

LIFE TransilvaCooperation

Târnava Mare SCI: Demonstrating cooperative approach for good management of Natura 2000 grasslands at landscape scale in Transylvania

Layman's Report



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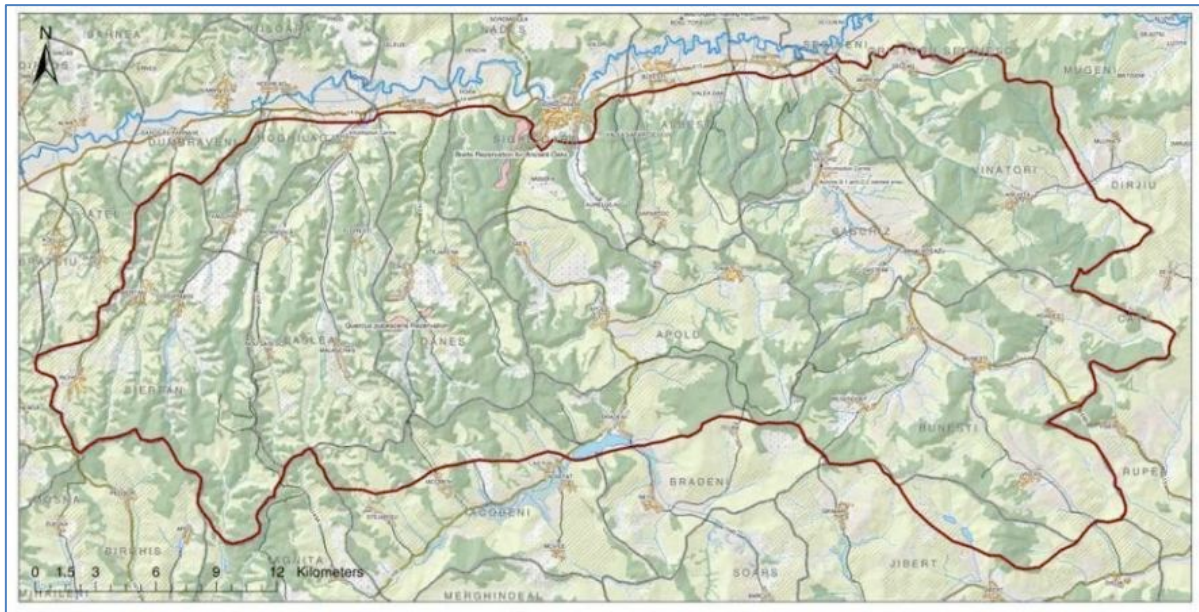
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Saschiz, Romania, December 2024

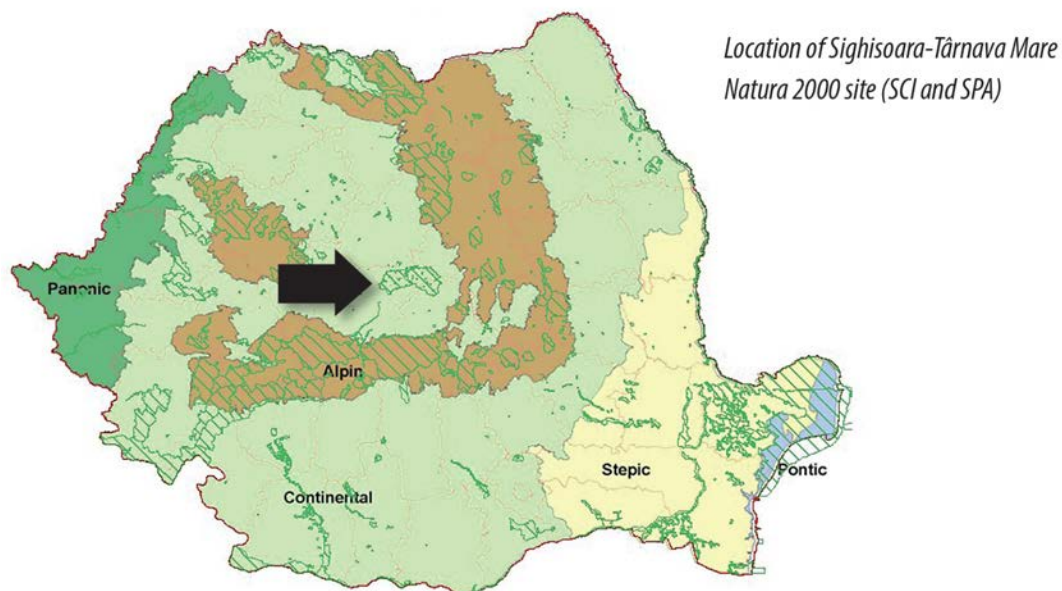
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Background to the LIFE TransilvaCooperation project

The LIFE TransilvaCooperation project is located in the Sighișoara-Târnava Mare Site of Community Interest (SCI) site, part of the EU's Natura 2000 network of protected areas. Târnava Mare is a lowland area of high biodiversity, 89,000 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, and agriculture remains largely traditional. Each household traditionally has strips of arable land in the different areas that were good for the various crops, and larger parcels, typically 5–10 ha, of hay-meadow. Grazing is still on the common pastures maintained by the village neighborhood 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 from common pastures.



