



Fundatia **ADEPT** Transilvania

10-year report 2004-2014

Ten years of protecting landscapes and communities in Transylvania



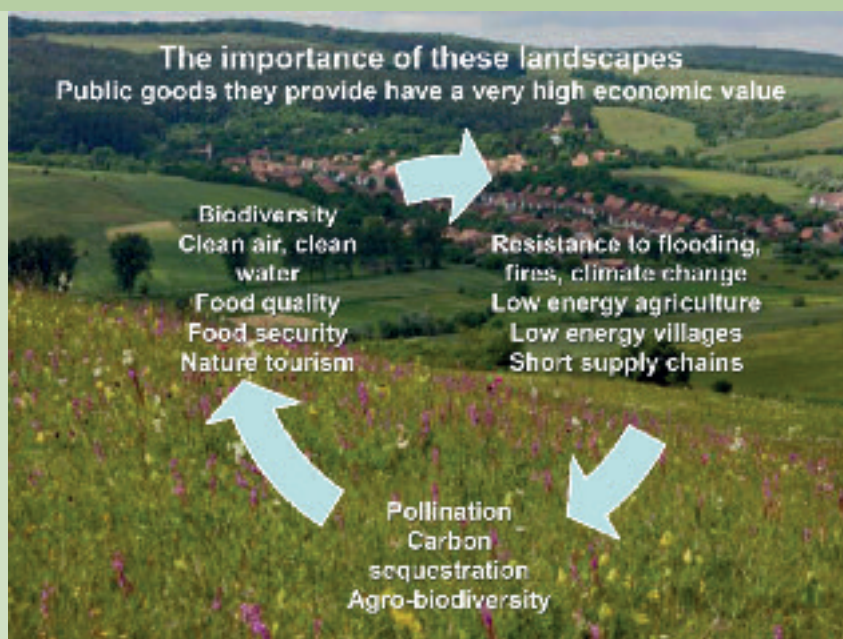
Fundatia ADEPT activities 2004-2014: an overview

Some of Europe's most important high nature farmed landscapes are found in Romania, especially Transylvania. These landscapes are still in full ecological "working order", with wild species and natural habitats in balance with sustainable farming practices, intimately linked to the small-scale farming communities who work within them. The links between man, agriculture and nature are still intact.

The grasslands of Transylvania have some of the highest diversity of flower species recorded anywhere in the world, and support large, stable populations of mammals, butterflies and other animal species that used to be linked to farmland but are now rare over much of Europe.

These landscapes are not just of historical and aesthetic interest: they provide high productivity and high local employment, and many other important benefits such as:

- havens for Europe's threatened wild plants and animals
- food security through truly sustainable land use, including healthy bee populations for pollination
- healthy populations of natural predators for sustainable pest control
- clean air and water, and flood prevention through natural landscape features in catchment areas
- a gene pool of farm animal breeds and plant varieties, enabling improved production under varying conditions.



Such areas can only be preserved by the farmers who created them in the past, and live within them today.

In spite of their many values, these landscapes are threatened by social and economic factors, especially under the drive for competitiveness in the EU and global markets, which do not place a value on the wider benefits of these forms of agriculture. It would be a tragedy to lose such landscapes just as we are beginning to appreciate their importance.

When ADEPT started work in 2004, these kinds of man-made landscapes did not enjoy support. They were not valued for nature conservation, since conservation NGOs and policy-makers emphasized wilderness areas. And they were not valued by

development NGOs and policy-makers, because their low-intensity land management was seen as contradictory to the goals of competitiveness, productivity and poverty-reduction.

More recently, it has become increasingly appreciated by policy-makers that

- man-made semi-natural landscapes support higher habitat and wild species diversity than do many wilderness areas
- small-scale farmed landscapes offer higher productivity per hectare, greater long-term security, and higher local employment, than does industrial farming.

ADEPT is proud that it has contributed to this shift in vision and policy at local, national and European levels.

ADEPT's aim is to give these landscapes and communities an economic future and relevance in the 21st century without sacrificing their sustainability and productivity, which are in fact an important model more widely in Europe. An innovative approach is required if these landscapes and communities are to survive in the 21st century.



ADEPT has been working with farmers, local communities, universities, other NGOs, and government at all levels to solve the range of problems threatening the survival of these landscapes and farming communities. For 10 years ADEPT has been carrying out an integrated programme linking economic and social benefits with biodiversity conservation, and raising local capacity for good management in the future.

- Policy work with governments
- Farm advisory services
- Model small-scale commercial enterprises which improve local economy at all stages in the supply chain – production, processing, sales and marketing
- Development of other income sources such as agro-tourism and nature guiding, of which its highest-profile success is a network of mountain bike trails.

3

Târnava Mare area

ADEPT's first, and still most important area of operation, is the Târnava Mare area of Southern Transylvania. It is a lowland area of high biodiversity, 85,000 ha, farmed by 5,000 families in 24 small-scale farming communities. The site lies in the historic region of Southern Transylvania. The 'Saxons', who arrived in Southern Transylvania in the 12th-13th centuries from Flanders, Luxembourg and the Mosel, established some 200 villages and seven principal fortified towns.



The extensive mixed farming carried out in this region for over 8 centuries has created one of Europe's finest surviving lowland High Nature Value farmed landscapes. Agriculture remains largely traditional; each household with strips of arable land in the different areas that are good for the various crops, and larger parcels, typically 5-10 ha, of hay-meadow.

Grazing of village livestock is on common pastures maintained by the village neighbourhood systems. Each livestock owner was obliged to donate a certain number of days' work, according to how many head of cattle or sheep he owned, clearing scrub etc., but this old system now needs to be supported by payments.



The grassland habitats and species of Târnava Mare are especially important. These kind of wildflower-rich grasslands – grazed pastures and mowed meadows – have disappeared over much of Europe as a result of intensification, but are still widespread in this area.

In the early 1990s the majority of Saxons left their villages and cities and moved 'home' to Germany. This caused a social and economic upheaval, and a depopulation of the area: the area is threatened by land use changes, intensification and abandonment.

This is a cultural landscape also. Villages, land management and nature have maintained their balance.

The most obvious manifestation of Transylvania's astounding richness of plant and animal diversity is the wildflowers of the traditionally managed grasslands. These are probably the best lowland hay-meadows and pastures left in Europe; so extensive that you can walk through them for days on end. The colourful and varied flora of these grasslands comprises a rich mix of western and central European plants, but with a significant element of steppic species such as *Crambe tataria* and *Iris aphylla*, both listed on Annex II, and as many as 30-40 species of leguminous plants.

One of the most significant factors is the low nutrient status of the soils. Generations of villagers have transferred nutrients to the valleys as hay or animal dung with almost no input of nutrients to the upper hay-meadows. This correlates with the great species diversity, with often over 40 species in a square metre. In other parts of Europe, nutrient enrichment has destroyed similar ancient grasslands.

The diversity of habitats support more than 1100 plant species, over 30% of the Romanian flora. This richness is a result of geographical position, diversity of relief, varied climatic conditions and soils, and above all traditional land-use with a mosaic of woodland, grassland and arable cultivation. Of these species, 87 are protected by law at national and international level, and 12 are threatened in Europe and included in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. A further 77 species are threatened at national level and included in Romanian Red Lists. Just over half occur in meadow-steppe grasslands. Many are rare and decreasing in Europe.

Some 60 native plants are related to cultivated or crop plants and constitute a resource for plant breeding, notably distinctive variants of forage legumes such as Sainfoin and Red Clover. Some village fruit trees represent old varieties, especially plums. The wild pears dotting the landscape are also a natural gene-pool.



