

Romania – innovation example 4

PRACTICAL MEASURES OF CONSERVATION OF HNV GRASSLANDS: INNOVATIVE MACHINERY, CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN, EDUCATIVE MATERIALS

Department of Economic Sciences, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca

www.usamvcluj.ro/eng/

- Location: Sighișoara-Târnava Mare SCI Natura 2000 site - Saxon Villages Area of Southern Transylvania, Romania
- HNV system: Extensive grazing, mozaic farming
- Scale of operation: 5000 families living in 24 small-scale farming communities.
- Timespan: 2010-2013
- Keys to success: Initiative of ADEPT foundation; EU funds and co-funding from a partner; Direct involvement of the inventor of the mower in training farmers; Participation of a large number of farmers to the farm visits; Regular discussions with stakeholders to validate the Conservation Action Plan



Figure 1 & 2 Tarnava Mare: 6210* and 6240* managed by farmers
Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>

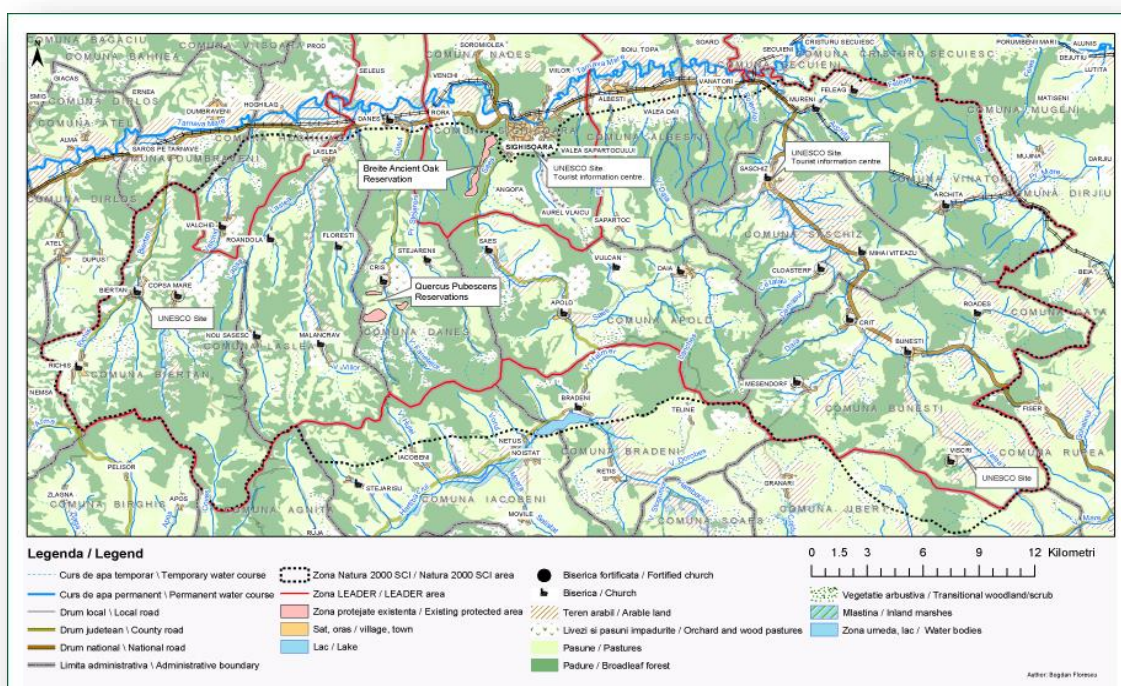


Figure 2 Map of Târnava Mare Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>

Problems addressed by this example

The threats identified at the beginning of the project were the loss of grassland priority habitats 6210* and 6240* - scrub and thorn spread quickly in abandoned grasslands and a thatch of dead grass develops on top of the hay meadows smothering the plants underneath; and the loss of priority habitats through lack of local support for conservation measures; lack of public knowledge about the economic and ecological value of the biodiversity.

Story in a nutshell

Innovative actions within the project "Saving the Important Pastoral Ecosystems of Transylvania" (STIPA) initiated by the ADEPT Foundation: (1) develop conservation action plans for two priority dry grassland habitats: 6210* Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) with important orchid sites, and 6240* Sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands - in cooperation with farmers; (2). clear scrub with innovative machinery; (3). bring habitat into good conservation status; (4). management plan addressed to all stakeholders (farmers, general community, schools, policy-makers)

What does Practical measures for conservation of HNV grasslands achieve for HNV farming?