Tarnava Mare: wildflower-rich permanent grasslands managed by farmers in a High Nature Value farmed landscape – mosaic and connectivity characteristics

These grasslands – specifically the dry and mesic permanent grasslands of hay meadow and pasture, were the object of this project. But it is important to remember that they lie with a very important man-made mosaic of habitats, including forest and arable. This leads to extraordinary biodiversity. As an indicator, Southern Transylvania is the last lowland farmer landscape in Europe with viable populations of wolves and bears.



In the early 1990s the majority of Saxons left their Saxon villages and cities and moved 'home' to Germany. This caused a social and economic upheaval, and a depopulation of the area, bringing about land management changes and abandonment.

The grasslands being protected by this project

The grassland habitats and species of Târnava Mare are of European importance. The wildflower-rich pastures and meadows have disappeared over much of Europe through agricultural intensification, but are still widespread in this area. These grasslands have some of the highest floristic diversity recorded anywhere in the world, and support substantial populations of rare vertebrate and invertebrate fauna.

- 40A0* Subcontinental Peripannonic scrub
- 6210 (Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates
- 6240* Sub-Pannonian steppic grasslands
- 6510 lowland haymeadows (EU Habitats Red List: Endangered);
- 6520 mountain haymeadows (EU Habitats Red List: Endangered);

* indicates priority habitat under the European Habitats Directive, designated for habitats of special importance.

Images of four key grassland habitats for conservation



6240* Sub-Pannonian steppic grasslands



6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands



6510 lowland haymeadows



6520 mountain haymeadows

Characteristic butterfly species associated with these grasslands include the Dryad (*Minois dryas*), Hermit (*Chazara briseis*), Green-underside Blue (*Glaucopsyche alexis*) and Chestnut Heath (*Coenonympha glycerion*).



Green-underside Blue



Dryad



Chestnut Heath

Threats

However, these precious grasslands are threatened. Traditional land management has become uneconomic, leading to a number of visible effects including:

1. small-scale farming is no longer attractive to the next generation; small-scale farmers are ageing, and as the numbers of small-scale farmers decreases holding sizes are increasing, which damages the biodiversity-friendly mosaic landscape and leads to loss of landscape features
2. measurable loss of high-biodiversity haymeadows, being converted to lower biodiversity pasture, as a result of the fall of cattle numbers and rise of sheep numbers in the area. Agri-environment payments do not distinguish between cattle (which are a motivation to maintain hay meadows) and sheep (which are associated with loss of hay meadows)
3. reduced conservation status of pastures owing to abandonment or (mainly) overgrazing by sheep.

Of the 30,000 ha of these grasslands in the Târnava Mare area, about 50% are poorly managed: ploughing, overgrazing in easily accessible sites, abandonment of less accessible grassland (causing spreading of thorny scrub). These effects are obvious but still easily reversible by re-establishment of traditional management.

Specific threats to habitats

Specific threats include the following, and long term management will be required to monitor and mitigate their effects.

Undergrazing: traditional management of those dry to mesophytic grassland habitats is low intensity grazing and/or mowing. The expansion of highly competitive native and alien grass species into grassland represents a threat to diverse grassland vegetation. Where grazing levels are reduced, swards typically become dominated by coarse grasses (in particular tor-grass and upright brome), and smaller plants become correspondingly scarcer.

Invading scrub: woody species gradually enter grassland communities and force profound and fast changes to the vegetation by shading and producing a large amount of litter. Scrub invasion is an acute threat because it can result in an increase in soil nutrients and a decline of richness in grassland species. Native scrub species include *Ligustrum vulgare*, *Cornus mas*, *Crataegus* sp. div., *Rosa* sp. div. etc. The most serious threat to permanent grassland habitats is the invasion of the strongly aggressive tree *Robinia pseudacacia* (black locust).

Overgrazing: overgrazing by sheep is also a significant threat in the area. This leads to the spread of ruderal and invasive plant species that respond positively to high fertility, and loss of less competitive species.

Loss of haymeadows and mosaic management: mosaic management, with small parcels of 0.3-1.0 ha cut for hay at any one time owing to small-scale ownership, is ideal for biodiversity but under threat from consolidation of ownership. Grazing is changing from well-regulated mixed grazing by cows and sheep, to less well-regulated and monotonous grazing by sheep, as sheep numbers increase and cow numbers decrease, which is also a threat to biodiversity-friendly land management.

The factors above will lead to loss of biodiversity, from a combination of loss of mosaic management, loss of landscape features, loss of haymeadows, and intensification of land management including use of fertilisers and silage making and increased stocking rates.

Good examples are urgently needed to show farmers that they can have a decent economic future, and that they will be rewarded for maintaining the landscape.

Owing to small-scale and mosaic ownership, **cooperation** at landscape scale is key to the survival of the farming communities, and for delivering good biodiversity conservation results at effective scale. Local cooperation approach can solve many of the problems.

The LIFE TransilvaCooperation project was designed to address these complex threats.

Aims of the LIFE TransilvaCooperation project

The project is designed to help the continuation or re-establishment of grassland management that will bring these habitats under proper long term management regimes.

The project goal was to demonstrate how landscape-scale cooperation can improve conservation management of wildflower-rich grassland habitats of farmland N2000 sites in Transylvania, halting the loss of species and habitats of European importance – and increase economic returns from the land, and community prosperity.



ADEPT worked with farming communities in two valleys in the Tarnava Mare area: Angofa valley and Viscri Valley

Under the project, ADEPT worked with farming communities in two valleys to demonstrate how cooperative management based on co-designed local management plans, suited to the small-scale ownership and management mosaic, can improve the conservation of threatened habitats especially wildflower-rich haymeadows.

