 Editor: Fundația ADEPT Transilvania No of pages: 4
Newsletter	Title: "Natura si Prosperitate într-un peisaj istoric: Numarul V - Ianuarie 2013" (3.48 MB) Year: 2013 Editor: Fundația ADEPT Transilvania No of pages: 4
Poster	Title: "STIPA – Protejati pajistile importante din Transilvania!" (892 KB) Year: 2013 Editor: Fundaia ADEPT No of pages: 1
Project web site	<a href="#">Project's website</a>
Publication	Title: "The LIFE project STIPA: Saving Transylvania's important pastoral agroecosystems (Romania)" in Henryk Baumbach & Stefan Pfützenreuter : "Steppenlebensräume Europas - Gefährdung, Erhaltungsmassnahmen und Schutz" p341-350. Author: John Akeroyd, Laura Sutcliffe, Razvan Popa & Nat P Year: 2013 Editor: Thüringer Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Forsten, No of pages: 17
Publication: After-LIFE Conservation Plan	Title: After-LIFE Conservation Plan Author: Jan Šeffer <i>et al</i> Year: 2013 Editor: John Akeroyd & Nat Page, Fundaia ADEPT Transilvan No of pages: 34
Publication: Layman report	Title: Layman report Year: 2014 Editor: Fundaia ADEPT Transilvania No of pages: 20
Publication: Proceedings	Title: "High Nature Value grasslands: Securing the ecosystem services of European farming post 2013: International conference" (1.94 MB) Author: Nat Page, Razvan Popa, John Akeroyd (Editor) Year: 2010 Editor: Fundaia ADEPT No of pages: 32

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