

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2008)

Project Ref. No.	621
Project Title	Agricultural Development & Environmental Protection in Transylvania
Country(ies)	Romania
UK Organisation	ADEPT Foundation
Collaborator(s)	Fundatia ADEPT, Universities of Sibiu, Cluj, T. Mures and Oxford Brookes
Project Leader	Nat Page
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Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR3
Project website	www.fundatia-adept.org

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

Nr.	Actions	Due date	Progress	Description of performance to date: November 2006
1	1. Biodiversity assessment and protection.			
1.1	EU agrees status of the Natura 2000 SCI	June 2008	Yes: June 2008	At the biogeographical seminars (June 2008) formal approval was given by Brussels of the SCI status of the area. However, EU decided that many Continental habitats are underrepresented ("insufficient - min") and ADEPT has been asked to assist in studies to identify further important grassland sites.
1.2	Grassland management guidelines published	July 2007	Yes: Feb 2008	Comment requested from review: Regarding Output 1: Will the team propose an alternative integrated management plan or some guidelines which will substitute the practical use of scientific data element, which is key to this output? ADEPT team grassland management guidelines have been incorporated into the agri-environment schemes (National Rural Development Plan 2007-2013), published Feb 2008. This is a very practical use for the scientific data accrued during the project: in fact is probably the most effective use of the data in terms of effective conservation. See also Section 2 (Notable problems) below.
1.3	Biodiversity monitoring methodology and measurements	March 2007	March 2008	Established and in use.
2	Education/awareness. Publish materials for schools and wider public. Produce information boards. Design web site to inform about project, promote products and tourism services. Establish information centre to serve local people and visitors.			
2.1	Information boards in place	May 07	information boards in place by Feb 2008.	28 boards, one in each village, installed by Feb 08. Also the first of a series of new village signs, promoting the area brand, have been installed at Saschiz which have noticeably increased visitor numbers
2.2	Newsletters printed and distributed to schools and general public	Jan, April, July, Oct 08	Completed on schedule	Monthly community newspaper established in October 06, printed quarterly in 2007 and 2008 in Saschiz (January, April, July, October 08). Includes articles on Rural Development programme to explain opportunities/responsibilities in simple terms.
2.3	Presentations on environmental issues to schools	2007-2007	ongoing	Monthly classes in schools Nov 07-July 08, will start again in late 2008. August 2008: summer ecological camp was held for 25 local children.

2.4	Information Centre active	Continuous	ongoing	The information centre is permanently manned, is selling local products, publications and postcards, and distributing information about the area, where to stay etc.
2.5	Web-site established and operative	Continuous	ongoing	Comment from review requested in final report: It is hard for the reviewer to clearly pin point which aspects of the project can be attributed to Darwin only and which aspects are to do with the ADEPT venture. Achievements that are clearly Darwin could be clarified (including by a website page). ADEPT website in English and Romanian offers information on ADEPT activities and links to other producers/services in the area. The website is being revised and will include a page devoted to Darwin Initiative, active by end 2008.
3	Establish incentives, reduce poverty.			
3.1	Minutes of LSG meetings, and regularly 2007-2008.	Sept 2007	March 2007	Local Steering Group (LSG) established by the Local Action Group under the LEADER axis. We will therefore call this group the LAG, not LSG, in future. The actual structure and activity of the LAG (as defined under LEADER) fulfills all the requirements for an LSG. LAG met 5 times in 2008 - minutes and participants' list available
3.2	Info centre active providing ag extension advice.	Continuous	Continuous	ADEPT information centre serving 9 communes, has helped with inspections. After the success of 2007 (Romania's unique grassland incentive project), when 190 farmers received their first SAPARD 3.3 grants, it is now clear what an impact this had: uptake of farmers to agrienvironment schemes in ADEPT area is over 80%, uptake in neighbouring areas was 10-20%.
3.3	Training courses in food and crafts marketing, with UK specialist 2006-2008.	Continuous	Continuous	Comment from review: for final report, detail economic benefits for farmers more clearly. Farmers' Market established for small producers in Bucharest, involving at least 6 Tarnava Mare producers, has continued monthly with considerable commercial success. Financial benefits are now real for small producers, linked to the image of the area, and have been the subject of media interest at national level (press cuttings available). In March 2008 ADEPT published a guide for small producers, 50,000 copies distributed in ADEPT area and nationally, with assistance of Romanian authorities.
3.4	Pilot guest houses active	Continuous	Continuous	3 new guesthouses in use in Saschiz as result of training. Tarnava Mare Tourism Association is being established through the LAG
3.5	Producers visit Slow Food gatherings in Italy	Continuous	Continuous	ADEPT director Cristi Gherghiceanu has attended Slow Food Tera Madre biennial meeting in Turin, October 2008, accompanied by local producers, with great success.
3.6	Forest assessment including NTFP carried out by WWF	March 2007	Yes: May 2008	High Conservation Value forest parcels have now been mapped in detail, including HCVF 3 category (rare, threatened and endangered ecosystems) and HCVF 4 category (forests providing ecological services - anti-erosion, etc).
3.7	Forestry workshops including inputs from WWF-DCP	May 2007	June 08	5 workshops held First workshop and subsequent technical meeting with Sighisoara Forest District, Apold Forest District and WWF-DCP in June.
3.8	Entry of some forest areas into FSC Group Certification process	June 2008	By Feb 2009	This has been delayed by the confusion in forest ownership, with the majority of forests being returned to private owners in period 2005-2007. The ownership/management situation is only now sufficiently clear in out project area to allow FSC certification. The fact that the area is a N2000 SCI, and many of the forest parcels are habitats directive habitats, makes FSC certification process much easier. Ni further assessment required.

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.

As reported in the mid-term review, December 2007, one of the outputs - preparation of a management plan for the area, using a participative approach - was not feasible by project end, firstly because the SCI status was not confirmed, which still awaits EC approval and subsequent designation as a protected area under national law, and secondly because of delays in finalising the generic guidelines for N2000 (and other protected area) management plans. Currently, there is no legal way to accept the management plan of an area, which has no designation as a protected area according to Romanian law.

By end 2008 these barriers will have been resolved.

In June 2008 the site was accepted as an SCI, with Protected Area designation under Romanian Law

In August 2008 the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MMDD) circulated a consultation document recommending a framework for managing Natura 2000 sites. This has still not been finalized and published in its final form. The finalisation of national guidelines are due in Nov/Dec 2008.

Drafting an integrated management plan for the area will only be feasible starting early 2009, and will form the basis of a Darwin Post Project application.

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

The removal of integrated management plan as such as a target for this project was proposed in the Mid-Term Review and accepted by DEFRA. But please note, ADEPT's grassland management plans have been incorporated into the national agri-environment scheme.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no

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

No

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.

See 1.2 above.

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**