At the same time, the project brought improved economic returns to act as an additional incentive to continued traditional farming.

This demonstration had local, regional and national impact, on farmers, general public and policy makers.

Specific objectives:

1. Develop habitat, species, land use maps for Angofa and Viscri valleys including landscape features.
2. Carry out direct habitat restoration, whose effectiveness will be measured by baseline and then annual species monitoring: reducing scrub, returning grassland from pasture to hay meadow, fencing of parcels to reduce stocking rate and reduce abusive grazing of haymeadows, returning abandoned land to managed grassland. This will return from unfavourable to favourable conservation status, minimum 240 ha of the following habitats: 40A0*; 6210; 6240*; 6510.
3. Develop local management plans in the two valleys, co-designed with the many small-scale land managers, in order to implement cooperative agri-environment management with full local support. This will support future good management, to maintain favourable conservation status, of approximately 1800 ha of grassland and associated landscape features, at valley/water catchment scale, of which minimum 500 ha are HD grassland habitats.
4. Establish a demonstration farm at Angofa Valley, including innovative buildings mostly on the footprint and buying and demonstrating innovative equipment. By using local materials and simple but effective designs, this will show how livestock and grassland management improvements can be done at costs accessible to local communities.

5. Training of farmers in Natura 2000 sites, especially young farmers, in cooperative landscape-scale biodiversity management.
6. Measure the results of the project by flora, soil and socio-economic monitoring
7. Promotion/dissemination. Demonstrate to farmers, policy makers, general public how biodiversity friendly farming in N2000 areas can be economically viable by the use of innovative low-input management techniques, landscape-scale cooperation, well-targeted RDP payments and development of new products / better marketing.

What did the project achieve in the end?

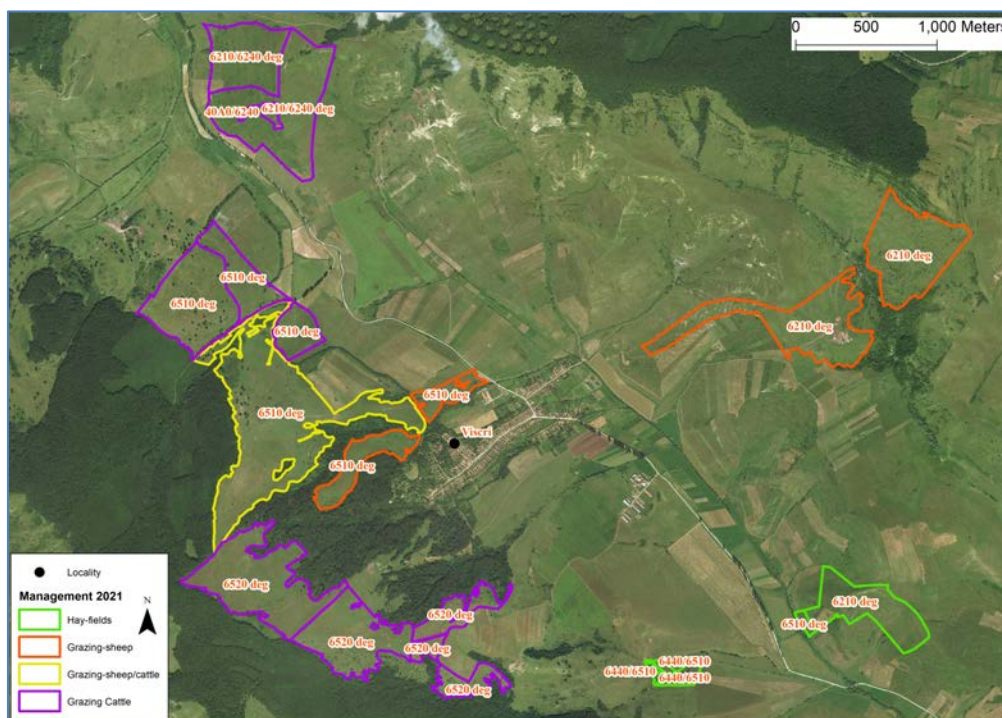
Some highlights

- Three Innovative apps developed or adapted for local use: one for biodiversity and soil monitoring, one for farmer training, one to encourage visitors to the area
- Innovative scenario software developed that allows visualization of long term consequences of decisions on sustainable or intensive development of the farmed landscape
- Local Management Plans developed and agreed by Viscri and Angofa communities which offer long term viability of good management practices established during the project
- Over 100 ha of haymeadow and 290 ha of pasture restored by clearing scrub, hay-lale reseeding, harrowing to remove dead plant material, protection of haymeadow from early grazing, establishing rotational grazing.
- Effectiveness of habitat restoration demonstrated by increase in plant species richness (number of species, and species abundance). Unrestored control plots showed a decline in both species richness and diversity, highlighting the importance of active management strategies. Lepidoptera surveys also showed increasing number of butterfly species linked to restoration of the grassland.
- Effectiveness of farmer training meetings and community meetings over project period demonstrated by socio-economic surveys, which reveal a shift towards market-oriented farming, a positive development for farm economics and increased environmental awareness, and community understanding that leveraging strategic investments in branding, direct sales, and sustainability-focused policies can bring economic benefits and social stability.
- Built a unique demonstration farm in Angofa, offering accommodation and conference facilities, whose effectiveness is demonstrated by school visits (over 280 children have attended nature classes and excursions), visits from other High Nature Value farming areas in Romania, and visits by LIFE projects and other important conservation groups around Europe.
- Over 1 million TV viewers in Romania have seen films dedicated to the project. Dozens of newspaper and radio reports.
- Proposals for improved agri-environment measures design submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development and the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

