



Annual report

Capacity Building for Managing Eastern European High Conservation Value Forests: Romania

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1. Darwin Project Information

Project Ref. Number	385
Project Title	<i>Capacity Building for Managing Eastern European High Conservation Value Forest: Romania</i>
Country(ies)	<i>Romania</i>
UK Contractor	<i>Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College</i>
Partner Organisation(s)	<i>Transylvania University</i>
Darwin Grant Value	<i>£213,000</i>
Start/End dates	<i>1 July 2005-30 June 2008</i>
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3..)	<i>1 April 2005-31 March 2006, 1</i>
Project website	<i>Under construction</i>
Author(s), date	<i>Transylvania University</i>

2. Project Background

The project is located in Romania where large tracks of previously state-owned forestland has been given back to its rightful owners. However, most of these areas are faced by acute poverty and the forest is inevitably and frequently perceived as a quick cash earner. This could endanger Romanian forest which is one of the few remaining pristine forests in Europe.

This project intends to build an awareness of the benefits that High Conservation Value Forests could bring, both to individuals and communities, through the adoption and implementation of sustainable management plans for these forest areas.

3. Project Purpose and Outputs

The project's purpose is to define and identify High Conservation Value Forests in private ownership, assess the management needs of these forests and deliver appropriate training to owners/forest managers, simultaneously establishing ongoing monitoring procedures to ensure that sustainability prevails.

In its first year this project created the draft manual to be used as a guide for identifying and managing the High Conservation Value Forest areas under private ownership. It set up a database of all private holdings, exceeding 10 hectares in surface area, and produced a map of these holdings.

Training of trainers commenced with the help of Proforest and the Environmental Change Institute of Oxford University.

Project outputs as defined by the logic frame below.

4. Progress

This project is a continuation of previous work undertaken in Romania under the Environment for Europe Fund programme (DEFRA). Local people who are uncertain of what to do with their forest holdings, because of lack of awareness of any uses for the forest other than logging, are offered alternative choices by this project. This project enables them to be educated in the importance of HCVF and its benefits, demonstrating how adopting a management system that satisfies sustainability requirements can be both economically viable and rewarding.

A number of workshops were organised across Romania at the outset of the project to identify the current understanding of the forest owners regarding any alternative benefits that the forest might provide. These workshops were also used to identify the motivations and outputs of the current management in employ. They were also used to identify areas where it was important to achieve watershed protection, to reduce soil erosion, to protect endangered species, and to protect the forestland for cultural and social value.

Forest managers were asked if they would consider certification as a form of third part audit for the management employed. Based on their answers an initial database locating areas at risk of habitat loss, was created.

These workshops also gave voice to the forest owners, enabling local forest managers to voice their concerns about all aspects of HCVF and the affects changing to these conservation methods would have on the management. Presentations comprehensively expounding the benefits for the community and livelihoods of HCVF, such as ecotourism, possible funding for endangered species conservation, etc., helped allay these fears.

A number of citations about the project were broadcast by the local radio channel (EuropaFM) and in local newspapers (*Transilvania Expres*). Some of the feedback accrued from these workshops was included in a publication entitled: "*Romanian Forestry Sector-Privatisation facts*" which will be published in *International Forestry Review*. The project is also proposing to submit a paper and a poster to the

International Symposium on Forest and Sustainable Development seminar that will take place in Brasov in October 2006.

The project will submit its six month report for the 2006-2007 period at the end of October 2006 and the annual report at the end of April 2007. This project will also undergo a Darwin inspection during May 2006.

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

Not applicable

6. Partnerships

This project was cited in a competitive bid for Romania's Natura 2000 programme as a positive example of collaboration between NGOs, Academia and Private Owners Enterprises. It was also used as an example for a number of bids under the Life programme.

The partnership with Transylvania University is a well established one. The WWF Danube Carpathian programme's forest management office hosted by the Transylvania University and a number of project personnel have been recruited to this site. These recruits are: Dr Stancioiu and Mr Predoiu who will aid Erika Stanciu in delivering the project outputs allocated as areas of responsibility for WWF-DCP.