Farming systems in Târnava Mare

The farming systems of Târnava Mare are typical of the Carpathian Lowlands: predominantly small, semi-subsistence mixed farming. Crops are grown on the arable valley floors, and the valley slopes are given over to hay-meadows and large expanses of communal grazing land, for both sheep and cattle which are managed separately.

Small-scale dairy production is the key to the survival of many of the High Nature Value landscapes of Romania. The small-scale farmers, who have created these landscapes, depend mainly on cow or ewe milk or milk products for their income. Small producers all deliver to one or two milk collection points in villages, from which the processors take delivery. **It is key to survival of the High Nature Value farmed landscape that these milk collection points remain in profitable operation.**

Most sell less than half their products on the commercial market, and so are classed as subsistence farms. However, subsistence farming can also include the informal networks that supply to family members in nearby towns and cities, and so are more significant socially and economically than official statistics show.



'One haycart for each leg' – one cow is said to eat 4 cartloads over the winter

Hay-meadows

About 20% of the land in the Târnava Mare area is hay-meadow. The lower, more level hayfields are typically cut twice a year, in June/July, and again in September. The steeper upland meadows, difficult to cut by machine, are cut once a year by scythe, in July or August. After drying in the fields, hay is brought in to the villages by horse and cart or tractor. A Saxon farmer will store hay in his barn, a Romanian in a beehive-shaped stack outside. After mowing, owners put their own cattle on to their parcels of land for aftermath grazing. Local farmers recognise the rich flora as beneficial for their cows' milk production and general health.

Hay is cut throughout summer months, leading to effective seed dispersal. Flower richness and diversity benefits from a late hay cut, after seeding, at least once every few years. EU conservation regulations specify a late cut every year, but under traditional management seeding probably occurred once every few years, when weather conditions prevented earlier cutting.

Pasture

About 25% of the land is communal grazing land divided between cattle and sheep. Usually the land nearer the village, lower down and with richer grass, is reserved for the cattle since they return to the villages every evening for milking. The sheep remain on the upper pastures for the whole summer. This grazing land is owned by the Town Halls and the right to graze is rented out each year to the villages and – if land is not all taken up – to outsiders.

The common grazing is arranged as follows. Cattle and sheep are kept inside during the winter months and fed on hay. In December or January of each year auctions are held at which villagers bid to take care of the village herds and flocks. The cattle owners pay a fee per head to the herdsman. For sheep-owners, the shepherds offer a certain number of kilos of cheese per ewe per summer in exchange for the right to keep them, milk them in the hills and sell excess milk and cheese for their own profit.

Sheep systems

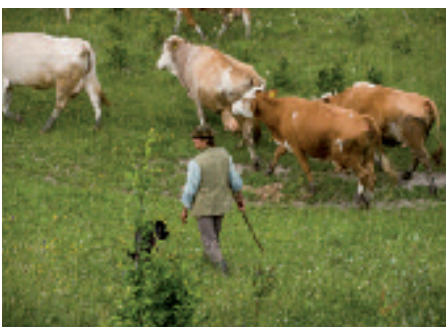
Most households in the valley own a few sheep, which are kept on communal pastures, in large flocks managed by locally elected shepherds. Sheep pastures are usually located a few kilometres from the village, on the higher ground. Sheep are taken up to the pasture in early May or before, and returned to their owners in November. Flocks vary in size between 200 and 700 head, a mixture of villagers' and the shepherd's own sheep.



The sheep are brought together in a group at night and the shepherds sleep at spaces around them because of threat of attack by bears and wolves. This labour-intensive system allows sheep to co-exist with wolves and bears in the landscape.

Farming sheep for milk, with this system of grazing and penning, has created a distinctive grazing pattern and an uneven distribution of nitrogen over the surface of the sheep pastures. High-nitrogen areas near sheepfolds are poorer in flowers, while less fertile areas away from sheepfolds are very rich in flower species.

Cow systems



The cattle are let out for daily grazing from early May. Each villager milks his cow or cows, and pushes them out of his gate at first light. The cowherd drives the herd out of the village and grazes them in communal pastures until evening. There is no rigorous rotation of grazing areas: this is left up to the herdsman. Towards dusk, the cowherd brings the herd back to the village. Each cow knows the way into its own yard, where it is milked again by hand. Milk is taken twice a day in buckets or churns to the village milk collection points, each with a bulk storage tank. The administrator of the milk collection point randomly tests milk quality, especially fat content, to prevent people earning more by adding water. Milk is collected once a day, or twice at peak production in the

summer, usually by tanker or sometimes simply by horse and cart loaded with churns, and taken to the milk processor who may be 20–30 km away. Cows' milk is also for producers' own consumption, but its sale is often a household's sole source of income.

Arable land



In the Târnava Mare area, about 15% of land is arable. This figure has fallen from nearer 30% under the more intensive management under communism up to 1989: the 15% abandoned arable land is now permanent hay meadow or pasture. In the 20 years since the fall of communism, much of this former arable land has reverted naturally to grassland of very high floristic diversity.

Small parcels of haymeadow may be ploughed for a year or two, and then allowed to revert to haymeadow. This should not be regarded as a threat: it is part of the dynamic traditional landscape. Succession to flower-rich meadow is rapid owing to the rich surrounding seed bank.

Artificial fertilisers and pesticides are used little in the area, mainly because of the cost. Arable areas and accessible haymeadows are fertilised with farmyard manure. Pastures, and the more distant hay meadows, are not fertilised except by grazing animals, a key to the wildflower richness.



Forest

30–40% of the land belonging to each village is forest. The villagers rely on wood for heating and cooking. The mainly hornbeam and oak timber trees are typically thinned gradually in the first 100 years, natural regeneration allowed or promoted by planting of seeds/acorns, and clear-felled at a 100–120 years old once there is a majority undergrowth of young trees up to c.1 m high. The forests yield a rich crop of non-timber forest products – edible fungi, wild berries and game. Red deer, roe deer, wild pig, wolf and bear are attractive to Romanian hunting associations, and to tourists armed with gun or camera. The riparian forests yield withies for basket-making and reinforcing water-channels in the villages.

The wildlife

The key words for these landscapes are scale, mosaic and connectivity. These are the keystones of the remarkable biodiversity of the area. The mosaic of habitats in this man-made landscape, a mixture of forest, grassland, scrub and arable with many wildlife-friendly connecting features such as hedges, avenues and isolated trees, leads to extraordinary biodiversity.

Mosaic management offers a variety of habitats, and boundaries between habitats which are always very species-rich owing to the interaction where one habitat meets another. Mosaic management also means that when one area is harvested for hay, butterflies, young and adult birds, reptiles and amphibians can find refuge nearby. Studies have shown that 2 weeks after hay harvest, butterflies which have taken refuge nearby begin to return to the mowed meadow as it regrows.

Connectivity allows fauna – small birds such as shrikes, larger raptors such as lesser spotted eagles, birds, small mammals such as dormice, larger mammals such as wolves and bears to move freely within larger feeding and breeding areas. **The scale** of these intact, extensively managed, high mosaic/connectivity landscapes is vital for long term survival of large, genetically varied populations.



The grasslands

The dry and damp grasslands of the area are obviously different in appearance, flora and fauna, and both are very important, rare and threatened European habitat types.

Dry grassland on limestone

The dry grasslands on limestone are found especially on south-facing and southwest-facing slopes, both steep and gentle, with few or no trees.

These grasslands are often a rich carpet of wild orchids and other wild flowers, including Red Viper's-bugloss, Jurinea and Three-toothed Orchid. Characteristic butterfly species include the Dryad, Hermit, Green-underside Blue and Chestnut Heath.