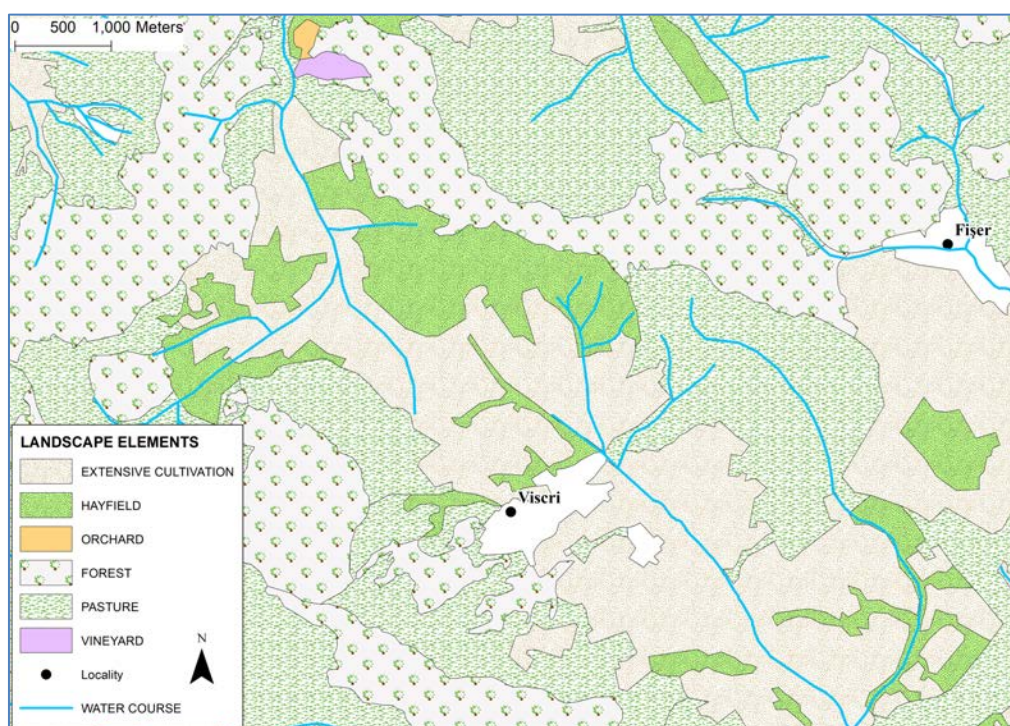
What was achieved, in more detail:

1. Develop habitat, species, land use maps for Angofa and Viscri valleys including landscape features.

Maps of habitats and rare species, management, restoration, and landscape elements were prepared by Dr Cristi Malos of Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj Napoca, with assistance of botanist teams. The maps cover over 800ha in each valley, taking a landscape-scale approach to conservation in which all elements of the landscape are valued and protected, not just the target grassland habitats.



Habitat and management map of Viscri valley



Landscape elements map of Viscri valley

2. Carry out direct habitat restoration, whose effectiveness will be measured by baseline and then annual species monitoring: reducing scrub, returning grassland from pasture to hay meadow, fencing of parcels to reduce stocking rate and reduce abusive grazing of haymeadows, returning abandoned land to managed grassland.

This improved the conservation status of over 400 ha (target was 240ha) of the following habitats: 40A0*; 6210; 6240*; 6510.

For scrub clearing we needed strong equipment; after consultation with farmers, we purchased a medium-sized tractor and mulcher. We also purchased a grass harrow which proved very effective in improving haymeadow performance.

We have restored 102 ha of abandoned haymeadow in Angofa.



Restoring haymeadows in Angofa by scrub removal

We purchased pasture management equipment to assist the restoration of grazing grassland, by scrub clearance and by improved grazing management, including rotational grazing. This includes two platimeters, innovative in Romania, for testing the biomass of grassland, an important tool for rotational grazing under the regenerative agriculture system.; a cattle handling system that is easily moved from one location to another, assisting the management of beef cattle for conservation grazing.

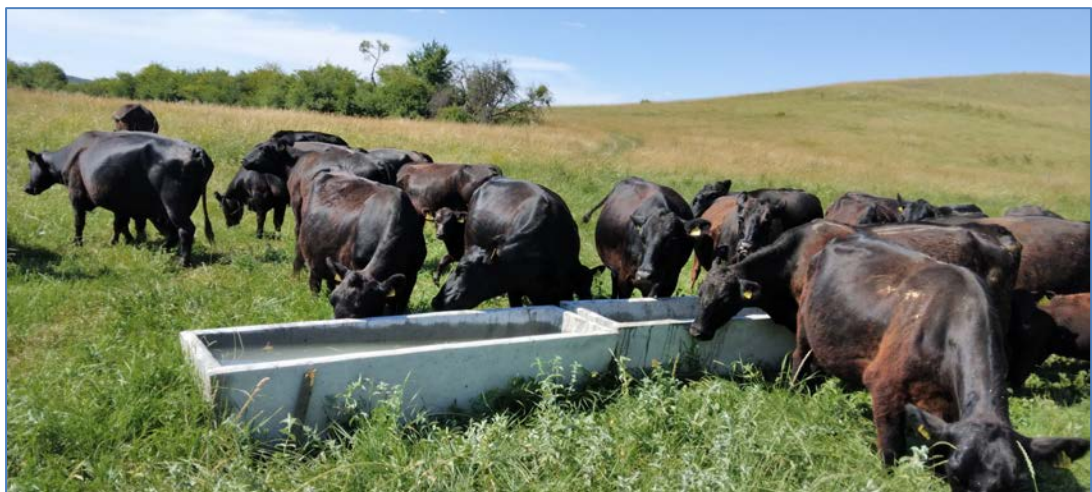
The platometer and the cattle handling system are both important for demonstration purposes, and we expect them to be adopted by other farmer groups.

