Darwin Initiative Annual Report

Darwin Project Information

Project Ref Number	14-018
Project Title	Capacity Building for Managing Eastern European High-Conservation-Value-Forests: Romania
Country(ies)	Romania
UK Contract Holder Institution	Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
UK Partner Institution(s)	Oxford University
	ProForest
Host country Partner Institution(s)	Transilvania University,
	WWF-DCP,
	Ocolul Silvic Zarnesti,
	Carphatian Wildlife Foundation,
	The National Association of Private Forest Owners
Darwin Grant Value	213,000 £
Start/End dates of Project	July 2005/June 2008
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3)	1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007 (4)
Project Leader Name	Dr Florin Ioras
Project website	http://www.unitbv.ro/silvic/eng1.html
Author(s), date	Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
	Transilvania University
	30.04.2007

1. Project Background

The project is located in Romania and aims to define and identify High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) in private ownership in Eastern Europe (Romania), assess management needs of these forests and deliver appropriate training to owners/forest managers and establish ongoing monitoring to ensure sustainability prevails.

High-risk areas of habitat loss will be identified and a training programme designed for designated representatives (owners and forest managers) will be delivered to optimise effectiveness of forest management and conservation of these sensitive areas.

2. Project Partnerships

The project partnership has grown in strength and all project partners have expanded their fruitful cooperation. The project has managed to not only fulfil its tasks but to link with other ongoing projects such as Life Natura "Priority forest, sub-alpine and alpine habitats", Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development (MAFRD) Project- "Evaluation of the protection functions of forest and development of a compensation scheme for forest owners" and with WWF Danube Carpathian Programme work on social issues. These partnerships supported directly the implementation of the project, especially in the field of identification of HCVF included in categories 1-4 (including pSCI) and category 5.

A strong lobby was created with relevant decision makers within the country and both the Secretary of State for Forests (Mr. Istvan Toke) –MAFRD and the Director General (Mr. Ciprian Pahontu) of Forest Directorate from MAFDR participated at the training workshop organised in Brasov in the frame of the project in February 2007.

A close cooperation regarding the definition and identification of HCVF and the project progress has been developed with Mr. Silviu Megan – the CBD Primary Focal Point for Romania and the Director for Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas in the Ministry of Environment and Water Management. Also the 3 project partners – Transilvania University, WWF and Carpathian Wildlife Foundation are active members in the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative which supports the implementation of Carpathian Convention in the field of biodiversity conservation.

The project coordinator in Romania – Dr. Ioan Abrudan from Transilvania University of Brasov – has cooperated closely with the Association of Private Forest Administrators from Romania (Mr. Dorel Fechete-President and Mr. Cori Alexa – Secretary) in the revision of the HCVF Manual, development of the database and training workshops.

Dr. Abrudan contacted the group of consultants (Dr. Viorel Blujdea, Dr. Marian Dragoi and Dr. Stefan Tamas) involved in the implementation of the World Bank – Forest Development Project's component regarding the support for the establishment of private forest owners associations in Romania and has periodically been in touch with the project manager of this project – Mr. Florea Trifoi.

The NGO partners (WWF-DCP and Carpathian Wildlife Foundation) had introduced this project to NGO Coalition NATURA 2000 established in Romania, to related partners and work they conduct under the BBI MATRA programme (Development Ecological Network in the Carpathian Ecoregion) and WWF Danube Carpathian work program in Romania.

A strong partnership was created with Dr Anna Lawrence of Oxford University and her Darwin project on Youth Participation in Protected Area Management in Rodna Mountains (14019). Dr. Lawrence deliverables for this project covered aspects on the social dimension of establishing HCV elements for private forest in sensitive areas. Her contribution enhanced relevance of project outputs to social, cultural and institutional needs of participating communities.

Proforest Ltd (Oxford) has provided a critical analysis of the HCV categories 5 and 6 with recommendations for further improvement of the local standard and relevant training.

The database developed by the project (including relevant data on all 104 private forest districts established in Romania by February 2007) and the map associated to it is unique in the country and was officially requested by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development (MAFRD) and Association of Private Forest Administrators from Romania as it is the largest updated database on non-state forest administration in Romania.

Transilvania University organised in October 2006 an International Seminar on Forests and Sustainable Development where the project had a prominent presence. An article on the HCVF

development in Romania was presented and a stand that disseminated the project was set-up for the duration of the Seminar. Leaflets were distributed to all participants.

It should be mentioned that the exemplary cooperation between the Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College and the project partners was mentioned 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."