Limestone dry grassland



Green-underside Blue



Red Viper's-bugloss

Steppic grassland

Another dry grassland type, steppic grasslands, occur on the steepest sunny slopes and are dominated by various grasses, especially feather-grasses (*Stipa* species). In this habitat we find several rare plant species including the showy, protected Steppe Sea-kale, Burning Bush and Nodding Sage, and the dwarf flowering shrub Steppe Almond.

Butterflies found here include Large Blue, Chalkhill Blue, Yellow Banded Skipper, Eastern Baton Blue and Red-band Fritillary.



Steppic grassland



Large Blue



Nodding Sage

Damp meadows

As well as the dry grassland described, the mosaic landscapes of Transylvania contain important damp meadows. Often near the villages, and used for mowing rather than grazing, these have a distinct flora. Lowland meadows of this kind have disappeared throughout most of Europe, owing to drainage and intensification.

The rich variety of blue and yellow flowers are important food sources for butterflies. Rare plant species include Siberian Iris and wild Gladiolus. These lowland damp grasslands often also contain montane species such as the striking Globe flower and White hellebore.



Damp meadow with Globeflower



Wild Gladiolus



Scarce Large Blue



Alcon Blue



Clouded Apollo



Great Burnet

Also specific to damp haymeadows is Great Burnet, host plant for the caterpillars of the strictly protected *Maculinea* butterfly species Scarce Large Blue and Dusky Large Blue. These species are threatened with extinction in Europe. In addition to their host plant, they also need a second host, a species of ant on which it is a parasite: these species can be present only in meadows where Great Burnet and the host ant coexist. In damp grassland with Gentian, another butterfly, Alcon Blue, is seen, also dependent on ants and strictly protected.

Towards the forest edges, damp meadows host another beautiful, threatened and protected butterfly, Clouded Apollo.

Scrub

In Transylvania cordons of scrub were kept to mark the limits of properties, to the benefit of species of insects and birds closely linked to this type of habitat. The main woody species are hawthorn, blackthorn, wild rose and dwarf almond. Among the species of butterflies closely linked to the presence of scrub are Scarce Swallowtail, Blue Spot Hairstreak and Brown Hairstreak whose caterpillars all develop on hawthorn or blackthorn.



Blue Spot Hairstreak



Scarce Swallowtail



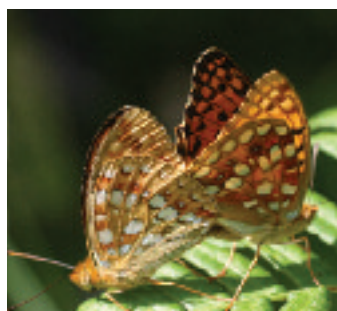
Brown Hairstreak

Forest edges

Forest margins bring together many flora and fauna species from forest, grassland and scrub habitats. Here typically you will see the Woodland Brown, internationally protected, flying slowly through the hazel bushes. In forest edges Clouded Apollo – another protected species – is still common. There are also many fritillary butterflies: Niobe Fritillary, High Brown Fritillary and Dark Green Fritillary.



Woodland Brown



Niobe Fritillary



High Brown Fritillary



Dark Green Fritillary

Forest

Hilly altitudes in Transylvania are dominated by deciduous forests especially oak, beech and hornbeam mixed with cherry, lime and maple. In clearings and towards forest edges can be seen the Woodland Grayling, Purple Hairstreak and Nine-spotted moth.



Woodland Grayling



Purple Hairstreak



Nine-spotted moth

Threats to the landscape and communities

Lack of social and economic incentives

Local farmers and other land managers have few incentives to remain working the land. This threat will have increasing impact over the next few years under EU pressure for competitiveness, causing intensification in more commercially viable areas and abandonment of less accessible areas. ADEPT's work is to try to unlock the potential benefits of international interest in the area, and the potential economic and quality of life advantages to farmers resulting from continued traditional management of these landscapes.

Response:

- Establish incentives by linking good habitat management to agri-environment grants
- Establish incentives by adding value to products, branding, market development
- Involve farmers, schools and general public in conservation activities through innovative education and publications
- Develop agri-environment packages (regional or national) that take account of specific requirements of grassland habitats, working with Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Agree management proposals with local people and other stakeholders to increase local support
- Distribution of booklets flyers, posters and simple information leaflets to raise local and general appreciation of the importance of the area
- Interpretation panels at points of special interest, to inform local people and visitors
- Website leading to broader understanding and support locally, nationally, and internationally
- Diversify income for example through networks of walking and biking trails, linking guesthouses and producers to visitors, nature guide training.
- Private associations of small-scale farmers; **only by cooperation can small-scale farmers survive in modern market conditions.**

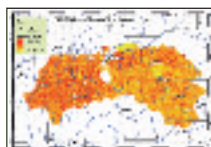
Poor agricultural management – intensification or abandonment.

Intensification by fertilisation or change of use will quickly destroy the grasslands. Abandonment is an equal threat because 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. This leads to gradual growth of bushes/thorny shrubs, and a massive reduction in plant diversity to be replaced by a matted grass and thorn scrub of much lower biodiversity value.

Response:

- direct habitat conservation action, using innovative machinery or simply by re-establishing traditional management, will restore grasslands and have a demonstration effect
- establish broadly accepted management guidelines for farmers, as part of the farm consultancy process under which we help farmers increase their incomes
- purchase areas of special importance which are under immediate threat, while allowing continued traditional use by local farmers
- demonstration areas in order to spread the word locally about how better management can lead to higher profits when linked to incentive payments and nature-branded marketing.

What has ADEPT done in it's 10 years? Some highlights



Innovative GIS mapping system developed for large-scale conservation, which can be replicated more widely.



Innovative mowers demonstrated and contractors trained to ensure continued use in the future. Over 1,000 hectares of grassland cleared of scrub. Monitoring shows significant long term improvement.



Flora and Lepidoptera species guides produced for long-term use in the area and more widely in Transylvania for visitors, farmers and schools



School nature classes and activities. 8 schools, 280 children per year in nature classes. Outdoor nature projects very popular. 'Junior Ranger' nature clubs established.



Over 1.5 million TV viewers in Romania have seen films describing ADEPT's work. Dozens of newspaper and radio reports at national and local level.



High-profile visits have had a big impact on local opinion as well as on policy-makers' understanding of the importance of these communities and landscape



18,000 ha in Târnava Mare receive incentive payments for good management of grasslands. New agri-environment measures developed so farmers in other areas of Romania are also supported to maintain their grasslands



Branding and adding value to local products raises farmer incomes linked to the nature value of the area and the high quality of their products from the area



Innovative direct marketing and information via mobile phones has expanded the market for products, and recreational activities, to urban consumers



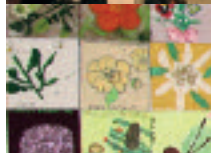
Developing farmers markets – the first genuine farmers markets in Romania, now sustainable and bringing significant additional income



Diversification of income: networks of guesthouses, networks of mountain-bike and walking trails, nature guide training.



Promoting development of farmer associations: only by cooperating and working in association can these small-scale farmers and communities survive.



International projects: Flower Festival, protection of local and traditional breeds, varieties and food products, spreading the message of the importance of these landscapes and communities , and increasing local pride.