We have completed two boreholes, one in Viscri, and one in Angofa, which assist rotational grazing since allows cattle access to water away from central location. Both these boreholes are for communal use by farm associations.

We have restored 290 ha of pasture in Viscri and 28.6ha of pasture in Angofa.



Restoration grazing in Angofa



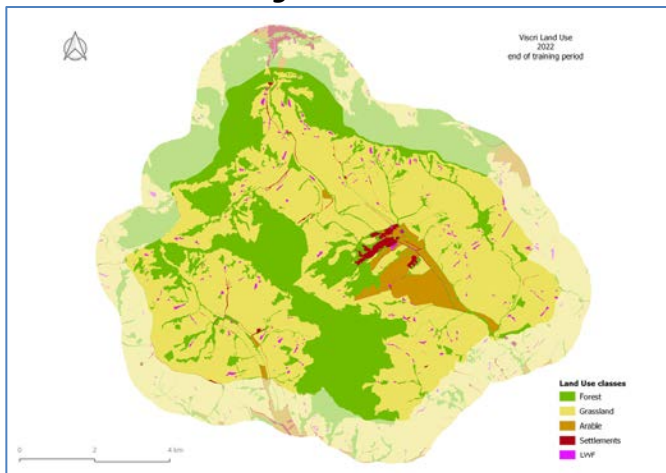
Boreholes and water troughs installed under the project allow improved rotational grazing (avoids the need for cattle to return to central location for water)

3. Develop local management plans in the two valleys, co-designed with the many small-scale land managers, in order to implement cooperative agri-environment management with full local support. This will support future good management, to maintain favourable conservation status, of approximately 1800 ha of grassland and associated landscape features, at valley/water catchment scale, of which minimum 500 ha are HD grassland habitats.

To assist visualisation of the consequences of management decisions, especially useful in community consultation, we developed a unique custom-made computer programme to generate scenarios based on decisions and drivers. We worked with specialist Dr Ionut Silviu-Pascu to develop a scenario program that will allow the automatic generation of revised maps based on the consequences management decisions taken.

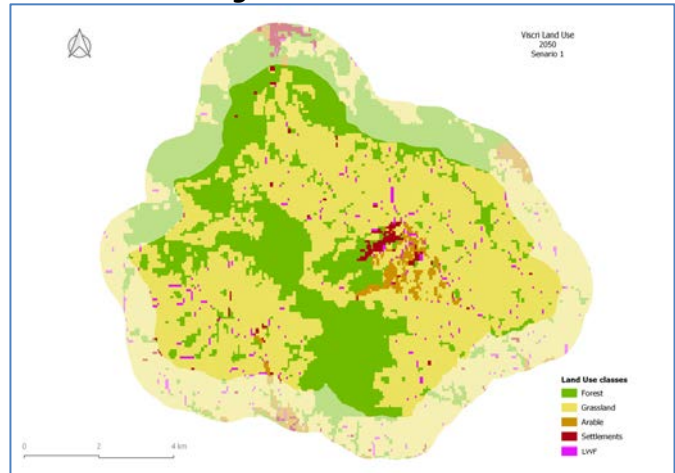
Current situation

Forest 31%, grassland 61%, arable 4%.



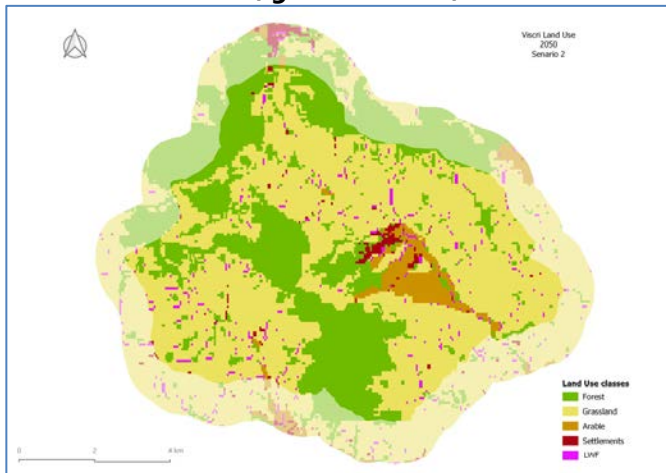
Future Scenario 1: Sustainability

Forest 31%, grassland 64%, arable 2%



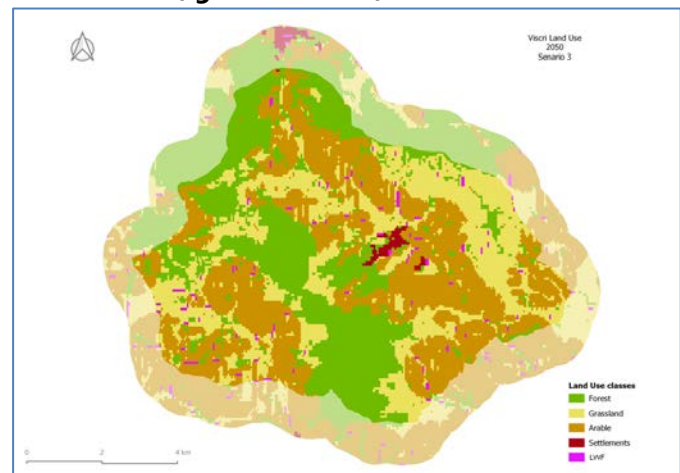
Future Scenario 2: Middle of the Road

Forest 30%, grassland 62%, arable 4%.



