

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	14018
Project Title	Capacity Building for Managing Eastern European High-Conservation Value Forests
Country(ies)	Romania
UK Organisation	Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
Collaborator(s)	Transilvania University, WWF-DCP, Fundatia Carpati, OS Zarnesti,
Project Leader	<i>Dr Florin Ioras</i>
Report date	31.10.2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR5</i>
Project website	http://www.unitbv.ro/silvic/eng1.html

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

The project has had its last field work for habitat assessment; all sensitive areas to habitat loss were re-assessed in the past growing season and described, according to the format for Natura 2000 sites. These sites will be further monitored in a post-project proposal that will be submitted when a date will be known, with the intention to see the benefits HCVF management and monitoring brings to biodiversity conservation and what economic activities are local people to conduct without detrimental repercussions to the nature sources.

The list of forest ownership has been updated with the last private forest districts that were organised as a result of recent restitutions.

The findings of work conducted in the past year are included in an article entitled “Conservation gain through HCVF in Romanian and Bosnia and Herzegovina” to be submitted to the Journal of Biodiversity Conservation (submission November 2007). The article is co-authored with two colleagues from Sarajevo University. The preparation of a further article on managing private forest (including sensitive habitats) is due for submission by the end of February 2008.

Results were also disseminated in the local media in Romania (local TV stations in Brasov and Maramures).

A programme of awareness was conducted with schools from Brasov, Maramures and Bistrita counties to inform children of the forest and wildlife protection and benefits for local community livelihood (eg, health through leisure activities such as hiking, rock climbing; economic benefits from non-timber products activities such as, mushrooms and bilberries and raspberries picking, accommodation offered for tourists interested in hiking or/and eco-hunting (photography) etc).

The project website has been updated and together with www.certificareforestiera.ro used as portals of information and for answering questions related to HCVF (eg, What is the cost for applying HCVF management, Who is paying for the monitoring, How will HCVF affect harvesting quota, What are the benefits of establishing HCVF sites, etc).

Local NGO partner (Fundatia Carpati) has been the link with the National NGOs and has promoted the project results. Furthermore the partnership with Transilvania University and WWF-DCP has enabled this project to disseminate its experience on another project that is conducted by the NGO in the northern part of the country and a Life Nature project on priority forest habitats at national level.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The main problem for the project is the rolling process of forest restitution, with new areas and new associations appearing overnight. The National Manager had to appoint a person (PhD student) to follow-up bulletined of news that are monthly delivered by the Ministry of Agriculture to track this new sites and get in touch with the new associations management teams. All costs were absorbed by the partners' contribution to the project.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

No changes were needed

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

This project will like to submit a proposal for a post-project funding to continue to monitor the sensitive sites for biodiversity conservation and to assess the implications for the local communities' livelihood.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**