Who has supported us 2004-2014

	2005-present: Orange and Orange Foundation support, co-financing of all activities		2005-2012: Darwin Initiative (UK) for creating community-based conservation plans for Târnava Mare area
Lois and Georges de Menil	2005: supporting establishment of Tourist Information Centre, Saschiz		2005-2007: improving farmers' understanding of policy on agri-environment and food safety
Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust	2005-present: co-financing of all activities		2008: Assessment of effectiveness of support for agri-environment, food production and marketing
Sigrid Rausing	2005: support for book <i>Historic Countryside of Saxon Villages of Southern Transylvania</i>		2008: designation of Tarnava Mare as Natura 2000 site, plus nature education in schools
Dinu Patriciu	2005: support for community development activities		2009: Promoting community management in a Natura 2000 area
Parthenon Trust (Switzerland)	2006: core funding for ADEPT activities		2009: establishing an NGO coalition for protection of traditional managed grasslands
	2007: information campaign for continuation of traditional food production in Romania		2009-2012: enterprises to improve economic viability of High Nature Value farmed landscapes
Barbara Knowles	2008: development of village milk connection point		2011: "Know what you are eating, know where it comes from" local food marketing campaign
JMG Foundation	2008: designation of and protection of biodiversity within the Tarnava Mare Natura 2000 site		2010-13: STIPA: Saving Transylvania's Important Pastoral Agro-ecosystems
Michael Radomir	2009-present: training, capacity building, core funding, protection including by purchase of key areas for biodiversity		2011-12: "Our Agro-biodiversity". international project with 5 countries.
	2010: Conservation Leadership Programme, UK, training for young conservation leader		2012-2014: Wildflower project, international project with 6 countries
	2012-14: building of 15 km cycle trail		2012-14: ESSEDRA, 6-country international project supporting traditional foods
	2013: training of young potters in UK, and re-establishment of Saschiz pottery in Târnava Mare		
	2013: Biodiversity and socio-economic monitoring of the Târnava Mare area		
	2013-2016: Promoting economic viability of High Nature Value grasslands		
	2013-14: promoting geographical indicators for Romanian traditional products		
	2014-15: Building 80 km mountain-bike trail		

Much of our work has been carried out in cooperation with Romanian NGOs, universities and groups especially Milvus Group, Pogany Havas, ProPark, Pro Patrimonio, Romanian Ornithological Society, WWF-Romania, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj, University of Agriculture Cluj, Lucian Blaga University Sibiu, Agapis Foundation, Natura 2000 Coalition.

2006

ADEPT moves into Saschiz office, donation from Proprietarul SRL.

ADEPT receives Bucharest Business Week award for rural development.

ADEPT begins pilot project to develop grassland payments, leading to millions of Euros of support for hundreds of thousands of farmers to continue to manage their wildflower-rich grasslands.

Funding from Parthenon Trust.

Skills in food processing and marketing brought into the team.

ADEPT joins Slow Food.

2009

Second visit by Prince Charles: he opens the Food Barn in Saschiz.

Innovation Norway grant begins, to build economic vitality of local economy.

Second Darwin Initiative project begins, management planning for the Târnava Mare area.

Grant from Netherlands government to create a coalition to support High Nature Value farmed landscapes.

Skills in tourism, guiding and outdoor sports including mountain-biking come into the team.

Cooperation with FFI begins, providing key long-term financial support, strategy planning, team capacity building.

Links established with policy groups in Brussels: EFNCP, EEB, ARC2020, CEEweb.

2005

UK Darwin Initiative funds first major project, to protect Târnava Mare landscape and communities.

Orange Romania offers co-finance which continues to this day.

Funding from Gerald Micklem Trust – continues to this day.

ADEPT activities can begin from this moment.

2003

World Bank funds feasibility study for ADEPT.

2007

Carlo Petrini Founder of Slow Food visits.

First visit by Prince Charles. Funding from Prince of Wales's Charitable Foundation for campaign to help small-scale producers.

Funding from Environment for Europe (UK) to help farmers understand EU opportunities (agri-environment) and obligations (food safety).

Orange Romania staff provide volunteer activities.

Vital communications capacity is improved: Orange Romania donates vehicles and office equipment.

First farmers' markets tested by ADEPT at national level.

2008

Funding from JMG Foundation, Ministry of Environment and Michael Radomir for designation and protection of Natura 2000 site.

UNDP Small Project for community development begins.

Skills and experience in agri-environment, training, management come into the team.

Târnava Mare declared a Nature 2000 site.

2000

John Akeroyd discovers the importance of the landscape and wildflowers.

2004

Registered as Foundation dedicated to conserving biodiversity through farming.

Adept
Timeline

2000

2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

Journey

Beginning - in the village wildflower meadows of Transylvania.

Darwin and Orange enable us to start. We do local activities with farmed landscapes and communities.

National profile raised by visits of Prince Charles and Slow Food founder Carlo Petrini. We begin to do national level activities in close cooperation with other conservation NGOs.

ADEPT influence reaches Europe. We link up with wider European policy coalitions on High Nature Value farmed landscapes. We become one of the leading NGOs in Europe working for small-scale farmed landscapes and communities.

2010

LIFE STIPA project begins: concrete actions for conservation and restoration of grasslands, farmer training, school nature classes, establishing micro-reserves.

Innovation Norway – milk collection points completed – farmers commercially viable, cow numbers (a barometer of landscape and community viability) stop falling.

High Nature Value grasslands conference in Romania: 200 people including EU Commission, 18 countries.

ADEPT begins to attend EU meetings in Brussels and is consulted on future policy.

Training provided by Conservation Leadership Programme.

2013

3rd farmers meeting in Sighisoara, providing information and discussion – increasingly popular, over 300 farmers attend.

Additional marketing and communication skills brought into ADEPT.

Funding from EU Civil Society Facility for project involving 10 Balkan countries, supporting traditional / regional foods.

Commissioner Ciolos visits ADEPT activities, DG Agriculture makes a film.

Mountain bike trails used by thousands of visitors and hundreds of local schoolchildren.
ADEPT wins Swiss funding for building a further 80 km of bike trail linking 8 villages.

ADEPT wins Swiss government funding for 2 additional projects: promoting viability of High Nature Value landscapes and communities; promoting designation/protection of traditional foods.

Long-term socio-economic monitoring starts through strategic partnership with Operation Wallacea, also bringing community benefits.

ADEPT is co-organiser of Agriculture and Rural Development policy conference in Brussels.

ADEPT is co-founder of Confederation of Peasant Farmers of Romania, established to give a voice to Romania's 3 million small-scale farmers.

ADEPT wins top prize in Europe for innovative communication with farmers, under the DG Agriculture *Telling the Story* competition.

2011

Wild Carpathia film gives international coverage to ADEPT activities and landscape.

As result of ADEPT work, extra agri-environment measures agreed, giving incentives to farmers to maintain important grazed orchards and grasslands.

Agri-environment grassland measures pioneered by ADEPT are the largest scheme in the Rural Development Programme: 230,000 farmers, 1.2 million ha.

1st annual farmers meeting, over 200 farmers meet, creates a tradition.

"Know what you're eating, know where it comes from" marketing campaign by ADEPT, funded by EU, reaches over 1.5 million TV viewers and helps to promote farmers' markets.

7 km of mountain bike trail built, Innovation Norway green enterprise funding.

2012

EU Education and Culture funding begins for "Our Agro-biodiversity" – 6-country project protecting traditional agricultural breeds and varieties.

EU Culture Programme funding begins for Wildflower Europe project, including strategic partner Plantlife (UK): a 'patchwork meadow' of wildflower embroideries will be created.

Third visit by Prince Charles – sees ADEPT innovative grassland conservation in action, visits special grassland reserve.

Camelia Botnar Foundation partnership with ADEPT to revive local pottery traditions: training in UK and setting up a small factory in Saschiz.

By winning Europe-wide competition, ADEPT wins funding from European Outdoor Conservation Association for building 15 km mountain-bike trail linking 3 villages.

Orange Foundation takes over long-term support for ADEPT from Orange Romania: support continues.

ADEPT awarded top prize in Europe for communicating with farmers, CAP@50 award.

2014

4th farmers meeting in Sighisoara, giving farmers opportunity to discuss with European Commission. Over 300 farmers meet.