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

The project purpose is to define and identify High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) in private ownership in Eastern Europe (Romania), assess management needs of these forests and deliver appropriate training to owners/forest managers and establish ongoing monitoring to ensure sustainability prevails.

In its second year this project:

- has reviewed and disseminated the HCVF Manual (based on stakeholder consultation and field testing of the draft Manual developed in the first year of the project the field testing carried out by the project team and WWF included Sacele, Sudrigiu, Belis, Remeti and Macin forest districts) see Annex 4. The main improvements (highlighted as track changes in Annex 4) are related to the management measures, thresholds and methodology for identification of categories 5 and 6 (based on UK project partners input and field testing),
- has updated the protocols for habitat survey and baseline social survey (Annex10),
- has conducted habitat assessment fieldwork in close cooperation with other projects coordinated by Transilvania University and based on the results a database of sensitive private HCVF areas started to be build see Annex 5. A detailed description and mapping of each of these areas (20 HCV forests situated in 10 counties) included in Annex 5 was carried out,
- has updated the database of forest resources ownership administrated by private forest districts (104 forest districticts included in the database by February 2007) and its associated map see Annex 6 and 7,
- has delivered 3 workshops (attended by 82 participants) on participatory assessment techniques, community forestry management options and methodologies and procedures for field survey (May 2006, October 2006, February 2007). The Secretary of State for Forests Mr. Istvan Toke participated at the one organised in February 2007.
- has organised 2 workshops (each attended by 6 participants) on HCVF identification and management/conservation (May and September 2006),
- has published and disseminated information regarding the projects results and progress: 1 article was published in a reputable international journal (International Forestry Review) and 1 paper was presented in October 2006 at the International Seminar held in Brasov (the Proceedings will be published by mid 2007). Furthermore BCUC's Research Matters presented an update on the projects in its summer 2006 issue. Dr. Abrudan and Mr. Predoiu disseminated the activities and results of this project in a number of TV and Radio programmes (Dr. Abrudan: OTV 22nd of February 2007, TVS Brasov 30th of March 2007, Mr. Predoiu: PROTV Brasov, Radio Brasov November 2006) that refer to sustainability issues,
- has produced a school leaflet and disseminated information on the project via Natura2000 NGOs Coalition and the project web page.

3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs

The project is on target to deliver its outputs and all proposed outputs would be delivered by the end of the project. The output level assumptions are realistic and the output indicators achieved: (i) the HCVF Manual was revised, (ii) the databases were updated, (iii) the planned workshops were delivered, (iv) the project results were disseminated via the scientific articles, brochures and website as well as mass media (TV and radio). The project web site is hosted by the Transilvania University and is regularly updated.

3.3 Standard Output Measures

Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	TOTAL
Established codes					
12A	Database of forest ownership situation in Romania.	1	1(updated – Annex 6)		1 (updated database)
6A-6B	Workshops to establish methodologies and procedures for field survey and participatory assessment techniques	1wk	1wk (10 participants in May 2006) (Field survey method -Annex 8)		2 workshops (2wks)
8	Field Research	14wks (May- August 2005)	18wks (May- September 2006) (List of sensitive HCVF - Annex 5)		32wks
12A	Production of a database of sensitive HCVF in private ownership		1 Draft database (Annex 6)		1
9	Production of protocols for habitat survey	1 Draft	1 Updated protocol (Questionnaire)		1
7	Production of baseline for social survey	1 Draft	1 Updated protocol (included in HCVF manual – Annex1)		1
10	Development of a manual of HCVF identification and management	1 Draft	1 Final (Annex 4)		1 Final
6A-6B	Workshops on participatory assessment	1wk	1wk (34 participants in		2wks

	techniques, with focus on sensitive forest habitats (HCVF).		October 2006)	
6A-6B	Workshops on community forestry management options in HCVF, certification and skills development	1wk	1wk (38 participants in February 2007)	2wks
6A-6B	Workshops on HCVF identification and management / conservation.		2 (6 participants in May 2006, September 2006)	2
11A-11B	Articles published in reputable journals.		1 article in IFR + 1 article in Proceedings)	2
18A-18C	Local and national TV programmes in Romania	1 Local	1 National + 2 Local	4
19A-19C	Radio debates in local radio programmes		1 on Radio Brasov	1
16Acopies	School newsletters (leaflet)	1	1 (Annex 9)	2
17B	Project updates / news for national NGOs through a dissemination network.	1	1 (via Natura2000 NGOs Coalition)	2
16A	Project reports.	2	1	3
17A	Project website	1	1updated	1updated
23	Project participants will contribute to this project funding.	£24,500	£6,000	£30,500
New - Project specific measures				

