

Youth Participation in Protected Area Management in Rodna Mountains, Romania

Project reference number 14-019

Annual Report 1, May 2005 – April 2006



**Environmental
Change Institute**
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Darwin Initiative

Annual Report

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Ref. Number	14019
Project Title	Youth Participation in Protected Area Management in Rodna Mountains, Romania
Country(ies)	UK and Romania
UK Contractor	University of Oxford, Environmental Change Institute
Partner Organisation(s)	Administration of Rodna Mountains National Park (APNMR)
Darwin Grant Value	£163,691
Start/End dates	May 2005 – April 2008
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3..)	1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006, Annual Report 1
Project website	http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/humaneco/rodamountains.html
Author(s), date	Alina Szabo & Anna Lawrence, 24 April 2006

2. Project Background

- This project is implemented in northern Romania in the Rodna Mountains National Park; geographic coordinates: N 47°25'54" - 47°37'28", E 24°31'30" - 25°01'30". It originated from the desire to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity in Romania, a European country with high biological diversity, and to assist the Romanian partner, APNMR, with the development and implementation of a participatory management plan for this national park. The APNMR was established only in 2004 and consequently needed support both in terms of expertise and equipment. Moreover, Romania, in line with other former communist countries does not have a tradition in participation in its stronger forms, and this project addresses this problem by contributing an original approach to participation through the involvement of local students in addition to other more traditional stakeholders.

3. Project Purpose and Outputs

- To develop and implement in collaboration with park management authority, local experts, local communities and students a participatory management plan for the Rodna Mountains National Park and Biosphere Reserve (PNMR) and promote the methodology as a model of regional significance.
- Outputs: 1. Baseline and monitoring systems established; 2. Management plan developed and implemented; 3. Experience evaluated, model developed and promoted. (see *Appendix for the full logical framework and progress against it*).

- The outputs and operational plan have not been modified from the original.

4. Progress

- This project progressed as per the agreed logical framework and baseline timetable (see attached Annex 1 for an analysis of logical framework outputs and achievements).

Project implementation timetable – Year I, 2005-2006			
Date	Key milestones	Achievements to March 2006	Observations
0. Project planning and agreements			
April	Memorandum of understanding signed.	The MoU was signed at the end of May.	-
May	Project plan finalised, priority areas identified and work teams formed.	Completed at the end of May.	October – to improve efficiency and accountability, AS together with APNMR produced a project calendar for the rest of yrl with clear deadlines and responsibilities.
May	“Darwin Volunteers for PNMR” student clubs established.	Seven clubs were established in May and June in schools adjacent to the park. Another club established in October, bringing the total to eight.	Although six clubs were initially planned, due to high demand in the end eight were created. Funding their activities has not been problematic; however, additional sources are sought.
1. Baseline and monitoring systems established			
May– July	Information collated on Rodna Mountains biodiversity and traditional use of natural resources in the area, by APNMR staff, and school students.	Started by APNMR in June; completed.	Darwin Club students collected information on traditional use. A great amount of literature has been collated on Rodna Mountains and hence we consider this activity completed for the purpose of this project; however, more titles will be added if and when they become available.
May– July	Equipment purchased.	Most equipment purchased in semester	Equipment was purchased as it became

		I. Completed in March 2006.	necessary. In addition to the capital items included initially, the purchase of a 4x4 vehicle was necessary. This bears the Darwin Initiative logo, hence promoting the project in the region.
July– August	Information collected on stakeholders' perception of PNMR and the role of its administration, by APNMR staff and school students.	Carried out in December 2005 with the help of qualified volunteers.	This activity was postponed for second semester of the project when it was more suitable to carry out. Additional questionnaire surveys planned for May 2006 to get a more complete understanding of the existing views.
July	Training in participatory biodiversity inventory and monitoring; training materials disseminated.	Completed in October 2005.	More training activities in monitoring techniques are scheduled for May– July 2006.
July– September	Participatory systematic biodiversity inventories completed and 1 database created.	Participatory biodiversity surveys undertaken with three Darwin Clubs; database created and updated.	More surveys will take place in 2006, as planned and included in the management plan.
July– April	Monitoring activities implemented by school students.	Biodiversity (species and habitat) and tourist monitoring activities undertaken by Darwin Clubs.	Monitoring activities will continue in 2006, as planned.
May & October	Training materials for GIS techniques distributed; training delivered.	Achieved.	-
September 2007	Field guide compiled by APNMR staff and DCs	Planning process started. Template for data collection drafted. Some data acquired.	Data collection will continue in 2006.
2. Management plan developed and implemented			
May & October	Training in adaptive management techniques; training materials	Introductory training carried out at the end of May. Further training combined with	