ADEPT shortlisted for best Natura 2000 project in Europe for bringing social and economic benefits from protected areas.

ADEPT represents Romania in the shortlist for Council of Europe's European Landscape Award, under the European Landscape Convention.

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

We have increasing policy influence at national level, so that local lessons are spread nationally. And increasing influence at EU level. Never forgetting our base: practical projects on the ground.

Involved in several international projects. We keep innovating and thinking of new ways of bringing local benefits.

ADEPT's combination of practical work and policy work attracts interest: seems to be a very unusual formula for success. We win top prize at European level 2 years in succession for innovative communication with farmers. This helps us continue to influence policy at EU level.

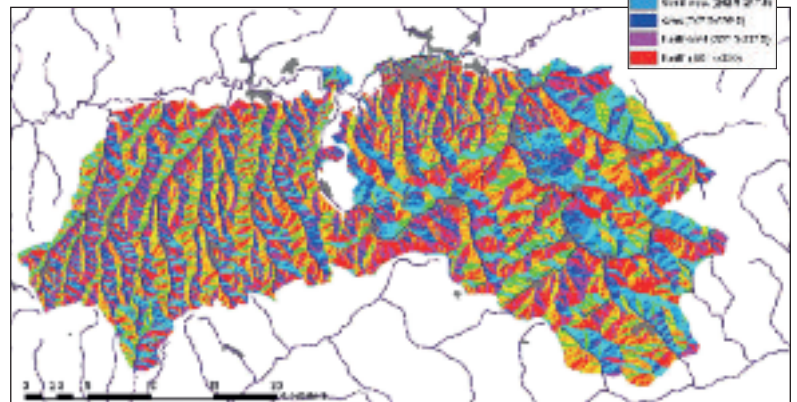
ADEPT reviews strategy, with help of Fauna and Flora International: goals to consolidate local and national results in the long-term by building capabilities of ADEPT team, and by establishing associations and confederations to give a voice to small-scale farmers.

What has Fundația ADEPT done, in more detail?

These landscapes are managed by local farmers, and are their source of income. Only local farmers can preserve them. Local support for any conservation proposals is key for their success. It is therefore essential to keep in regular contact with, and to discuss our ideas and activities with farmers, to check that proposals in local development plans are practical and acceptable. We have regular meetings with farmers, individually, or in groups and associations, and with Town Halls and other community groups. Because we offer practical solutions to their problems, we have gained the trust and support of individual farmers, grazing associations, Town Halls and the Local Action Group covering the area.

Mapping and creating an inventory for a large area

We also designed an innovative GIS mapping system to predict presence of important habitats. This was found to be over 90% accurate when field tested. This system will be a useful tool elsewhere in Romania and more widely in other countries.



Map of Physical Blocks, for agricultural mapping, adapted for the database

Demonstrations of equipment



We carried out many demonstrations of the innovative mower, Brielmaier, for scrub clearance. The Brielmaier allows speedy and energy-efficient mowing of sloping grasslands: this helps farmers to maintain meadows and pastures, especially the sloping dry grasslands, now that hand mowing has become prohibitively expensive.

Two local contractors were trained for future use of the Brielmaier in the project area. This ensures future availability of the machine for sustainable project results.



Clearing of scrub

ADEPT has cleared scrub from hundreds of hectares using the innovative Brielmaier mower. This made the land more productive for the farmers, and made them eligible for Common Agricultural Policy support payments, providing good incentives to keep the land in good condition once we had carried out the difficult job of clearing it.

Monitoring 2011-2013 of grasslands cleared of scrub has revealed significant increases in floristic diversity.

Monitoring of the results of dry grassland restoration

We established monitoring at different scales, to check whether clearing of the grassland had resulted in increased flower diversity and better status of these important habitats. Significant measurable improvement in habitat condition and wildflower diversity was measured, showing the immediate beneficial effects of this land clearing.



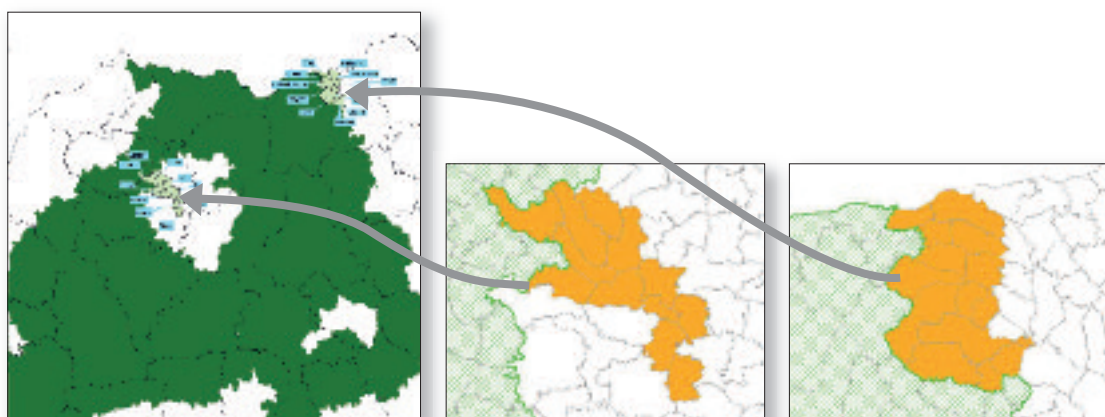
Improving farmer access to agri-environment payments

We improved the long-term conservation of a larger area, by increasing farmer participation in grassland agri-environment schemes. This will provide long-term incentives for good management. As a result of ADEPT promotion, five times the amount of land, and seven times the number of farmers, participated in agri-environment schemes, compared to neighbouring areas without an active NGO promoting agri-environment schemes. As a result, 1,400 small farmers on 18,000 ha are receiving a total of over €2.5 m / year through access to agri-environment schemes, an average of €1800 / farmer / year. This has a profound effect on the viability of these farming systems.



Developing new agri-environment schemes

Working directly with the Ministry of Agriculture, ADEPT successfully proposed new agri-environment measures at national level, effective from 2012. This made an additional 26 communes eligible for grassland management support payments; farmers on 200,000 ha of damp meadow are now offered an incentive for good management. For the first time, farmers using the innovative Brielmaier mowers are eligible for the higher payments: an important precedent for the future of these important grasslands many of which would otherwise be abandoned.



In addition, ADEPT worked with the Ministry to make 150,000 ha of mown/grazed orchards eligible for support across Transylvania and the Carpathians. We have also financed and managed the certification of over 18,000 ha of forest under Forest Stewardship Council scheme. This will improve income from sustainable timber extraction, and encourage owners and administrators to work more closely together.

Schools activities

Each year we give nature classes and field trips for 280 children in 8 schools, and arrange competitions designed to motivate children to get involved in this educational programme. Also, we have established teams of Junior Rangers in two villages, promoting understanding and responsibility towards nature. We built a pavilion to serve as an interactive learning station, which we donated to the Local Nature Volunteers Association.

We are the only European partner of Operation Wallacea, which brings schoolchildren and university students to sites around the world for long-term monitoring of important natural areas. Operation Wallacea are carrying out biodiversity and socio-economic monitoring in the Târnava Mare area, over 50 students visiting per year, working with Romanian university students. This will build up valuable long-term data about the evolution of the area.



Creating micro-reserves

Micro-reserves are small areas of special importance, which are protected under local management agreements between the NGO and the land manager.



Six biodiversity hotspots have been established as micro-reserves with Town Hall agreements. Micro-reserves are good not only for immediate protection of a site, but also for raising awareness of the importance of these types of grassland.

