

Interactive innovative actions to support conservation of grasslands and communities at landscape-scale in Romania



... working with many partners: private, academic, government, NGOs ...



AGENTIA REGIONALĂ PENTRU PROTECTIA MEDIULUI SIBIU



Project location: Tarnava Mare, a lowland area of high biodiversity, 85.000ha farmed by 5.000 families in small-scale farming communities



How/why did ADEPT activities start?



- One of Europe's most important lowland farmed landscapes, produces many public goods, under threat
- This is important as a LANDSCAPE: need to work at landscape-scale
- Fundatia ADEPT working in area since 2004. We understood that problems were **ecological, social and economic** an integrated approach needed: solving problems in one of these areas not enough

The story of ADEPT 2004-2014

- **Evolution of a local NGO**during the past 10 years, ADEPT has grown from a local project, to an NGO with national and European influence
- **How?** Our ability to influence policy is derived from our practical experience on the ground. We try innovative solutions on the ground in **immediate response** to practical problems as they arise and then present these solutions as models at EU level
- **What are we most proud of?**proud to be a BOTTOM-UP initiative working for thousands of small-scale farming families **GIVING THEM A VOICE** that they did not have before

Example: LIFE NAT/RO/000618: STIPA: Saving Transylvania's Important Pastoral Ecosystems



Dates 01/10/2010 – 30/09/2013
Total budget €356.330
EC contribution: €259.515 (73%)

Partners from Private, Academic, NGO and state sectors



Agriculture University Cluj



Babes Bolyai University Cluj



Ministry of Agriculture
and Rural Development



Romanian Lepidopterological
Society



Saschiz Town Hall
Tarnava Mare
Local Action Group



Progresul Silvic
ROSCI 0227 Administrator



Brielmaier Motor-mowers

Fundația
Orange



Orange telephones
Romania

Building the partnership

1. **Farmers** are the key partners: only they can manage a landscape this size. ADEPT farm advisers worked with individual farmers, farm associations, and Local Action Group for 2-way information channels
2. **Funders:** Orange telephones, UK Darwin Initiative: **risk takers**
3. We brought in Cluj and Sibiu **Universities**
 - a. biodiversity specialists – area species-rich, to their surprise
 - b. Mapping / GIS specialists enabling landscape-scale inventory
 - c. Agriculture specialists to advise on practical management measures.
4. Final link was **private sector**, innovative equipment made large-scale restoration possible

Important parallel links established with Ministries and Commission

- Initial scepticism from Romanian Ministries was overcome: MADR thought the area was simply underdeveloped, MoE thought that a man-made area was simply not worth N2000 designation/protection
- We worked with DG Agri (agri-environment, rural development approach) and DG Environment (LIFE+ Nature, biodiversity approach)



Project objectives



GOAL: to improve the conservation status of two priority dry grassland habitats

Activities:

- Field studies (developing 3D mapping methodology)
- Farm visits, workshops
- Innovative mowing equipment suited to restoration of dry grassland on uneven terrain
- Implement and monitor habitat restoration activities
- School activities also in the field
- Design new farmer-friendly agri-environment measures

Why is this a Natura 2000 site? Many Habitats Directive species and habitats, of which two habitats were the target of the LIFE project

6210*: dry grassland on limestone or other calcareous substrates with important orchid sites (about 8% of area)

- Grassland dominated by Upright Brome (*Bromus erecta*) and fescues
- Widespread on south- and west-facing slopes with few trees
- Often a rich carpet of wild orchids and other wild flowers, including Red Viper's-bugloss (*Echium maculatum*), Jurinea (*Jurinea mollis*), Three-toothed Orchid (*Orchis tridentata*).



6240*: Sub-Pannonian steppe grasslands (about 4% of area)

- Occur on the steepest sunny slopes
- Dominated by various grasses, especially feather-grasses (*Stipa* species) and the small sedge *Carex humilis*
- Several rare plant species including the Steppe Sea-kale (*Crambe tataria*), Burning Bush (*Dictamnus albus*) and Nodding Sage (*Salvia nutans*), and dwarf flowering shrub Steppe Almond (*Prunus tenella*).



Innovation 1: Field assessments of 30,000ha in 2 years, with a team of 4 Botanists! How ?