	disseminated.	participatory biodiversity assessment training, October. A training poster has been drafted and will be finalised during visit of project leader May 2006.	
May& September	Management planning workshops; materials and results circulated.	Workshops held on 30-31 May and 25 August.	An additional workshop was required and was held in February.
March	Management plan drafted.	Achieved.	
3. Experience evaluated, model developed and promoted			
May	Project web page created.	Created in June. Updated.	
August and February	Newsletter issued.	First issue created in August; available in Romanian and English, both in printed and electronic form. Second issue produced in March, also available in Romanian and English.	
September	Project presentation in local communities and schools.	Presentation held in: May and July in 2 communities with the occasion of various events organised locally; September for participating schools. Audience: 1,300.	December - Presentations given to the Park's Consultation Council (members of local communities, regional and central administrative bodies), Scientific Council, foresters and tourism agencies; audience – 235 persons. March - presentations in schools and communities; total estimated audience 524 students and 148 adults.

- This project has succeeded in achieving all activities planned for the first year of implementation. This was due to careful planning, continuous monitoring and efficient communication established between the partners, for which the project manager has been instrumental. The main objectives proposed for year one were: to establish the baseline by taking stock of resources present in the park and of those available to its administration; to use the baseline as a starting point for drafting the first management plan for this protected area; and to publicise the project as widely as possible, with an emphasis on local communities. Research

activities were needed in order to establish baseline. These activities ranged from literature reviews and biological assessments of several species and habitats to questionnaire surveys and were carried out in a participatory way by involving park staff, specialists and local students from the Darwin Clubs. Training activities were necessary in order to improve the Romanian partner's capacity to manage the park. The transfer of knowledge and expertise from the UK partner focused mainly on the park staff and Darwin Clubs coordinators and took the form of courses in the use of GIS and remote sensing techniques, adaptive management and participatory biodiversity assessment and monitoring. The results obtained formed the basis for drafting the management plan. Throughout this first year activities undertaken as part of the project were publicised in the local media. In addition, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, information on the project was made available to a larger audience through the internet, newsletters, radio broadcasts on regional stations and a feature in a national magazine.

- The project has been confronted by some difficulties. Early on in the project implementation the need for an extra vehicle was apparent. This problem was remedied by purchasing a Romanian 4x4 vehicle to be used for project activities (approved by the Darwin Secretariat). Another impediment encountered relates to the fact that the Romanian partner, APNMR, is relatively understaffed (see also Point 6 Partnerships below); this issue was addressed with the help of the Darwin Clubs and by involving qualified volunteers as much as possible.
- A potential threat to project implementation has developed in the form of a new piece of legislation passed by the Romanian Government at the end of December (Government Ordinance 195/2005) that prescribes the creation within the Ministry of Environment and Water Management of a National Agency for Protected Areas to which all protected areas and administration must be subordinated. Currently most national parks, including the Rodna Mountains N.P., are under the National Forest Administration (RNP) which is subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development. The new law introduces a great amount of uncertainty as to the future of PA administrations and could potentially lead to changes in staff and in project co-funding (provided, as agreed, by the RNP). This situation will be clarified by the end of 2006 as both officials of the Ministry of Environment and of the PA Service of RNP have expressed to the project manager; it is hoped that no major changes will ensue. Nevertheless, close contact with key officials will be maintained in order to promote the needs of this project.

Workplan for the next reporting period – Year II, semester 1, April – September 2006	
Date	Key milestones
1. Baseline and monitoring systems established	
July	Training in participatory biodiversity monitoring; training materials disseminated.
July-September	Monitoring activities implemented by school students.
July-September	Data collection for the field guide to be compiled by APNMR staff and DCs.
2. Management plan developed and implemented	
May	Management plan finalised.

June	Management plan approved.
June	Training in tourist guiding skills.
July	Annual work plans developed.
July-September	Annual work plans implemented.
3. Experience evaluated, model developed and promoted	
August	Newsletter issue 3.
September	Project presentations in local communities and schools.
August	Workshop to analyse and disseminate results, and develop model.

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

- Not applicable.

