

Project Information Sheet
Conference project brief number(PBN):2



Laslea and Bunesti Natural Parks

Pilot Project

Description: Conservation of natural and built heritage

Beneficiaries: Inhabitants of Romanian villages

Project Implementation: MET/UNDP

Co-implementer: Local Councils and Romania Government

Timespan: Immediate 12 months

Estimated Cost: 35,000 euros

Partners: Local councils, village inhabitants, Romanian Government, many other MET collaborators and donors, in training and skills.

Origin: this project originated through a partnership of the MET, Horizon Foundation, Packard Humanities Institute, Caroline Fernolend and Gabriel Lambescu.

1. Title of the Project

Pilot project for the establishment of Laslea Natural Park and Bunesti Natural Park

2. Location of the Project and Area of Coverage

Both Laslea and Bunesti are located in the south-central part of Transylvania, Romania. The two communes are part of a naturally coherent area, with a network of interlaced narrow valleys. It is a dense cultural landscape with a large number of small Saxon villages in which the World Heritage sites of Sighisoara and of the Saxon Villages with Fortified Churches lie.



Laslea (Sibiu county): 150 square km, 3,372 inhabitants.

Bunesti (Brasov county): 145 square km, 2,540 inhabitants

3. Justification

- National and international context:

The project advances the overall European strategy, outlined in the Nature 2000 convention, to create a widespread, integrated network of protected areas throughout Europe. The Romanian Government has adopted this strategy and is strongly encouraging the development of protected areas nationwide.



- Social problems:

The area is poor and under-populated, abandoned by the youth and its original owners, the Saxons. Dependency ratios and unemployment (60%) are high, while the lack of infrastructure and services (health, social, transportation, communication) encourages the continued emigration of the young and more able.

- Economic potential:

Basic facilities are urgently needed in these villages and the economy is dying. There is a chronic lack of income generation activities. At the moment, poverty may determine inhabitants to sell their land and leave for the cities. The protected area status would discourage that by providing an impetus to such environmentally friendly activities as ecotourism, organic agriculture and traditional crafts.



- Uniqueness:

The two communes selected for the pilot project present an ideal blend of cultural and natural heritage, displaying a remarkable harmony between people and landscape.

- Arable land and pasture extend from the back of the villages up to woodlands. Land ownership and field patterns have followed the village structure and date back to 12th century settlements.

- Natural value:

The region is blessed by a still untouched flora and fauna of remarkable quality, that exist as a product of the ancient farming methods. Its forests are professionally managed by the public

institution Romsilva, but there are possibilities that they be sold to private parties; this would put at risk large parts of the landscape of the Saxon villages.

- These natural areas are populated by a great number of wild species from wolves and brown bears to eagles and butterflies, including a number of internationally protected bats, reptiles, birds and amphibians



4. Objectives of the Project

a. Long-term objective

- Creation of a sense of belonging to a common region through the establishment of a network of cooperating cities and villages in the region, driven by a preserved cultural and natural heritage, sharing similar issues, problems and possibilities by creating an integrated network of protected areas throughout the culturally and throughout a naturally unified area stretching between the cities Sighisoara, Sibiu and Brasov.
- Conception, development and implementation of a mechanism providing capacity building, training and the necessary sets of organisational tools for the betterment of the economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions of the region and its constituent villages;
- Sustainable development through the appropriate use of heritage – cultural and natural – of the region and the effective operation of programmes and projects and of private ventures in the region.

b. Immediate objectives

- to finalise a quality, comprehensive scientific study which would serve as the basis for obtaining the protected area status
- to obtain the approval and support of the local councils of Laslea and Bunesti for this project
- to produce a 3-year plan for the administration of the future protected areas
- to submit the application to the Ministry of the Environment for obtaining the protected area status.

5. Activities of the Project

- Finalise the scientific study
- Obtain the support of the local councils
- Produce 3-year plan for the administration of the future protected areas
- Submit the application to the Ministry of the Environment
- Obtain protected areas status
- Inform the local inhabitants of what the protected areas status means and its benefits for the community (a series of public meetings).
- Start implementing management plan.

6. Inputs

a. Human

- 1 project coordinator
- 3 other part-time team members (one social/economic development specialist, one environmental specialist and one fund-raising consultant)
- occasional accounting and legal advise

b. Material

- Access to office and a car (supplied by the MET)
- The use of a laptop and digital projector for presentations (supplied by the MET)

7. Requirements from outside the project

- The support of the local councils of Laslea and Bunesti

- The cooperation of the local environmental protection agencies and the local Romsilva offices.
- The approval of the Romanian Academy for the scientific study.
- The approval of the Ministry of the Environment for the application.

8. Calendar of Activities and budget

Activity	Cost Euros	Oct 04	Nov 04	Dec 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05
Finalise the scientific study	2,000							
Present project at Stakeholders Meeting	500							
Obtain the support of the local councils (presentations)	500							
Produce 3-year plan for the administration of the future protected areas	5,000							
Submit the application to the Ministry of the Environment	500							
Obtain protected areas status	-							
Inform local inhabitants	5,000							
Start implementing management plan	20,000							
Materials	1,500							
Total Cost	35,000							

Annex I – Sources

“A Programme for the Integrated Development of Sighisoara and the Saxon Villages of Transylvania”, by Gaia Heritage Sal & MET

“The Saxon villages of Transylvania, Romania – A future for the Mediaeval Landscape”, by Kim Wilkie & MET

“Scientific study for the establishment of Laslea Natural Park”, by Minodora Holban

“Scientific study for the establishment of Bunesti Natural Park”, by Minodora Holban

“Fauna Survey of the Saxon Villages of Transylvania Romania”, by Ilf Jacobs and Pieter Blonde

The Bern Convention (1979), adopted by the Romanian Government through Law 13/1993

The Habitats Directive, European Council Directive 92/43 EEC

IUCN Red List, www.redlist.org

Annex II – protected areas in Romania

	Area (ha)	%
Total surface of protected areas	1.234.608,12	100%
Scientific reservations, natural reservations and monuments of nature	102.433,32	8%
National and natural parks and biosphere reservations	1.132.174,80	92%
Of which:		
The Danube Delta biosphere reservation	580.000,00	47%
Other national and natural parks	552.174,80	45%

(<http://www.grida.no/enrin/htmls/romania/soe2000/rom/cap5/ariiprot.htm>)

Annex III – protected areas with administrative structures

Protected areas with administrative structures	Area (ha)
Danube Delta biosphere reservation	580,000
Retezat National Park	38,047
Piatra Craiului National Park	14,800
Total area with administrative structures	632,847
Percentage of the national network	51%

(<http://www.grida.no/enrin/htmls/romania/soe2000/rom/cap5/ariiprot.htm>)