ADEPT is working closely with Fauna and Flora International to identify and protect some of the most important grassland sites – those of highest biodiversity value and which are under threat. These will be protected by purchase where necessary, but will continue to be managed by local farmers under special management agreements to assure their long term protection.

Farmer training

We have given high priority to farmer training and capacity building, so that our work leaves long-term sustainable economic benefits.

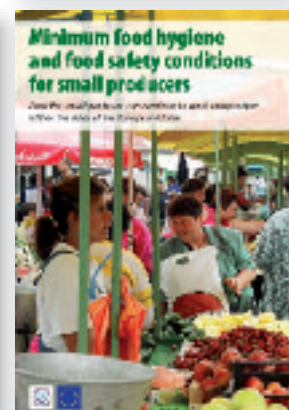
We have created a series of publications to help small-scale farmers and producers to understand the minimum requirements for receiving EU grants, including record-keeping; to develop markets to add value to their products; and to develop producer and marketing associations which are key to their future survival.



We have carried out milk hygiene training and built milk collection points in 8 villages in the area. These two actions, together with helping farmers negotiate a better price with the milk processors, have together halted the decline in cow numbers, led to increase in income for over 200 farmers in 8 villages and brought hundreds more hectares of haymeadow under use and good maintenance.



We have provided practical guides so that small-scale producers can avoid excessive regulations, which constitute a major threat to continued small-scale local production. We negotiated acceptance by the authorities of plans for simplified processing units for micro-producers, and have made these plans freely available.



We have built a model food processing unit in one village primarily for demonstration and training, but also bringing in local income at the same time. The micro-processing unit was opened by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2011.



Branding, Farmers Markets, Direct Marketing

Agri-environment support alone will not help small-scale farming communities to survive. It is important to promote farm income through improved *production* and *marketing*.

We have created successful logos and product brands linked to area identities.



We have created the first genuine farmers' markets in Romania, in which producers sell their own products. These have been very successful, bringing over €200,000 per year to 40 small producers. The markets are now self-organising and self-supporting.

In 2011 we carried out a 'Know what you're eating, know where your food comes from' campaign, which reached millions of consumers in Romania and helped them make a link between high-nature landscapes, family farms, short food supply chains and food quality.



We are expanding our training of traditional small-scale farmers and producers to 5 additional areas in Transylvania, where we will help increase incomes by improved marketing and branding (linking food quality to high nature landscape), including farmers markets.

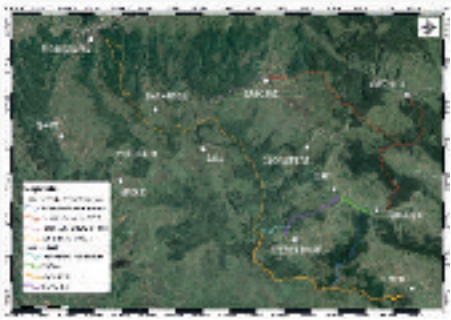
We have used innovative methods for marketing, including luxury products combining food quality and craftsmanship, such as 'Art of Jar'; and smartphone apps so that visitors can find products, meet producers, and find guest houses and activities in the Târnava Mare area.



Diversification of rural incomes

Mountain bike trails and guest house networks

We won an international campaign by winning 10,600 votes Europe-wide for funding by the European Outdoor Conservation Association. Combined with Swiss Government *Green Infrastructure* funding, we have built 80 km of mountain bike trails using local labour, providing 30 jobs. The trails link guesthouses in 8 villages, which are now benefitting from higher visitor numbers. Over 3,000 visitors and 300 local children use the trails each year. We have designed a smartphone application for the bike trail, offering an interactive map with information about the area. The trail network was launched with a press conference (30 local and national journalists) and an inaugural race with international mountain-bike specialists. The trail has been so successful that Local Authorities have banned motorised off-road recreation in the area, since Mountain Bikers bring in more income and are not destructive. We have trained 40 young people in the area as nature guides.



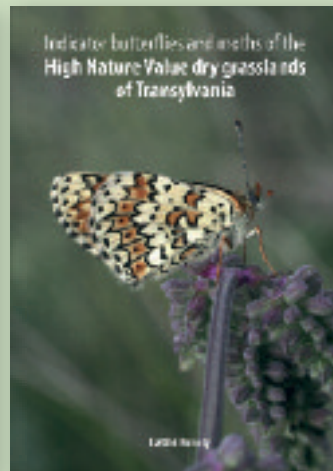
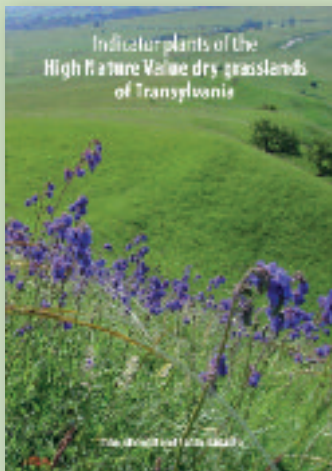
Revival of craftsmanship

In partnership with the Camelia Botnar Foundation, 2 young local people were trained in Cowfold, UK, to revive the technique of making the blue ceramic that was traditionally made in the Saschiz area. A small pottery factory will be established in Saschiz in 2014, reviving a lost local tradition, and further young, local, people will be trained in the UK. This will act as an additional tourist attraction as well as giving direct income to pottery workers. We also plan to revive blacksmith skills.

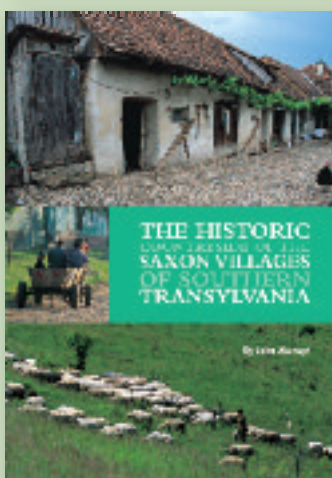
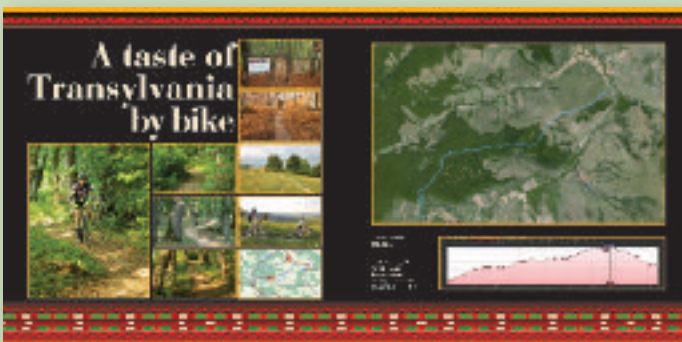


Publications

We have created a series of nature guides for visitors (in English and Romanian) to encourage nature tourism, and improve local understanding of the nature values of the area. These include identification manuals for the grassland habitats, and for the distinctive flowers and butterflies found within them, for use in Romanian for schools, farmers and Romanian visitors, and in English for foreign visitors. We have also produced other materials such as planner calendars and newsletters for local interest.



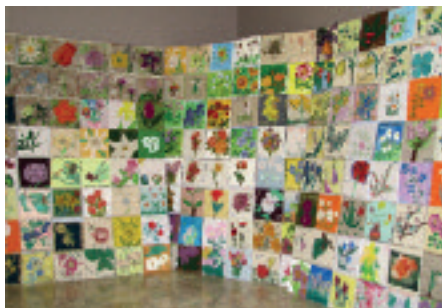
We have created a series of tourist guides to encourage responsible tourism and to increase local incomes from visitor use of guesthouses and other services linked to the nature values of the area.



We have erected imaginative nature signs along the walking and mountain bike trails.