Future Scenario 3: Intensification

Forest 30%, grassland 28%, arable 40%



We held over 20 meetings with farmers and communities to discuss the project.

Led by Dr Owen Mountford, practical farmer-friendly Local Management Plans were completed and agreed by the communities of Viscrist and Angofa.

Further management plans were created:

- Angofa Valley business plan and Meat Marketing business plan for Angofa farmers group. As a result of the meetings with the Angofa farmers, other farmers in the area asked to join the group.
- We have had regular contact with the Viscrist Association and we have helped them to overcome bureaucratic problems including securing common grazing. This was linked to the restoration of grazing land under the project.

4. Establish a demonstration farm at Angofa Valley, including innovative buildings mostly on the footprint and buying and demonstrating innovative equipment. By using local materials and simple but effective designs, this will show how livestock and grassland management improvements can be done at costs accessible to local communities.

Under the project, we restored and repurposed a derelict farmhouse including 7 bedrooms, conference room, storage barn, and innovative livestock sheds. The farmhouse building is ideal for accommodation, meetings, conferences. The surrounding area and equipment offer rare demonstration potential



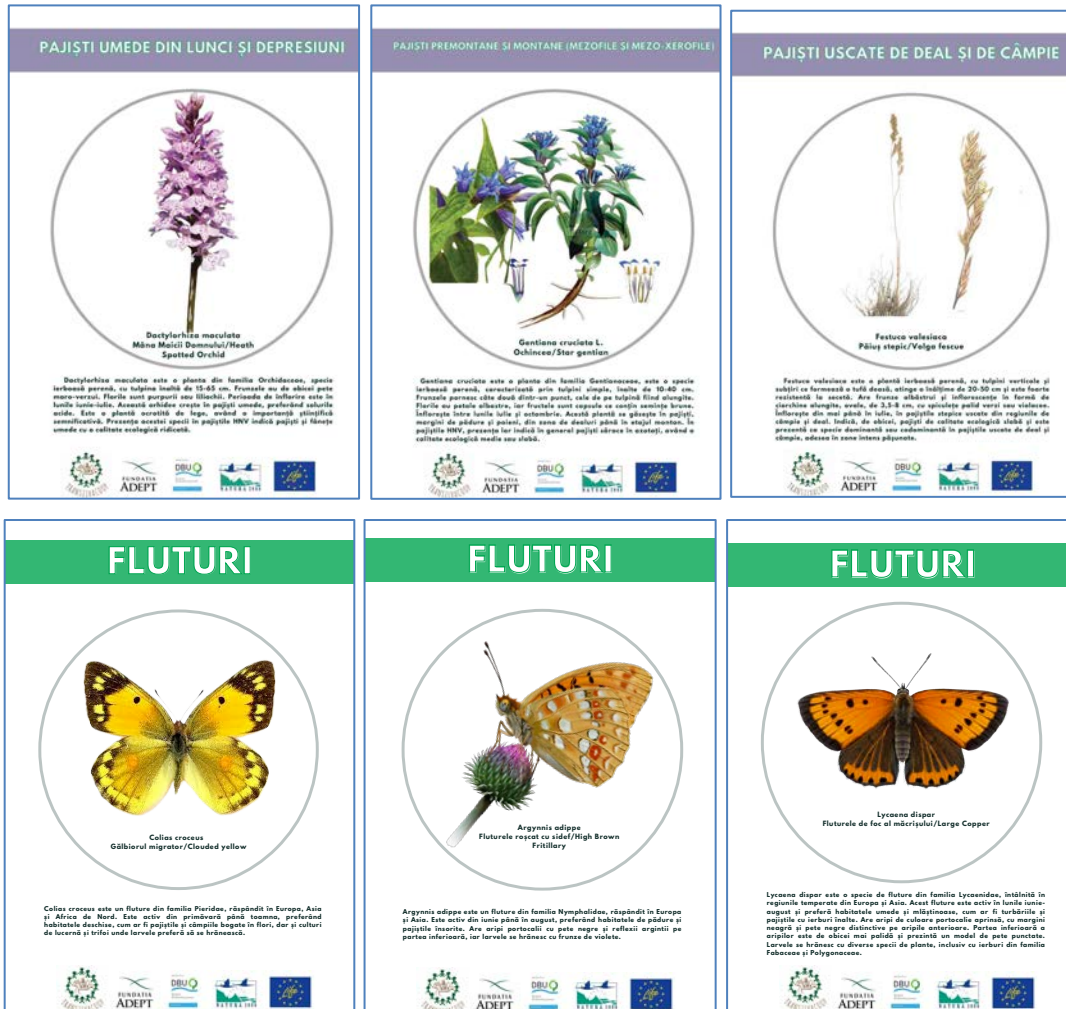
The Angofa farmhouse at various stages of restoration 2022-2024



The farmhouse conference centre has been used many visiting scientists and conference groups since it was completed in early 2024, including for Eurosite finance bootcamp (image left), research group from the Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research Leipzig, board of Rainforest Concern which co-financed the restoration, board of rePLANET biodiversity credits company, farmer meetings and various nature tourism groups.

