



DARWIN INITIATIVE



Pre-Project Funding Report

Project Title	ADEPT – Agricultural Development & Environmental Protection in Transylvania (provisional title was <i>Conservation & Rural Development Programme for the Saxon Villages area of Transylvania, Romania</i>)
Country(ies)	UK/Romania
Project Ref No. (if known)	EIDPR38
UK Organisation	The Grasslands Trust (UK)
Names / Titles of those who travelled to the host country	Dr Andrew Jones Bill Taylor
Grant Value	£2,800
Start and Finishing Dates	4-15 June 2005
Report Date	6 September 2005

1. Please provide a concise overview of the activities undertaken during the pre-project development visit. (Please also include relevant activities before and after, as appropriate). Please highlight those that were not planned.

- a. 4 day field trip to familiarise Jones and Taylor with the project area. Fauna and Flora specialists of University of Cluj (UBB-CJ), Targu Mures Botanic gardens (AGBR) and ADEPT Foundation took part.
- b. Discussions were held with UBB-CJ, AGBR facilitated by ADEPT Foundation in order to decide on the shape of the full Darwin project, and the institutions' responsibilities. An agreement was subsequently signed with UBB-CJ to carry out some initial field surveys on the area in order to back up scientific justification for the project in terms of High Nature value of the area.
- c. Discussions were held with Mures County Environment Protection Agency (APM-M) regarding the contribution they could make to the biodiversity conservation aspects of the project. An agreement was subsequently signed with APM-M on collaboration in working towards Natura 2000 designation of the area.
- d. Jones and Taylor, facilitated by the ADEPT Foundation, attended a village consultation meeting in Saschiz Commune at which the concepts of biodiversity conservation and sharing of benefits were explained, and the importance of the biodiversity of Saschiz as European heritage, and as an economic resource for local people, was discussed. A Village Consultation Committee (20 leading stakeholders) was subsequently formed, which has given formal approval to an outline conservation and sustainable development plan for the area.
- e. Dr Jones had detailed discussions with Mrs Oachis, ANCA (MAPDR's agricultural extension service) local representative.
- e. Dr Jones and ADEPT Foundation met with Mrs Adriana Baz, Director of Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas Directorate of the Ministry of Environment & Water Management (MMGA) in Bucharest. Mrs Baz gave MMGA support for conservation of the area (semi-natural areas tend to be neglected in Romania's Protected Area system), and Natura 2000 designation in due course. A formal letter of support has subsequently been received.
- f. Dr Jones and ADEPT Foundation met with Mr Danut Apetrei, State Secretary for Rural Development, and Mrs Rodica Matei, Director, at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAPDR). Dr Jones explained his work in agri-environment schemes and grassland conservation throughout Europe. MAPDR informed us of a SAPARD (EU) pilot agri-environment scheme for which only one area, a National Park, was currently eligible, and offered to help make the Saschiz project area eligible. Dr Jones felt that this would be a substantial contribution to the project. A letter has been subsequently received confirming MAPDR support for nomination of Saschiz as agri-environment pilot area.
- g. Contact was made with Milvus (ornithological NGO) and Romanian Lepidoptera Society, which have already carried out work in the area and are keen to participate in the full project.

2. Were any difficulties or setbacks encountered? No.

3. Briefly explain how the pre-project funding has helped to confirm or change the planned project intervention – what difference did getting the grant make?

- a. allowed Jones and Taylor to get to know academic project partners, and **confirmed** their interest in the project, willingness to participate, and specific responsibilities.
- b. allowed Jones and Taylor to stimulate formation of a Village Consultation Committee (VCC) and to reassure villagers that conservation would bring benefits to local people. Subsequent VCC debate **confirms** grass-roots support for project objectives.
- c. **confirmed** MMGA support for the project, especially Natura 2000 designation which entails government responsibility for protection of priority habitats/species identified.
- d. **confirmed** cooperation with regional Environment Protection Agency for Mures County (APM-M), which is important for work towards Natura 2000 designation.
- e. through Dr Jones' discussion with MAPDR, we **learned of** the existence of SAPARD Measure 3.3 agri-environment scheme, for which Saschiz could be eligible if certain actions and lobbying was carried out. Entry of Saschiz into 3.3 will substantially assist the project.
- f. Subsequent to the visit, ANCA Bucharest head office has **confirmed** willingness to work closely with the project in the design and delivery of training courses, in agriculture, alternative incomes such as agro-tourism, marketing, etc., and with the publication of information booklets.

4. Briefly describe the outcomes and conclusions arising from discussions with the host institution(s). What is the value of the project to the host institution(s) and what will their intended contributions be. Have any other partnerships evolved as a result of the pre-project grant?

- a. good working relationship with **Universities and other flora/fauna specialists**, who have first class field experience but are not familiar with the European importance of semi-natural landscapes. The Universities appreciate the additional expertise being brought to Romania in terms of the ecology, conservation and European importance of grassland communities.
- b. the process of obtaining **local support** for conservation has begun, with the explanation of local benefit sharing that is not well understood in Romania.
- c. **New partnership**. ANCA's local experience in delivery of courses and attracting trainees, and in publishing information booklets, and UK specialist input into the content and style of courses and publications, will be a very useful combination. ANCA will be able to use innovative teaching and extension techniques received through the project more widely in Romania.
- d. APM-M are tasked with the nomination of Natura 2000 sites, and have commented that they are delighted to receive specialist support in building up the necessary data through the project: a process that they (with a staff of 2 or 3 in each county) are unable to do alone.
- e. **New element – agri-environmental subsidies**. MAPDR are tasked with maximising uptake of agri-environment schemes such as SAPARD 3.3, and have commented that they are grateful for the project's assistance in increasing the area eligible for agri-environmental grants.
- f. **New partnerships** with 2 Romanian conservation NGOs with expertise and experience in the area.

5. Conclusion and lessons learned from the Pre-Project Grant. Briefly highlight the main conclusions (positive and negative) gained from the pre-project grant. Please also include any suggestions you may have for improving the impact of this funding scheme.

The pre-project Grant application and reporting process is admirably simple and reduces the burden on participants.

Funding to enable local and national-level discussions at the project design phase has been extremely useful, to confirm local and institutional support and reveal some helpful new elements.

Signed:

Date:

Name / Title:

Please restrict this report to no more than two pages in length and send the completed form to ECTF with your Stage 1 Application Form either via email to darwin-applications@ectf-ed.org.uk or by post to ECTF, Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Edinburgh EH26 0PH.