6. Partnerships

- Collaboration between project partners has been good overall. There is a continuous dialog between partners on all aspects of project implementation. However, the small number of staff (12) for such a large park (almost 47,000 ha) meant that, at times, meeting project deadlines was a challenge and required a great level of input (expertise and time) from the project manager. More staff are to be hired in 2006, and this coupled with the knowledge and experience acquired by the Romanian partner, APNMR, during the first year of project implementation is expected to lead to a straightforward implementation in the following period.
- The project has good ties with WWF Romania and their projects in Romania and the region. More links with other organisations and projects are to be established in the following period through planned workshops and conference attendance.

7. Impact and Sustainability

- This project is unique in Romania (and elsewhere) through the involvement of local students in all activities relating to the development and implementation of a participatory management plan for this national park (PNMR). Originally six Darwin Clubs were planned to be established in schools close to PNMR; however, the clubs were quickly popular and in the end eight clubs were created. Through activities planned during the project and beyond, these students will go on to be the best local, regional and national supporters for this park and its biodiversity.
- As part of this project, Romanian collaborators have improved their knowledge and skills regarding biodiversity conservation; as a result, all research and management activities are now based on the use of GIS.
- This project has been promoted locally and within Romania through: newsletters and other printed materials, web-sites, local printed media, local radio and TV broadcasts, and public presentations in schools and communities. The first issue of the newsletter was well received and was included in 'Revista Padurilor', the national magazine of Romanian foresters.

- The project has established and maintained good relations with local schools, local and regional administrative bodies, as well as with members of the park's Scientific Council (including highly influential members of Romanian academia). An exit strategy is currently being developed with a focus on the Darwin Clubs as the main group that will carry on the aims of this project beyond its duration.

8. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

- Project implementation has followed throughout the outputs agreed in the initial 'Project Implementation Timetable' and the 'Project Outputs Schedule'; there were however, a few modifications:
 1. While course notes were distributed to participants for adaptive management and GIS, separate training materials have not yet been developed. A document synthesising the experience accumulated over the duration of the project will be developed in year 3 for GIS. A training poster in adaptive management and participatory biodiversity assessment has been drafted and will be finalised during visit of project leader May 2006.
 2. Only 5 permanent field plots were established of the 18 proposed. This is due to the fact that during the first year the project focused more on biodiversity assessments and less on monitoring activities. More monitoring plots will be established in 2006 based on the management plan.
 3. The value of assets transferred to the Romanian partner in almost three times greater than initially proposed. This is due to the purchasing of a Romanian 4x4 vehicle needed for projects activities. The purchase was approved by the Darwin Secretariat.
 4. The number of local press releases in Romania exceeded that planned by at least 6 important features.
 5. An additional output was achieved, namely a local TV feature in Romania.
- Project dissemination activities included: web-sites, newsletters, press releases, radio and TV broadcasts as well as public presentations. Target audiences were: local people, students, researchers, and other organisations involved in biodiversity conservation.
- Dissemination is expected to continue beyond the project's lifespan through web sites and materials created during the project (including proceedings of conference to be organised in year 3), but most importantly through the Darwin Clubs. Funding is expected to be provided by the park budget as well as local and county-level administrations (town halls and prefecture). All this will be included in the exit strategy that is to be developed in 2006-2007.

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
4A	Number of undergraduate students to receive training	80				80
4B	Number of training weeks	1				1
6A	Number of people to receive training (adaptive	16				16

	management, GIS, participatory biodiversity assessment)		
6B	Number of training weeks	3	3
7	Training material in adaptive management	To be finalised May 2006	
8	Number of weeks spent by UK staff on work in host country	14	14
9	Management plan	1 (drafted)	1
12A	Database	1	1
15A	National press release Romania	1	1
15B	Quarterly local press releases in Romania	10	10
15C	National Press release UK (ECI annual report)	1	1
16A	Newsletter	2	2
16B	Circulation in host country	700	700
16C	Circulation in UK	Downloadable from website	
18C	TV programme in Romania (not included originally)	1	1
19C	Local radio interviews/features in Romania	2	2
20	Value of assets transferred to APNMR	£9602.92	£9602.92
22	Permanent field plots established	5	5
23	Value of resources from other sources	£26000	£26000

- In Table 2, provide full details of all publications and material produced over the last year that can be publicly accessed, e.g. title, name of publisher, contact details, cost. Details will be recorded on the Darwin Monitoring Website Publications Database. Mark (*) all publications and other material that you have included with this report.