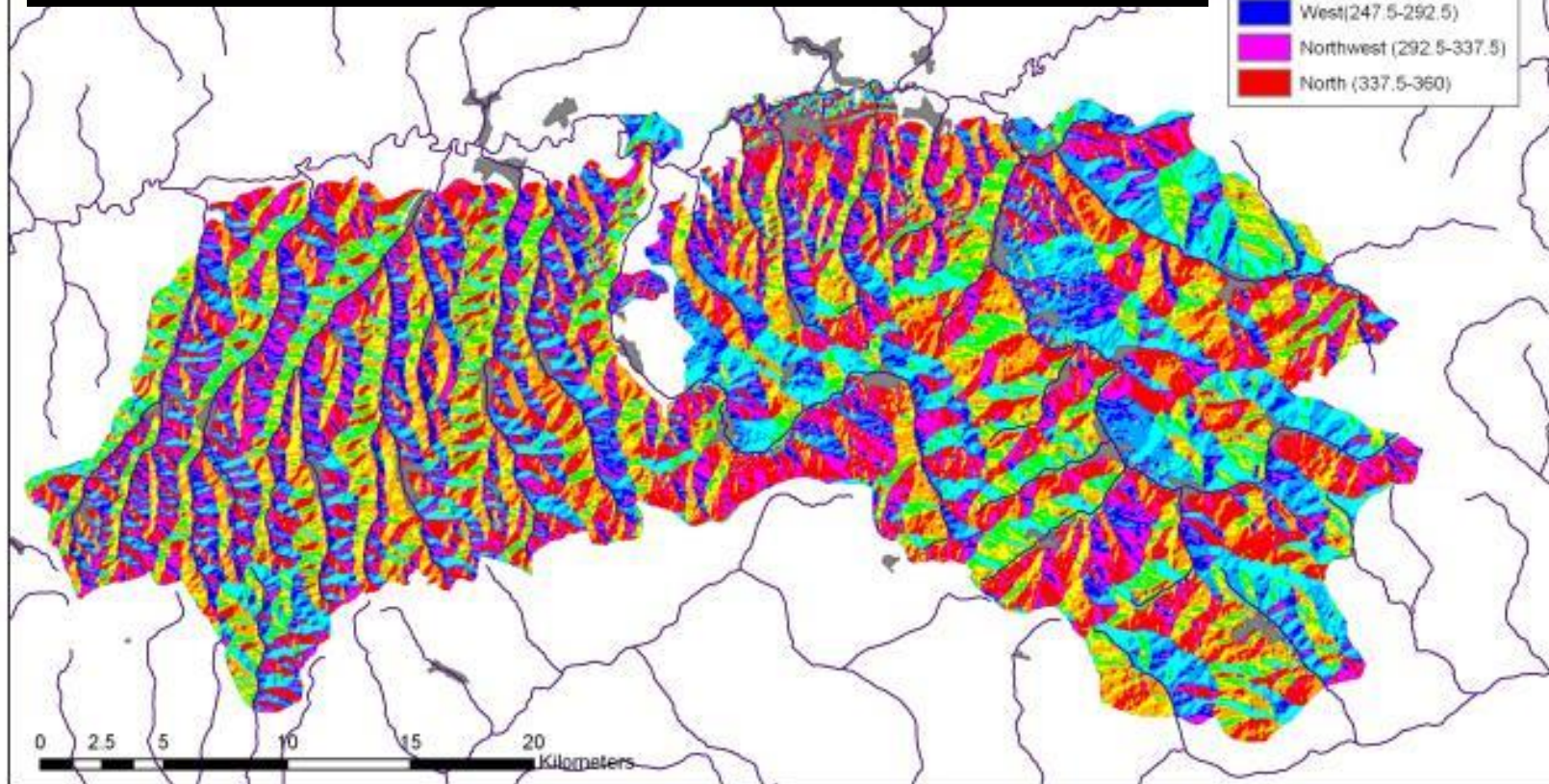


Partners in mapping/inventory and their roles

- Mapping and assessment methodology: Daphne Institute
- Sources of mapping data identified, at different scales, including orthophotoplans and 3D mapping: UBB-Cluj.
- Working with the MADR: LPIS.