Table 2 Publications

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
(e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	(title, author, year)	(name, city)	(e.g. contact address, website)	
Journal of International Forestry Review	The Romanian forestry sector: privatisation facts	International Forestry Review Vol.8	www.atypon- link.com/CFA/toc/ifor /8/3	
	Dr Florin Ioras	(3)		
	Dr Ioan Abrudan			
	2006			
Seminar Proceedings	Aspects on High Conservation	Transilvania University	Dr. Ioan Vasile Abrudan	Free (up to 5 copies)
1 Tocecumgs	Value Forests	Publishing	Dean	o copies)
	identification and management in Romania	House, Brasov (in press)	Faculty of Silviculture and	
	Dr Florin Ioras	(p. 555)	Forest Engineering,	
	Dr Ioan Abrudan		1, Brasov-500123,	
	2007		Romania abrudan@unitbv.ro	
Manual*	Identifying High	Transilvania	Dr. Ioan Vasile	Fron /1
Iviariuai	Identifying High Conservation Value Forests at national level: a	University Publishing House, Brasov	Abrudan	Free (1 copy)
			Dean	
	practical guide		Faculty of	
	A group of authors including Dr.		Silviculture and Forest Engineering,	
	Abrudan, Dr.		1, Brasov-500123,	
	Stancioiu, Mrs. Stanciu from the		Romania	
	project team		abrudan@unitbv.ro	
	2007			
Leaflet*	High Conservation Value Forests – A	Transilvania University	Dr. Ioan Vasile Abrudan	Free (up to 5 copies)
	chance for the management of	Publishing House,	Dean	
	natural resources of Romania (in Romanian)	Brasov	Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering,	
	Project team		1, Brasov-500123,	
	2006		Romania	
			abrudan@unitbv.ro	

^{*} Copies attached to this report as Annexes

3.4 Progress towards the project purpose and outcomes

The project is on target to achieve its goal and purpose according to the initial planning. The planned outcomes and outputs for the first two years were achieved:

- the HCVF Manual was developed,
- the databases were updated,
- the planned workshops were delivered,
- the project results were disseminated via the scientific articles, brochures and website as well as mass media (TV and radio),
- the project web site was regularly updated.

3.5 Progress towards impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits

Romania has one of the richest in biodiversity forest resource in Eastern Europe.

Changes in Romanian forest ownership encountered in the last decade have been putting pressure on its biodiversity conservation.

This project is contributing to the biodiversity conservation by:

- Identifying HCV private forests,
- Disseminating and providing training on HCVF identification and management to private forest districts,
- Identifying HCVF sensitive to habitat loss,
- Making management recommendations for such sites.

This project deliverables on biodiversity conservation will be visible in the years after the end of its life when through monitoring the conservation values will be evaluated.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

Every three months the management team reviewed over the phone or through direct meetings in Romania and the UK this project's outputs against the agreed schedule. A special attention was paid to the actions needed to address the issues raised in the review of the previous year report (explicitly presented in the next section).

The HCVF manual was revised and updated based on field-testing and project members/consultants input. This allowed the project to listen to stakeholders concerns about the change in management requirements and to use a participatory approach for the awareness outreach.

The database was extended from 64 to 104 districts and 20 sensitive sites located in ten counties were identified and assessed.

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

The project team considered all the issues raised in the review of the first year report and the following actions have been taken:

- the database was significantly improved and adjusted to an easy accessible and coherent format and includes information on protection forests in each private forest district – see Annex 3.
- this project established a partnership with another project carried out by Transilvania University of Brasov "Evaluation of the protection functions of forest and development of a compensation scheme for forest owners". The results of this project will be considered for the next year activities. On the other hand the situation of the wood processing sector improved significantly in Romania in the recent years, leading to an increase in wood price which is contradicting the remarks in the last para section 4 of the reviewer's report,
- viable economic alternatives are under consideration and the compensation schemes for forest owners as well as the EU support for alternative activities (tourism etc.) for the period 2007-2013 are certainly examples in this respect,
- considering the fact that (a) according to the present legislation the game is a "state asset", the hunting rights are sold by auction to hunters' associations and (b) the low profit the hunting associations are obtaining, hunting revenues cannot be considered relevant for owners. The animated debates on these issues in the recent years have not led to a significant change in the hunting legislation in Romania in order to address the forest owners' rights,
- logical framework is fully completed and the outputs clearly mentioned in this AR.

6. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

The project established links with other international and national projects focusing on biodiversity conservation (see Section 2). These links and collaboration with the respective projects supported this project implementation, especially regarding field survey and the sensitive HCVF identification and description.

7. Sustainability

The national importance and profile of this project (recognised by the MAFRD and Association of Private Forests Administrators – AAP) is due to the development of HCVF Manual – with a national applicability, the development of private forest districts database and map – the largest database of this kind in the country, and the support for the identification of sensitive HCVF in the country and appropriate management recommendations.

After the end of the project the HCVF Manual will continue to be used by those interested, the existing database can be updated by the interested institutions (MAFRD and AAP) and some of the sensitive HCVF which will be included in the pSCI will benefit of national support for appropriate management and monitoring in the future.

8. Dissemination

This project had a number of dissemination outputs with a wide audience such as:

- one article in the IFR that targeted the international scientific audience,
- one article in the IS Proceedings that targeted the national scientific audience,
- one presentation through Natura2000 NGOs Coalition that targeted eNGOs,
- one leaflet/ newsletter that targeted the schools,
- 3TV and 1 Radio programmes that targeted national audience,
- project web page that targets all interested parties.

This project web page will continue to be updated beyond this project life. Funding is intended to be secured through a post-project submission that will implement a monitoring programme for all sensitive HCVF private sites identified.

9. Project Expenditure

Table 3 Project expenditure <u>during the reporting period</u> (Defra Financial Year 01 April to 31 March)

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Highlight any agreed changes to the budget and explain any variation in expenditure where this is +/- 10% of the budget.

10. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

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

This project has contributed to the development of HCVF Manual (with national applicability for Romania), and developed the largest and most comprehensive private forest district database in the country. It was also the main disseminator vector of the information in Romania on HCVF among the administrators and managers of private forest districts.

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2006/07

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006 - March 2007	Actions required/planned for next period
Goal: To draw on expertise releve United Kingdom to work with local biodiversity but constrained in resulting the conservation of biological divariates and equitable sharing of utilisation of genetic resources	nl partners in countries rich in sources to achieve versity, nents, and	(report on any contribution towards positive impact on biodiversity or positive changes in the conditions of human communities associated with biodiversity eg steps towards sustainable use or equitable sharing of costs or benefits)	(do not fill not applicable)
Purpose To promote knowledge and skills in HCVF management and conservation among private forest owners, community groups and managers of private forests.	1. Creation of a pool of national specialists in management and conservation of private HCVF. 2. Heightened public awareness of forest ecosystems conservation. 3. Evidence of sustainable management/conservation and commitment to this.	1. Number of private forest managers trained - 82 2. Establishment of eco-tourism activities that will be beneficial to the management of HCVF by landowners 3. Number of sites recorded as HCVF and managed sustainably -20	Identify in partnership with private forest administrators and managers eco-tourism activities potential on 20 sites
Output 1. Establishment of national co-ordination centre for training in HCVF identification, assessment and management.	Effective recruitment of trainees and successful delivery of on-site training	Transilvania University has established a focal point for information and training on HCVF identification, assessment and management. This poir has national recognition.	

Activity 1.1 Project Planning		Four project meetings held and two more meeting to revise projects goals and outputs achievement to be hold during 2007-08 period	
Activity 1.2 Learning Materials Produ	ction	Manual completed	
Output 2. Private HCVF at risk of habitat loss identified. Map based representations of private HCVF according to risk and habitat loss; HCVF management and conservation plan models.		Map and database produced	
Activity 2.1 Field Research Programme		32 weeks of field work undertaken and 16 more weeks of field work left to be carried out between May and September 2007	
Activity 2.2. Classify Private HCVF a	ccording to risk of habitat loss	20 sites identified and currently partially monitored through field work	
Output 3. System designed to monitor private HCVF resources.	Monitoring programme for private HCVF.	Good response from private forest district managers	
Activity 3.1. Field Research Programme		32 weeks of field work undertaken and 16 more weeks of field work left to be carried out between May and September 2007	
Activity 3.2. Training Workshops		5 training workshops conducted and 3 further training workshops to be conducted during 2007-08 period	
Output 4. Specialists trained in HCVF management and monitoring techniques.	Romanian specialists trained for the monitoring programme.	Training delivered	

Activity 4.1. Training courses held in the UK for Romanian trainers		Completed 2 training courses (each consisting of two sessions 6 participants per training)
Output 5. Publication of research.	Successful review and publication of three articles.	Good quality articles and material disseminated.
Activity 5.1.	Production of Publicity Material	2 articles, 2 radio and 4 TV programme, 2 newsletter/leaflets and a 2 communication to the eNGOs. One article, one newsletter/leaflet and 1 TV/Radio programme to be achieved during 2007-08 period
Activity 5.2.	Reporting to Darwin-Defra	3 reports submitted, 3 left