- Farmers trained on using Brielmaier mower
- 320 ha cleared of scrub by Brielmaier mower, 920 ha returned to Favourable Conservation Status, 3,800 ha under better conservation management;
- Conservation Action Plan agreed by Town halls and farmers;
- Habitat improved after only 3 years;
- Additional 26 communes became eligible for grassland management support payments

Achievements

264 farmers participated to demonstrations of innovative equipment for scrub clearance during 43 farm visits and 2 local contractors trained by the inventor for use of the Brielmaier; 320 ha cleared of scrub by Brielmaier mower, 920 ha returned to Favourable Conservation Status, 3,800 ha under better conservation management; Conservation Action Plan agreed by Town halls and farmers; monitoring shows habitat improvements after only 3 years; additional 26 communes became eligible for grassland management support payments



Figure 3 Martin Brielmaier (right), a trainer from Germany and two Romanian trainees.

Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>

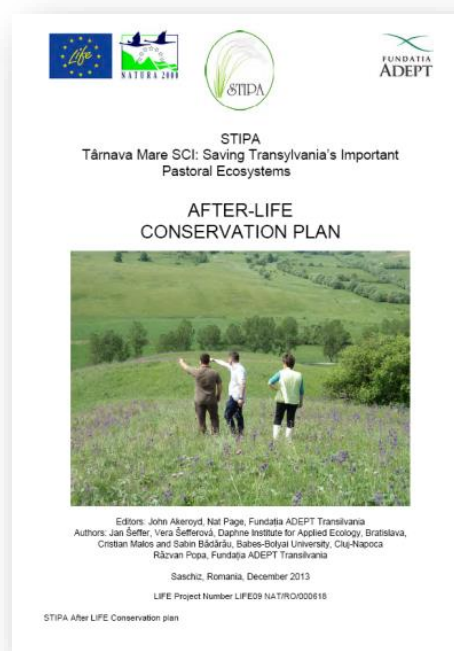


Figure 4 Conservation Action Plan Document



Figure 5 Clearing of scrub Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>

Economics of HNV farming

As a result of the innovative actions taken, 2,097 farmers (69% of eligible farmers, receiving SAPS direct payments) on 35,421 ha (74% of land eligible for direct payments) are receiving a total of €4,959,060 per year (average €2,364 per farmer per year) on 5-year contracts. Farm technology is correlated with the need to improve the conservation status of the dry grassland habitats in the area by using the innovative mowers and applying the Conservation Action Plan.

Maintaining or improving HNV values

The main aim of the project was to improve and secure future conservation status of two priority habitats and of the HNV landscape, in partnership with local people especially farmers. At the end of the project, 920 ha have been returned to Favourable Conservation Status and 3,800 ha are under better conservation management.

How does Practical measures for conservation of HNV grasslands respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?

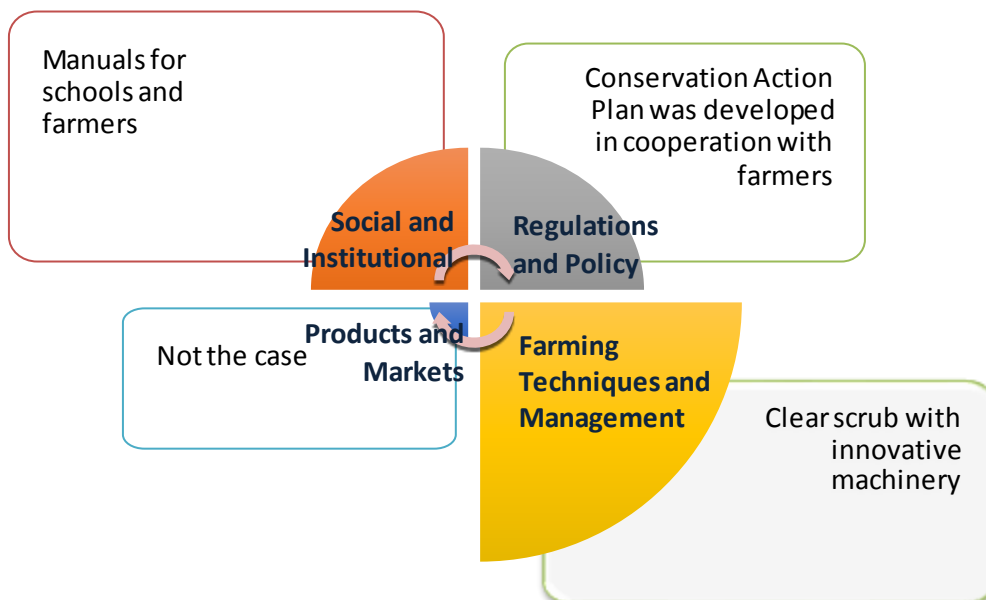


Figure 6 Shows how this innovation addresses the four themes of the HNV-Link innovation framework.