Innovative mapping system developed working with Daphne Institute and UBB-Cluj

- Maps prepared using contours of 30m and 5 m to assist location of target habitats based on aspect, inclination.
- Detailed GIS mapping identified 6000 surfaces with correct aspect / inclination as potential target habitats = 5895 ha.
- Field testing shows 90% accurate



Innovation 2: modern walk-behind mechanical mower

After mapping, we restored large areas using innovative machinery developed by Martin Brielmaier

With Cluj Agriculture University (USAMV) we helped farmers by combining modern equipment with traditional management

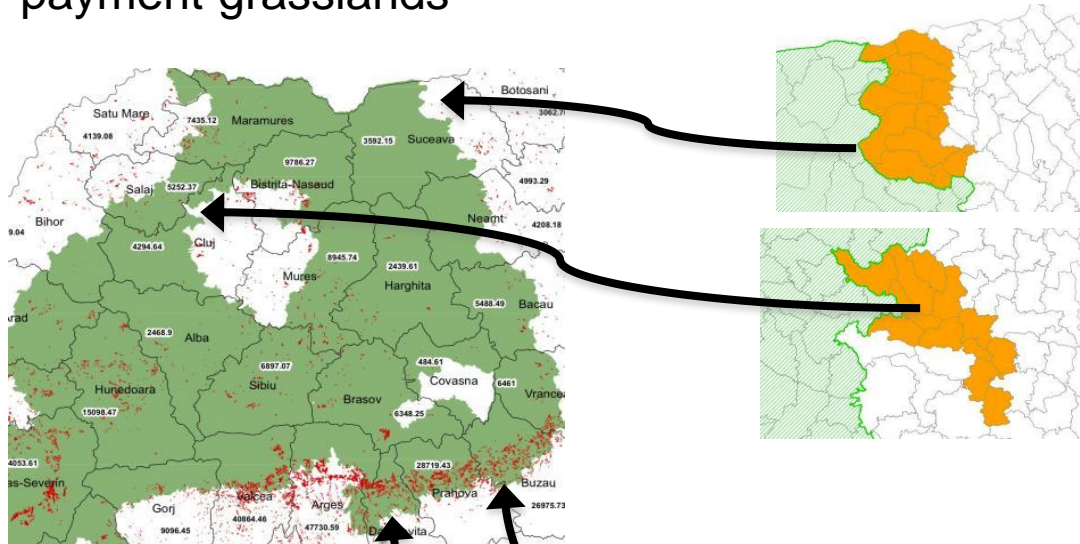


Innovation 3: development of new AE payments

Working directly with the Ministry of Agriculture (MADR), UBB-Cluj and SLR we have successfully proposed new agri-environment measures effective from 2012.

Impact: over 400,000 ha eligible for support payments for HNV farmers:

1. In cooperation with SLR, we justified butterflies as umbrella species for damp grassland conservation, making an additional 26 communes eligible. Also, for first time, use of walk-behind mowers was permitted in higher-payment grasslands



2. In cooperation with SoR (birds) and SLR (butterflies) we justified eligibility of 195.000 ha of extensive orchards
3. In cooperation with UBB-Cluj, USAMV-Cluj, SLR and MADR we designed another butterfly/dry grassland measure, *Pseudophilotes bavius* measure

Innovation 4: imaginative, interactive approach

Our imaginative approach is the most important innovation of all – underlying all the other innovative actions

We engaged with local farmers to solve the environmental, social and economic problems of these valuable pastoral ecosystems.

We did this by taking risks: if we saw a problem, we reacted quickly, not limited by previous planning and existing projects. The fact that we listened and responded immediately to farmers' problems helped us build a relationship of trust.

To do this we have to be active on the ground, communicating through our farm advisory team, and speaking the farmers' language: concrete solutions to concrete problems.

Experiences and recommendations

- N2000 payments are just one of the support measures needed to maintain small-scale farming and communities. We need to provide ***integrated approaches*** to landscape-scale conservation, bringing together a wide range of support payments and technical assistance.
- We need to **work at all levels**, bringing together
 - Innovative Businesses (Brielmaier)
 - University specialists (UBB-Cluj, USAMV-Cluj)
 - Other NGOs
 - Local Authorities
 - Ministries and management Authorities
 - European Commission.
- Design ***regional schemes*** to ensure schemes suit local conditions
 - Use ***group agreements*** to achieve scale
 - Use ***local partnerships*** including NGO farm advisory services in order to promote uptake of schemes
 - Improve capacity of **Farmer Associations** to act as channels of skill and innovation

Thank you for your attention!



www.fundatia-adept.org

www.discovertarnavamare.org

...and all our private, academic,
government, and NGO partners!



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