Annex 2 Project's full current logframe

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions			
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					
the conservation of	biological diversity,					
the sustainable use	of its components, and					
the fair and equitabl	e sharing of benefits arising o	out of the utilisation of	genetic resources			
Purpose						
To promote knowledge and skills in HCVF management and	Creation of a pool of national specialists in management and conservation of private	 Number of private forest managers trained. Establishment of 	Local resistance anticipated so co-operation between project participants and local communities is essential for successful implementation, as is local knowledge. Working groups will be greated at community level.			
conservation	HCVF.	eco-tourism	2. Working groups will be created at community level.			
community groups and managers of private forests awareness of forest ecosystems conservation.	activities that will be beneficial to the management of HCVF by landowners.	3. Government support pledged to HCVF sustainable management and conservation.				
	and commitment to this.	3. Number of sites recorded as HCVF and managed sustainably.				

Outputs

- 1. Establishment of national coordination centre for training in HCVF identification, assessment and management.
- 2. Private HCVF at risk of habitat loss identified.
- 3. System designed to monitor private HCVF resources.
- 4. Specialists trained in HCVF management and monitoring techniques.
- 5. Publication of research.

- 1. Effective recruitment of trainees and successful delivery of on-site training
- 2. Map based representations of private HCVF according to risk and habitat loss; HCVF management and conservation plan models.
- 3. Monitoring programme for private HCVF.
- 4. Romanian specialists trained for the monitoring programme.
- 5. Successful review and publication of three articles.

- 1. Office functional, programme peer-reviewed and accepted by Romanian authorities.
- 2. Maps and database.
- 3. Annual schedule for monitoring of private HCVF and monitoring forms.
- 4. Trained monitors.
- 5 Journals.

- 1. Office space identified and learning materials prepared.
- 2. Some local specialists currently opposed to private ownership.
- 3. Monitoring schedule could be affected by adverse weather conditions.
- 4. Secretary of State for Forestry supports educational aspects.
- 5. Training period may clash with holiday periods.

Activities

- 1. Project planning.
- 2. Learning materials production.
- 3. Training workshops.
- 4. Field research programme.
- 5. Classify private HCVF according to risk of habitat loss.
- 6. Training courses held in the UK for Romanian trainers.
- 7. Production of publicity material.
- 8. Report to Darwin-Defra.

Activity Milestones (Summary of Project Implementation Timetable)

- 1. Project planning workshops to revise project goals and outputs achievement (7, every 6 months +1 at start).
- 2. Draft and publish HCVF identification and management manual (1 manual Yr2/Yr3).
- 3. Workshops to establish methodologies and procedure for field survey (1 wk 06/05), participatory assessment techniques (1 wk 07/05) and private forest owners' management options and skills development (6 for 60 private owners/managers on participatory assessment techniques, focusing on sensitive forest habitats (HCVF) and 6 for 60 private owners/managers on community forestry management options in HCVF, certification and skills development 06/05, 12/05, 09/06, 09/07).
- 4. Protocols for all main habitat survey (09/05), production of baseline social survey (07/05-10/05) and habitat assessment fieldwork (4 months per year (May-September 05, 06, 07)).
- 5. Creation of a database of forest resources ownership (1 database Yr2), identification of sensitive private HCVF areas (1 database Oct 2007), creation of database of sensitive areas (1 database), and production of maps to localise sensitive forestry habitats susceptible to deforestation and habitat loss (Jan 08).
- 6. Intensive training of Romanian participants in HCVF identification and management/conservation (4 in community forestry and biodiversity assessment techniques with a focus on sensitive forest habitat management) (09/05, 06/06).
- 7. Annual TV and radio broadcast (Yr2 & 3). Publication of school newsletters (12/05,06,07), and information in local NGOs publications (every six months). One scientific publication per year.
- 8. Production of bi-annual reports



Annual Report 2006-2007: Capacity Building for Managing Eastern European High Conservation Valuel 6 Forests: Romania

Checklist for submission

	Check
Is the report less than 5MB? If so, please email to Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk putting the project number in the Subject line.	Yes
Is your report more than 5MB? If so, please advise Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk that the report will be send by post on CD, putting the project number in the Subject line.	No
Do you have hard copies of material you want to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number.	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or communications for Defra with this report.	No