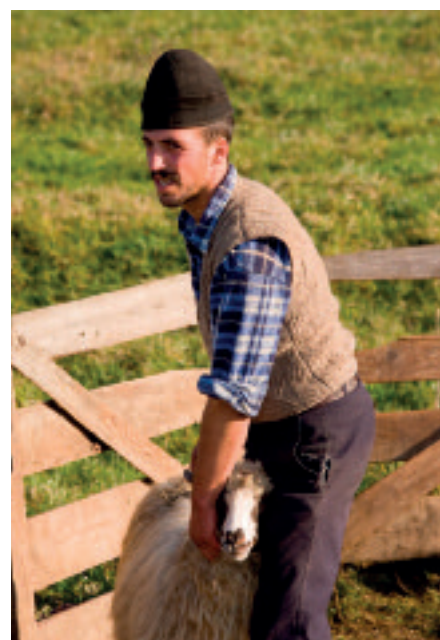
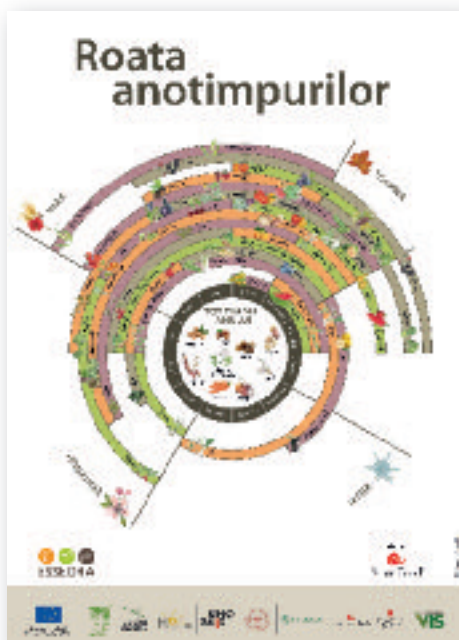
Flower festivals

Representing Romania in a joint project with four other countries, we have organised Flower Festivals in the Saxon Villages, celebrating flower-rich grasslands across Europe. These included traditional music and dances, activities with children and visitors, and a patchwork meadow. In collaboration with 4 local schools and the local volunteers, we created patchworks of embroidery of local plants, which will be sent to exhibitions in all participating countries and in Brussels.



Protecting traditional products, varieties and breeds

As part of another international project, we have carried out an inventory of traditional Romanian products that are endangered, travelled with local cheese producers to the International Cheese Festival in Bra, Italy, and attended international workshops on policy to support traditional food products. We have developed a Traditional Food Calendar for Romania. We are working with Romanian Ministry officials to identify Romanian products for certification as traditional products (Geographical Indicators).

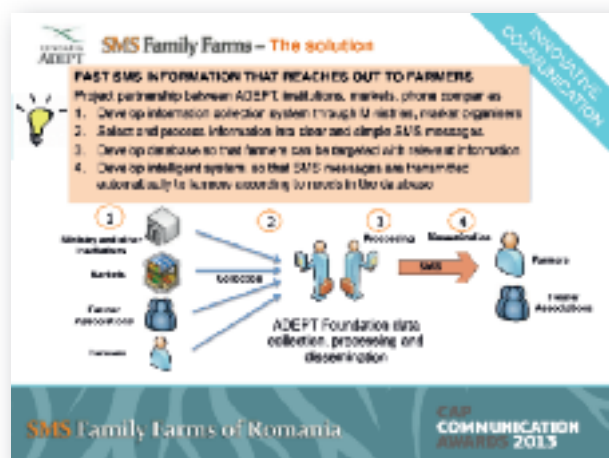


Creating farmer networks and associations

The creation of associations, and increased willingness to act cooperatively, is key to the future of these small-scale farming communities, because single farmers are not able to compete on their own with larger producers. We have led the establishment of a Local Action Group in Târnava Mare. We have trained village associations to manage themselves more professionally, so that they provide services for their members and trust between members. And we have also led the establishment of a Confederation of Small Scale Farmers, CATAR, which already represents over 100,000 farmers and acts as a channel of information and expertise.



We have created a prize-winning, innovative, intelligent mobile phone messaging system for informing farmers of events, opportunities for training and funding, market information – designed so that the information is targeted towards farmers' specific interests.



Supporting community grazing

Common grazing is essential to the survival of the small-scale farming communities of the area. However, it is breaking down under economic pressure.

As one example of supporting the establishment of effective common grazing associations, ADEPT has developed an innovative scheme allowing a grazing association access to European support payments. The 40 cow, sheep and goat-owners are using the payments for joint capital investments such as such as mowers, drinking tanks for cattle, improved cattle tracks. This is a model which can be replicated elsewhere in Romania to strengthen and support common grazing. Our experience has shown the key elements to be: management capacity, transparent decision-making, and trust between members. An outside advisor such as an NGO is often needed for this.

Media and dissemination

National and international media coverage is very important to spread the message of ADEPT's work in High Nature Value farmed landscapes. This increases public support, and also increases policy support, for these landscapes.

Visits by HRH the Prince of Wales and EU Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloș resulted in millions of TV viewers hearing about ADEPT's work. Our work has also received good coverage from local and national newspaper and radio, papers in academic journals and presentations at several conservation conferences.



ADEPT won the top EU prize for communicating with farmers in 2012 and 2013. This has increased the international profile of the work we are doing: promoting international understanding of the important of these traditional farmed landscapes and farming communities.

Our 'Know what you're eating, know where your food comes from' campaign of 2011 reached a known audience of over 1.5 million people in Romania, with its message of healthy food linked to high-nature landscapes and short food supply chains.



International campaign for Family Farming in Romania



Campaign for local foods and Farmers' Markets reached over a million people in Romania

Policy work

ADEPT's policy work at national and EU level has brought policy changes which have had a major effect on the viability of these high nature farming systems more widely in Romania and in Europe. The key to success in our policy advocacy is that we produce clear, technical justifications for proposals, offering reasoned and practical solutions rather than simple demands to policy-makers.



At national level ADEPT's work includes the original design of the national scheme to support farmers who manage high-nature value grassland. As a result of our pilot grassland scheme, the only one in Romania, the measure was simplified for farmers: now it is the most popular measure in Romania's Rural Development Programme: over 230,000 farmers are paid incentives to maintain over 1.2 million hectares of High Nature Value grassland.



In 2007, ADEPT led the case for inclusion of Târnava Mare in Natura 2000, the EU network of protected areas. We overcame initial reluctance at national level for protection of man-made landscapes. This was an important precedent, which led to the protected status of other similar landscapes in Romania.

In addition, in 2011 we designed, and had accepted, significant new measures to protect grazed orchards and damp grasslands which were not protected until then. Grazed orchards are very important for biodiversity, and lowland damp haymeadows are the most threatened habitat in Europe. As a result, farmers managing 400,000 ha of these two habitats are eligible for payment for good management. We continue to work with the Romanian Ministry to make support measures more practical and farmer-friendly in the future.



At EU level, we work with technical advisory groups in DG Agriculture & Rural Development, and DG Environment, and have carried out policy studies on their behalf. We have influenced some specific measures in the Common Agricultural Policy 2014-2020, which will greatly benefit these high-nature farmed landscapes and associated small-scale farming communities, in Romania and also more widely in Europe. We are active in Europe-wide conservation and rural development policy groups such as European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism, European Environmental Bureau, Agricultural and Rural Convention, and Central and East European Web for Biodiversity.

The strong links between our practical projects on the ground and our policy design/advocacy have been remarkably effective. ADEPT's policy influence is much increased by the fact that we can speak from on-the-ground experience. And ADEPT's local solutions and results are consolidated and greatly amplified by our policy work. This has proved to be an excellent formula for success, which has attracted European attention since there are very few other programmes integrated in this way.