- **Farm Techniques and Management:** Clear scrub with innovative machinery (Brielmaier mower; large surface of two habitats cleared and demonstrations of using for farmers). The Brielmaier allows speedy and energy efficient mowing of sloping grasslands.
- **Regulation and Policy:** The Conservation Action Plan was developed in cooperation with farmers was well received by stakeholders
- **Social and Institutional:** Flora and Lepidoptera Indicator species guides produced, for long-term use in the area and more widely (manuals for schools and farmers); 8 schools were involved (280 children per year in nature classes); Over 1 million TV viewers in Romania have seen film dedicated to the project

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- Active involvement of ADEPT Foundation in preserving natural values
- Critical factors: reluctance of farmers; lack of money to buy the Brielmaier mower
- Risk of intensification may appear if farmers are not using the innovative machinery and the Conservation Action Plan is not applied.



Figure 7 Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>



Figure 8 ADEPT team

Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>



Figure 9 Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>

Actors and roles: ADEPT Foundation – initiator/**catalist/innovator**; Martin Brielmaier - inventor and trainer; Farmers – trainees and for consulting sessions; Local Action Group Dealurile Tarnavelor - for consulting sessions; Town Hall - for consulting sessions

Institutional context that made it possible: The previous experience of ADEPT in nature conservation contributed certainly to the good feedback of stakeholders. The project was well received by the community and authorities.

Resources: STIPA is a EU-funded Life Natura project (LIFE09/NAT/RO/000618). Total budget was 356330 euro (73% EC Co-funding). It was co-financed by Orange Romania.

Processes: It was a pilot project. Proposed follow-up actions were: to incorporate the Conservation Action Plan into the management plan for the SCI/SPA to be finalised in 2015 (no information found if it was done or not); to cooperate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to develop better-targeted agri-environment schemes for dry grasslands; to continue to provide farm advisory services to promote economic viability of the broader landscape of which the target habitats are an integral part.

Critical factors for success: Reluctance of farmers in using the proposed farming techniques. No information found if farmers are using the Brielmaier mower. Continuity depends on the purchasing power of farmers (about 25,000 EURO new mower; 18,000 EURO second hand mower)

Limiting factors, actual/potential problems, and how could they be overcome? The areas need to be cleared of scrub periodically. The risk of intensification may appear if farmers are not using the innovative machinery and the Conservation Action Plan is not applied.

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- Brielmaier mower proved to be efficient and supports HNV farming
- Farmers and stakeholders willing to learn about how to protect the grasslands
- Connection among all stakeholders lead to success result, such as the agreement of the Conservation Action Plan.
- Applicable in other HNV areas

Overall lessons from this example, especially from point of view of HNV farming?

The project was designed to help the continuation or re-establishment of grassland management in the area. The innovative mower can support HNV farming, but it can be a challenge for farmers due to finance reasons. Farmers and other stakeholders were willing to learn about how to protect the grasslands. Connection among all stakeholders lead to success result, such as the agreement of the Conservation Action Plan.

Is the innovation unique to its territory and its characteristics, or is it replicable in other areas?

It was unique at the time of project implementation. The use of the innovative mower is replicable in areas with the two types grassland habitats: 6210* and 6240*. The conservation action plan can be adapted to other areas, in LA as well.

Could it be rolled out on a bigger territorial scale?

Yes, Brielmaier mower was proved to be efficient in Dealurile Clujului Est a well. A Conservation Action Plan should be developed for each habitats and included in the management plans of the areas.

What would be needed to do this successfully?

To increase awareness of the positive effects of using it (technical innovation); create farmer association to afford purchasing the mowers, which could be shared by farmers. Farmers need to be frequently trained and proved the efficiency of using light machinery.



Figure 10 Monitoring of the results of habitat restoration

Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>



Figure 11 Visit of Former EU Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloș and HRH The Prince of Wales

Source: <http://www.fundatia-adept.org/>



Figure 12 Meetings with stakeholders

Source: <http://www.orgfundatia-adept.org/>

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