5. Training of farmers in Natura 2000 sites, especially young farmers, in cooperative landscape-scale biodiversity management.

To assist farmer training, we developed indicator species cards, based on the plant lists developed by the botanists and butterfly specialists early in the project. These include 76 indicator species for High Nature Value grassland. See species cards on project webpage: <https://fundatia-adept.org/projects/life-transilvacooperation/>



We have held many meetings with the Angofa farmers group and Viscri Association, and with individual farmers in order to discuss grassland restoration locations and ideas. One meeting with each group was to train farmers in the use of the Soilmentor app.



Several meetings each year were held with farmers in Angofa and Viscri

6. Measure project results by flora, butterfly, soil and socio-economic monitoring

Led by Dr Anamaria Roman and Dr Tudor Ursu, baseline botanical surveys were carried out in Angofa and Viscri in 2021, and then monitoring in 2022 and 2024.

In addition, Dr Laszlo Rakosy and Dr Andrei Crisan carried out butterfly monitoring so that butterfly species richness could be directly linked to grassland management 2022 and 2023.



Dr Anamaria Roman and Dr Tudor Ursu,
botanical surveys



Dr Laszlo Rakosy and Dr Andrei Crisan
butterfly monitoring

The Soilmentor smartphone application was adapted to local use, and mapping points created in the two valleys, allowing monitoring of soil and biodiversity linked to accurate GPS location. App can be used by community including farmers, as well as by scientists, to gather data. Socio-economic baseline surveys carried out in 2021 and 2024 by Dr Monica Stroe and Dr Bogdan Iancu of National University of Political Studies and Public Administration Bucharest. Soil baseline survey was carried out under supervision Dr Ramona Balc of Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj Napoca.

Results of Monitoring

The surveys revealed the success of restoration, and of our consultations with farmer groups on attitudes to conservation farming and future decisions about farm management.

The diversity of the grassland vegetation from Angofa and Viscri project sites was monitored from 2021-2024 using vegetation quadrats and transects, to evaluate the effects of the different management activities. Haymeadows had greater diversity than pastures, with a notable rise in plant species richness in 2024 when compared to earlier years, even after severe droughts occurring in 2022 and 2024. This increase in species could be linked to improved haymeadow management (diminished plant biomass) that enabled new species to emerge from seeds, as well as the incorporation of varied hay bales for winter feeding of cattle, and removal of scrub

Average species richness therefore displayed an upward trend from 2021 to 2024, reflecting the success of restoration initiatives. Conversely, control plots from Angofa that lacked management showed a slight decline in both species richness and diversity, highlighting the importance of active management strategies, including hay cutting and rotational grazing, to avert the dominance of competitive species and weeds

In 2021 and 2022, lepidoptera surveys showed increasing number of butterfly species linked to the conservation status of the grassland: 71 species on good condition haymeadow, 60 species on good condition pasture, 43 species on degraded grassland.

Nevertheless, to gain a comprehensive understanding of these patterns, it is advisable to conduct monitoring over an extended duration (7-10 years).

This underscores the vital significance of sustainable land management practices in fostering biodiversity and sustaining healthy ecosystems, ultimately serving the interests of both wildlife and agricultural productivity.

The socio-economic report highlights the resilience and adaptability of local farmers in the face of economic and environmental challenges.

- There was a shift towards market-oriented farming, a positive development for farm economics. However, surveys noted that significant obstacles remain, particularly in processing infrastructure, land access, and labour availability.
- Surveys noted an encouraging increased environmental awareness, but greater institutional support will be necessary to ensure that conservation efforts align with farmers' economic needs.
- There was increased community understanding that leveraging strategic investments in branding, direct sales, and sustainability-focused policies, the region can foster a more economically viable and environmentally sustainable agricultural sector for the future.



Communities had a higher understanding at the end of the project that community prosperity and environmental health of the landscape can be linked in a mutually beneficial way



7. Promotion/dissemination. Demonstrate to farmers, policy makers, general public how biodiversity friendly farming in N2000 areas can be economically viable by the use of innovative low-input management techniques, landscape-scale cooperation, well-targeted RDP payments and development of new products / better marketing.

ADEPT has lobbied the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development, with several remote and face-to-face meetings in 2023 and 2024 regarding agri-environment measure design. The newly imposed agri-environment measure in the two valleys, and in the wider area of Tarnava Mare and other farmland Natura 2000 sites, are contrary to expert advice and to the experiences we have gained during the project, and will damage habitat condition and species diversity. We have also raised these problems with the Ministry of Environment & Forests. **The current agri-environment scheme in the area represents one of the greatest threats to the survival of this special landscape.**

Media work: we hosted press visits in 2022 and 2024, and we have made numerous press releases and Facebook postings. ADEPT's FB has over 22,000 followers, and a reach of 32,624 people. See <https://www.facebook.com/FundatiaAdeptTransilvania/posts/>

There was also a broadcast about the project on national and regional TV and radio.