Table 2: Publications

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
(e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	(title, author, year)	(name, city)	(e.g. contact address, website)	

1. Project Expenditure

- Please expand and complete Table 3.

Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period (Defra Financial Year 01 April to 31 March)

2. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

- Project monitoring has been performed by both the UK and Romanian partners. Regular workshops and informal interactions have ensured that planned activities had been carried out in due time. Indicators used included key milestones from the project implementation timetable and those present in the logical framework. In addition to this, a project calendar was developed with clear individual responsibilities and deadlines for achieving these, leading to an increased accountability on the part of the team. Moreover, a questionnaire was developed to collect the views held by all those participating in the project with respect to the quality of communication, training, and activities undertaken, and with regard to future steps needed to be taken in order to achieve the purpose of the project.

- A major lesson learned during the first year of this project relates to the way the Darwin Clubs are run. The task of coordinating activities and meetings was given to the Romanian partner, APNMR; however, as the project progressed the need for more self-organising on the part of the clubs became apparent. This will be addressed together by the partners and clubs as part of the process of developing an exit strategy for the project.

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

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

This project is unique in Romania (and elsewhere) through the involvement of local students in activities relating to the development and implementation of a participatory management plan for this national park (PNMR). Originally six Darwin Clubs were to be established in schools close to PNMR; however, the clubs were quickly popular and in the end eight clubs were created. Through activities planned during the project and beyond, these students will go on to be the best local, regional and national supporters for this park and its biodiversity.

The project facilitated the discovery of a new species of butterfly for Romania, *Apotomis infida* Heinrich 1920, of family Tortricidae.

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 			
<p>Purpose <i>To develop and implement in collaboration with park authority and local and national stakeholders a participatory youth-led management plan for the PNMR that will work towards improving local livelihoods and to promote this method as a model of regional relevance.</i></p>	<p>1. <i>Baseline and monitoring systems established (end y1);</i> 2. <i>Management plan developed and approved (end y2) and implementation commenced (end y2 and y3);</i> 3. <i>Experience evaluated, model developed and promoted (end y3);</i></p>	<p>- <i>Baseline established through biological and social data collection; monitoring activities started.</i> - <i>Management plan drafted.</i> - <i>Project publicised widely.</i></p>	<p>- <i>Management plan finalised; implementation started.</i> - <i>Workshops to analyse results and promote project.</i> - <i>Exit strategy.</i></p>
<p>Outputs</p>			
<p>1. <i>Baseline and monitoring systems established.</i></p>	<p><i>Workshops and training for 35 participants; 1 database created; 2 lists of species and habitats prioritised for management; 1 list and 1 map of monitoring sites; development of an attractive and popular field guide to the wildlife of PNMR.</i></p>	<p>- <i>Information collected on: Rodna Mountains biodiversity; traditional use of resources in the area; stakeholders' perception of PA and its administration.</i> - <i>Equipment purchased.</i> - <i>1 database created.</i> - <i>Training in: participatory biodiversity assessment and monitoring; use of GIS for Pas.</i></p>	<p>- <i>Establishing additional permanent monitoring plots.</i> - <i>Training in biodiversity monitoring and GIS techniques.</i> - <i>Creating a map of monitoring sites.</i> - <i>Developing and publishing a field guide.</i> - <i>Data analysed.</i></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - species and habitat prioritised for management; - participatory species inventory and monitoring. - initiated data collection for inclusion in a field guide. 	
2. Management plan developed and implemented.	Workshops; training; management plan approved; annual work plan developed; 6 student clubs 'Darwin volunteers for PNMR'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops (3). - 8 student 'Darwin Clubs – Friends of Rodna Mountains National Park' established. - Management plan drafted. - Training in adaptive management techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Management plan finalised; implementation started. - Project partners working together with the Darwin Clubs on exit strategy. - Training in tourist guiding skills.
3. Experience evaluated, model developed and promoted.	Newsletter; at least 2 academic papers written; 1 model for participatory protected area management developed; 1 conference to present findings; annual presentations of results to local communities and schools; website development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Newsletter – 2 issues produced. - Project web pages created and updated. - Presentations in schools and communities. - Numerous apparitions in media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project newsletter issues 3 & 4. - Conference participation; presentation of posters and papers. - Web-pages updated. - Public presentations of project results. - Presence in local, regional and national media.

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.