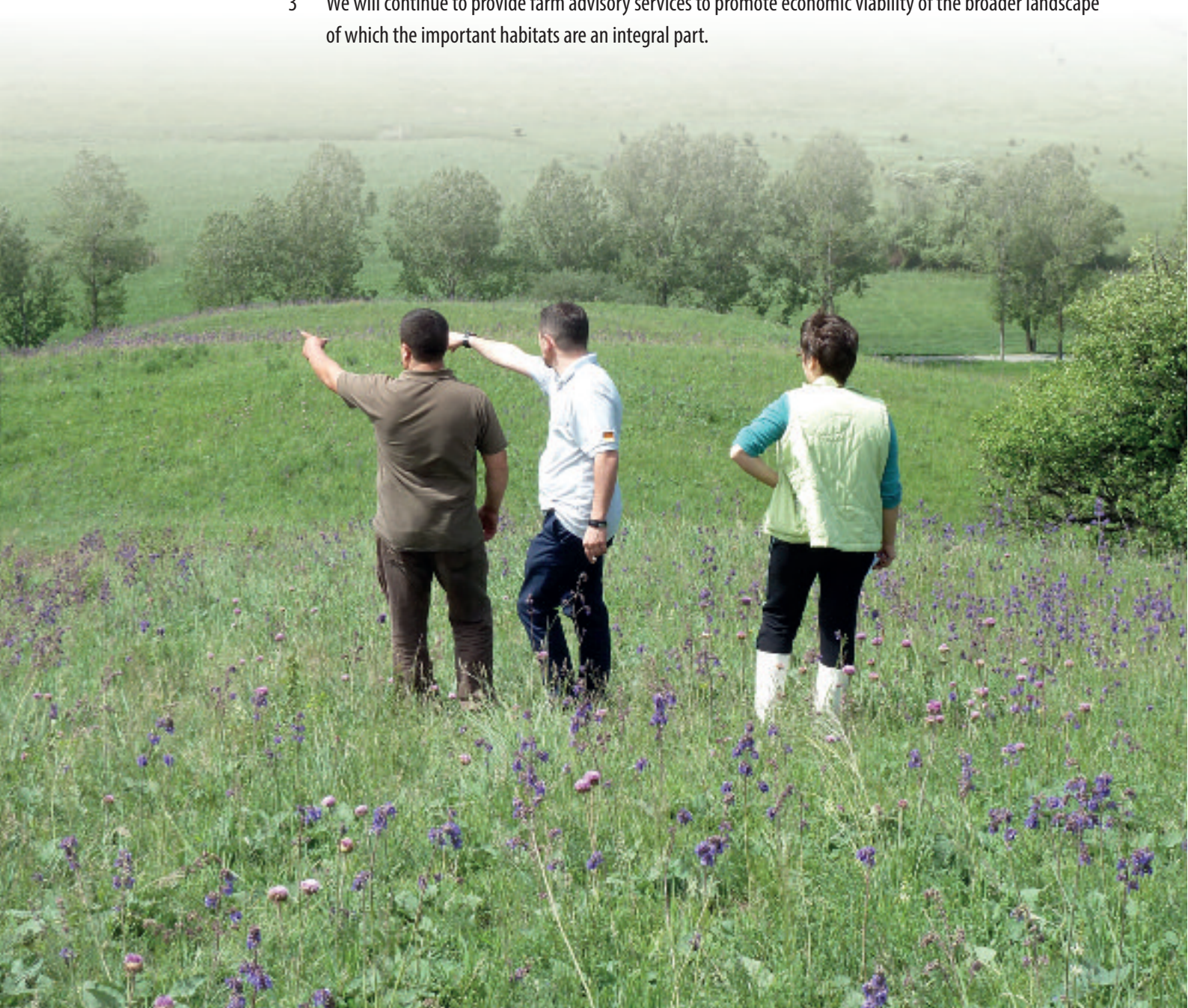
The future

There are several reasons to be optimistic that our results will be long-lasting.

- our mapping and inventories of habitats and species have provided a tool for the design of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- the activities have left skills in the area, and local people are increasingly confident about their future
- there are over 18,000 ha of threatened grassland receiving support payments under the current CAP
- local producers are getting better value for their products now they are branded with the nature value of the landscape
- local people – farmers, and the next generation of farmers, the schoolchildren – understand much better the value of the land that surrounds them. Local pride is developing, which, combined with financial incentives, will assure a much brighter future for some of Europe's last great lowland grasslands.

The following are the next actions which will strengthen the sustainability of our results:

- 1 We will work closely with local development groups, and Town Halls, to incorporate innovative development ideas in local planning.
- 2 We will cooperate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to develop better-targeted agri-environment schemes for grasslands
- 3 We will continue to provide farm advisory services to promote economic viability of the broader landscape of which the important habitats are an integral part.



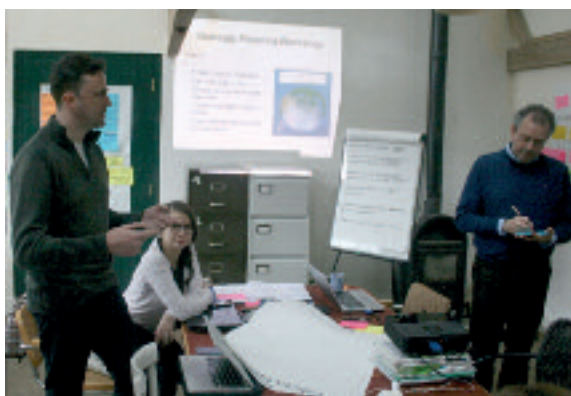
The ADEPT team



The key to Fundatia ADEPT's achievements over the last 10 years is our staff. We have a dedicated multi-disciplinary team, offering a variety of skills all united around the concept of farmer-based conservation offering true sustainability.

We have local knowledge (most of our team come from the Târnava Mare area) to listen to, and act upon, the local problems that are the most real and immediate threats to the survival of individual farmers and of farming communities. We have the range of skills to tackle a whole range of problems: design of agri-environment and other Rural Development payment schemes; hygiene regulations and other inspection problems; practical micro-scale production techniques; marketing; building of effective farmer groups and associations. And we can tackle these problems immediately and locally. In addition, owing to our policy expertise, we can also work at national and even EU policy level, which amplifies and consolidates our local results.

This has proved to be an excellent formula for success, which has attracted European attention since there are few other integrated projects like this.



We are working closely with Fauna and Flora International, developing a strategy for the next 5-year period up to 2020. Strategic objectives include continued innovation at local level for integrated landscape and community protection; continued policy work at national and EU levels; and building capacity and sustainability of the Fundația ADEPT team in the long term.

Fundația ADEPT's mission is to protect the High Nature Value Farmed Landscapes of Transylvania, working with and supporting the small-scale farming communities that created them.

Our work in the first 10 years has shown the value of being able to react immediately and flexibly to problems or opportunities as they emerge – be they in local development or policy areas. For this, corporate and private donations are an essential, very effective addition to more restricted institutional funding. If you are interested in supporting us in the future, please contact us at office@fundatia-adept.org or visit our website.

Fundația ADEPT Transilvania

Str. Principală nr. 166 Saschiz
Mureș 547510, România
Tel. +40 (0) 265 711635
www.fundatia-adept.org

© Fundația ADEPT, Saschiz, 2014.

Text: John Akeroyd, Laura Chirilă, Cristi Gherghiceanu, Nat Page,
Răzvan Popa, Ben Mehedin, Cornel Stanciu.

Photos: Bob Gibbons and ADEPT staff.

All photos © ADEPT.