Networking. Although travel has been restricted by Covid early in the project, we have had contacts with numerous projects, where we presented LIFE TransilvaCooperation, including

- European Landscape Conservation Network ENPLC LIFE project
- Eurosite conference 2023, SERE conference August 2024, Results based Agri-Environment Payments Scheme network meeting 2023, LIFE Info day May 2024
- FFI visit to Angofa and WWF visit to Angofa in 2022 and 2023
- Meeting with Latvian Integrated LIFE Project on grasslands
- visits from two other LIFE projects (Broz Slovakia, Metamorphosis in 2022, and Muhu Liha Estonia LIFE connecting meadows in 2023).

Visits to other HNV farming areas: we visited three other areas Maghareni, Cobor, Hartibaciu.

We have had visits from local communities, and hosted 5 school visits. We also created an Tarnava mare map for visitors to the area.

We have completed a professionally made 5 minute film following the course of the project over the full 4 years.

Website: dedicated page see <https://fundatia-adept.org/projects/life-transilvacooperation/>.



Far left: visiting group enjoying a summer field excursion in Angofa, June 2022

Left: Fermieri ADEPT smartphone app developed for farmer training and information exchange, based on cooperation with Haller App identified via FAO Agroecology platform <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/home/en/>.

The situation at the end of the project

Traditional agricultural practices that have mostly been lost in Western Europe, such as common grazing and unfertilised wildflower-rich haymeadows, are still part of everyday farming life in SCI Târnava Mare. These habitats can only be maintained by farmers: their scale dictates that conservation bodies cannot carry out the management themselves, as is possible when the protected habitats are much smaller in area (typical in western Europe). Therefore, the successful long-term protection of these habitats requires an integrated approach to the support of the entire landscape and community. **This is why we have prioritised the development of local management plans to improve local cooperation between to farmers in the Angofa and Viscri valleys.**

Continued threats to habitats

At project end, there is a lower immediate level of threat. Flora and socio-economic monitoring show improved habitat condition; improved local cooperation and access of farmers to agri-environment payments; greater interest of farmers in improved management; increased awareness at community level of the links between their high nature value grasslands and local incomes. These all add up to a more favourable immediate threat level.

The ultimate source of threats of land-use change, and loss of habitat and species diversity, is socio-economic, and can be solved only by longer-term solutions. Economic pressures will continue to provoke land use change through conversion into arable fields in more productive areas, abandonment of more distant pastures or meadows, falling cattle numbers and rising sheep numbers, leading to over-grazing of grassland and abandonment of mowing (conversion of meadow into pasture), leading to a monotonous landscape. **Therefore, a shared vision at community level is required, bringing direct economic benefits though scale, and social benefits of community cooperation.**

Farmers should be encouraged to carry out the following, especially through well-designed agri-environment measures

Cutting of scrub: scrub and trees should be cut during late summer or early autumn (second half of August, beginning of September), so that the shoots freeze and die during winter in the case of black locust. The shoots appearing will be cut in July of the second year. Follow-up treatment is needed up to 3 years to achieve suppression of the alien species and rehabilitation of targeted habitats.

Mowing: annual mowing or grazing, compensated by grassland agri-environment schemes. Schemes should allow flexibility of first mowing date, allow mowing by tractor, and offer higher payments for mowing than for grazing. Unfortunately, the current agri-environment package in the area (Corncrake package) strongly encourages conversion of haymeadows to pasture, which also represents a threat to Corncrakes. We will continue to work with the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development to make the agri-environment measure better designed for haymeadows, pasture and target species.

Burning: burning is currently not permitted. We will work with Environment Protection Agencies to permit controlled burning, in limited problem areas, as early in the year as the disappearance of snow cover allows (late February/early March, ideally) as a one-off action not repeated at all or at least for several years; and permit controlled burning of the heaps of cleared scrub that are having a negative impact on habitat condition.

Reducing stocking rates:

Sheep overgrazing either due to excessive stocking rates over a large area, or by failure to move flocks frequently, should be prevented by establishing proper flock management with shepherds. Dry grasslands in particular can tolerate lower stocking rates of 0.3-0.8 L.U./ha, compared with the 1 or 1.2 L.U./ha currently permitted under grassland agri-environment measures. Revised agri-environment proposals especially suited to these habitats could offer higher payment for stocking rates below current levels.

Fundatia ADEPT



Fundația ADEPT Transilvania is an NGO dedicated to protecting Romania's unique high-biodiversity farmed landscapes and the small-scale farming communities that have created them.

Relevant aspects of Fundația ADEPT activities in the Târnava Mare area, in the 20 years since it was established, include:

1. Policy support. Development of agri-environment schemes, assisting the link between small-scale farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development.
2. Farm Advisory Services. Promote effective (for biodiversity) and practical (for farmers) agri-environment scheme design, and promote farmer participation in agri-environment schemes.
3. Dairy sector. ADEPT has helped several villages to improve their milk collection points, and to improve milk hygiene generally, significantly benefitting village economies.
4. Supporting common grazing. ADEPT has pioneered a project under which communal grazing land has been leased to the village grazing association, unlocking access to agri-environment payments, and securing the future of traditional livestock farmers.
5. Adding value to agricultural products, and diversification. ADEPT promotes local branding and labelling, farmers' markets, local sales to hotels and restaurants. ADEPT worked with the authorities for a flexible approach to direct sales by small-scale producers, essential to the development of farmers' markets. ADEPT also promotes rural tourism in the area, linking agro-tourism, nature guiding and mountain bike trails.

For more information, see www.fundatia-adept.org.