Dr Anna Lawrence from Oxford Environmental Change Institute is employed by this project and is also running a project in Romania's Rodna National Park (Youth Participation in Protected Area Management in Rodna Mountains) and is keeping project personnel informed of developments there. A number of joint publications/ areas of knowledge exchange have been discussed for production. Furthermore, a new Darwin Initiative project awarded this year (ADEPT - Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection in Transylvania), run by Nat Page will also be a key contact point and three monthly meetings on progress have already been agreed.

Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College has used this project in its application for a University title, to exemplify work undertaken by the institution.

"Collaboration with the University of Transylvania on a Darwin Initiative project 'Capacity Building for Managing Eastern European High Conservation Value Forests: Romania', funded by DEFRA, and building on an earlier successful two year project, also DEFRA funded."

7. Impact and Sustainability

This project is of real benefit to the private forest owners, the Romanian Forestry Commission and to nature conservation. The Forestry Commission did not have time to build capacity to advise the new forest owners on the management and benefits of sustainability. So the project workshops have been able to bridge that gap, promoting cooperation from both parties and enabling dialogue and an informal exchange of information.

Local and international NGOs are concerned about the conservation of biodiversity in Romania as a direct result of changes in ownership of forest resources. This project has created a one stop information centre for these new private forest owners where they can seek and receive advice on how to employ a system of sustainable forest management.

At this moment in time the international and domestic wood market in Romania has stagnated due to the increased wood offer driving prices down. Therefore, there is an urgent need for new forest owners to add value to their resources. An obvious way of doing this is to seek recognition for managing their forestland sustainably by gaining certification from a recognised third party programme.

The training of trainers program will further enable forest owners to disseminate information and to build capacity for conservation and diversification of forest value use.

Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

The outputs agreed in the Initial Project Implementation Timetable were achieved earlier than initially expected. WWF-DCP achieved its objectives three months in advance of target. The project is working on the curriculum for the training of trainer workshops in partnership with ProForest and Anna Lawrence of ECI -Oxford University. In partnership with the Environment for Europe Fund project, entitled: '*Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of Private Forests in Romania*' this project has produced a small, informative leaflet for the Private Forest Association on sustainable forest management. It has also been agreed that there is a definite need for production of an informative bulletin, to be published annually and continuing beyond the project life, to disseminate information on HCVF management and its opportunities.

Table 1. Project Outputs (According to Standard Output Measures)

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Year 4 Total	TOTAL
12A	Database of the current ownership situation in Romania	Up to date list				
12A	Database of sensitive private HCVF areas	Up to date list				
10	Development of a manual of HCVF identification and management	Final Draft				
10	Production of a map of sensitive private HCVF areas	Up to date representation				
6A-6B	Workshops on participatory assessment technique.	1 wk				
6A-6B	Workshops on project dissemination	5 x1day				
6A-6B	Project planning workshop	1 wk				
6A-6B	Workshop on community management options in HCVF	1 day				

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

Every three months the management team hold a review meeting by teleconference, or face to face meetings in Romania and the UK, to analyse the current status of the project's outputs against the agreed time schedule. There are no issues on performance and targets to date.

The creation of the databases and map to locate private forest holdings and identify areas at risk of habitat loss has helped to raise awareness among workshop participants of the importance of HCVF identification and management. Private association managers are now in a position to visually identify their holdings on a map, recognise their position on a national scale and thus understand the importance of creating a harmonised management system for areas with possible designation as HCVF.

The HCVF identification and management manual went through a consultation phase which allowed the project team to get to grips with local concerns and fears concerning the change in management requirements. In so doing they utilised a participatory approach for the awareness outreach, thus gaining the necessary buy-in at all levels.

The project's first year has been an important one for building relationships with private forest association managers to foster and promote an honest exchange of information so vital for accurate production and maintenance of the project database and map updates.

10. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum)

This project has also succeeded in bringing together all new forest owners, with forest land exceeding 10 hectares, and to openly discuss implementing and applying HCVF management conservation techniques and the benefits of certification.

This has led to a greatly increased interest in identifying alternative uses for the forest other than just wood production. Forest owners have actively begun to consider other ways of employing their natural resources to generate revenue that could help to improve the livelihood of the local communities by offering ecological services. They are also looking at the environmental benefit of having a sustainable forest in the vicinity of dwellings which can provide a sink for the carbon emission, reduce land slides and also provide clean water. These forests are home to a wide variety of wild animals and some indigenous species that are considered endangered. Forest owners are showing an interest in marketing these as a positive so as to contribute further to the finance of a sustainable management system.

The project has an office at Brasov that is used as a focal point for information. Forest owners can consult with the office for advice on a number of issues related to HCVF, sustainability, certification and funding opportunities.

■ I agree for ECTF and the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section

In this section you have the chance to let us know about outstanding achievements of your project over the year that you consider worth highlighting to ECTF and the Darwin Secretariat. This could relate to achievements already mentioned in this report, on which you would like to expand further, or achievements that were in addition to the ones planned and deserve particular attention e.g. in terms of best practice. The idea is to use this section for various promotion and dissemination purposes, including e.g. publication in the Defra Annual Report, Darwin promotion material, or on the Darwin website. As we will not be able to ask projects on an individual basis for their consent to publish the content of this section, please note the above agreement clause.

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2005/2006

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2005-Mar 2006	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conservation of biological diversity, • The sustainable use of its components, and • The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources 			
Purpose <i>(insert original project purpose statement)</i>	<i>(insert original purpose level indicators)</i>	<i>(report impacts and achievements resulting from the project against purpose indicators – if any)</i>	<i>(report any lessons learned resulting from the project & highlight key actions planning for next period)</i>
Outputs			
<i>(insert original outputs – one per line)</i>	<i>(insert original output level indicators)</i>	<i>(report completed activities and outcomes that contribute toward outputs and indicators)</i>	<i>(report any lessons learned resulting from the project & highlight key actions planning for next period)</i>
Establishment of a national co-ordination centre in Transylvania University for training in HCVF identification, assessment and management.	Effective recruitment of trainees and successful delivery of on-site training	WWF-DCP has recruited two trained people on HCVF identification and management. Proforest has agreed training programme and has been delivering training in partnership with all project members.	Proforest is a busy consultancy company so it is important to schedule timing for their input at least six months in advance.

Private HCVF at risk of habitat loss identified	Map based representations made of private HCVF, according to risk and habitat loss; HCVF management and conservation plan models.	Map and database of HCVF at risk of habitat loss created and is permanently updated according to information provided by private forest associations in their reply to questionnaires. A manual was produced and is currently in its third draft version.	Initially, there was a lack of understanding among managers of habitat-loss due to land use. A field sheet that could aid them in identifying such habitats is currently in production. More field work is required and this is planned for summer 2006.
System designed to monitor private HCVF resources.	Monitoring programme for private HCVF.	An initial monitoring programme was agreed to be conducted by WWF-DCP during summer 2006.	WWF is actively supporting this project and future trained monitors shall continue to cooperate with the DCP office in Brasov
Specialists trained in HCVF management and monitoring techniques.	Romanian specialists trained for the monitoring programme.	A training programme was agreed with Proforest and WWF-DCP for autumn 2006.	
Publication of Research	Successful review and publications of three articles.	One article submitted to International Forestry Review.	More collaborative publications agreed with two other Darwin Projects located in Romania.

Note: Please do NOT expand rows to include activities since their completion and outcomes should be reported under the column on progress and achievements at output and purpose levels.

Annex 2 HCVF habitats at risk of lose (attached)

Annex 3 Private Forest Associations (attached)

Annex 4 Leaflet (attached)

Annex 5 HCVF-Identification and Management Manual (attached)