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# Promotion of Sustainable Development and Conservation of Biodiversity in the Bulgarian - Romanian Cross-Border Region

Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Project Area

Ideas for Potential Projects Eligible for 2005-2006  
Funding Under CBC Grant Scheme for Environment

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## BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

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### THE PHARE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION (CBC) FRAMEWORK

The European Commission (EC) Regulation No 2760/98 as amended states that the PHARE Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Programmes are extended to PHARE countries as of the year 1999 making the Romanian/Bulgarian border regions eligible for regular PHARE CBC support. The aims of the projects funded under the PHARE CBC are:

- To promote co-operation of border regions in countries in Central and Eastern Europe with adjacent regions in a neighbouring country as defined in Article 1 and thus to help the border regions in Central and Eastern Europe to overcome the specific development problems which may arise, inter alia, from their position within the national economies, in the interest of the local population and in a manner compatible with the protection of the environment;
- To promote the creation and the development of cooperation networks on either side of the border and the establishment of links between these networks and wider Community networks.

In the border regions the projects to be included in the cross-border cooperation programme can take the form of:

- Projects linked with measures that are supported by INTERREG or by other Community external assistance programs;
- Projects agreed by the countries concerned, that have a cross-border impact, contribute to the development of structures in border regions and facilitate cooperation between the countries as a whole.

The actions that can be financed under this programme could include among others:

- Environmental protection, for instance waste management, environmental management and pollution prevention dealing with problems exacerbated by the proximity to external borders;
- Agricultural and rural development measures with particular attention for facilitating cross-border cooperation projects;
- Training and employment measures;
- Local economic development, including tourism;
- The development or establishment of facilities and resources to improve the flow of information and communications between border regions, including support for cross-border radio, television, newspapers and other media;
- Cultural exchanges;
- Local employment, education and training initiatives.

The EC Regulation above-mentioned has been amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No 1596/2002 (September 2002) that seeks to realign the CBC programmes more towards INTERREG. The new Regulation aims to:

- Align the PHARE CBC programme more with the INTERREG Programme by emphasising “a more programme oriented approach” and with projects of similar size to those permitted under INTERREG.

- Align the suggested list of Priorities and Measures with those set out in Section 11 of the EC Communication on INTERREG dated April 28th, 2000 and as set out in more detail in Annex II to the same document.
- Remove the restriction set out in Section 5.1 of the 1998 Regulation whereby certain activities such as local economic activity and tourism, cooperation in cross-border health arrangements, information exchange across the border via TV, radio and other media, cultural exchanges and local employment, education and training measures could only be dealt with under a Joint Small Projects Fund. Such activities can now be dealt with also under mainstream CBC Projects.

With a view to encouraging joint small scale actions involving local actors from the border regions and to enhancing their capabilities to identify, develop and implement such actions, a joint small project fund has been established in each border region, for which a limited percentage of the appropriations for the relevant programmes and initiatives for cross-border cooperation may be used (up to 10% of the total funds made available/country, on an annual basis).

Special attention will be given to measures with a strong cross-border cooperation character which are planned in close cooperation with the regional and local authorities in border areas and which include the establishment or development of shared management structures intended to widen and deepen cross-border cooperation between public and para-public agencies, as well as non-profit organisations.

The establishment of plans for the development of border regions, project identification and programme formulation, feasibility studies, assistance for the implementation of the programmes and monitoring and / or evaluation studies, may also be financed.

At present, the **national coordinator** of PHARE CBC programmes for Romania is the Ministry of European Integration (through the CBC Directorate), which also acts as Implementing Agency and Contracting Authority, having the whole responsibilities of programming, implementing and payments for PHARE cross-border programmes. The corresponding Bulgarian authority is the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW). It has the responsibility for all programming and implementation matters relating to PHARE CBC programmes, through its Programming, Implementation and Financial Departments.

At the regional level the project area comprises one EUROREGIO: **Euregio “Lower Danube”** in the north-east Region of Bulgaria and the Southeast region of Romania including the Bulgarian Municipalities of Dobrich and Silistra; and the Romanian Judets of Constantza, Calarasi and Jalomita. This project addresses conservation matters in the easternmost Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region along the Danube River and the Black Sea coast, namely the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Plateau.

## **DOBRUDJA/ DOBROGEA PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION**

The area (shown on the map) is geographically known as **Dobrudja** (Dobrogea in Romanian, Dobrudza in Bulgarian). The area is 23,300 sq km, and is located in South-eastern Europe, (in South-eastern Romania and Northeastern Bulgaria, between the lower Danube River and the Black Sea).

The region area concerned in this document comprises two Bulgarian districts and one Romanian county in the easternmost sections of the border. The Bulgarian border region covers two districts (NUTS III): Dobrich and Silistra, that are part of the North East Region (NER Bulgaria). The Romanian border region is comprised of one county (NUTS III): Constantza being part of the South East Development Region (SEDR Romania).

The chief cities are Constantza, in Romania, and Dobrich and Silistra, in Bulgaria. Dobrudja/ Dobrogea comprises a low coastal strip and a hilly and sparsely forested inland. Largely agricultural, the region grows cereal crops, has vineyards, and breeds Merino sheep. The largest industrial concentration is in and around Constantza. Tourism is also economically important, particularly along the Black sea coast. The population includes Romanians, Bulgarians, Turks, and Tatars.



Dobrudja/ Dobrogea's original inhabitants were conquered in the 6th century BC by the Greeks, who founded colonies along the Black Sea coast. The region passed to the Scythians in the 5th century BC and to the Romans (who made it part of Moesia) in the 1st century BC. As part of the Roman Empire and later of the Byzantine, it suffered frequent invasions from the Goths, Huns, Avars, and other tribes. Part of the first Bulgarian empire (681–1018), it was re-conquered by the Byzantines. In 1186 it was included in the second Bulgarian empire. Tatar raids were common in the 13th century. In the 14th century the region became an autonomous state under Walachian prince Dobrotich, from whom the name Dobrudja/ Dobrogea derives. Turks conquered the region in 1411, and for the next five centuries it remained a sparsely populated and barely cultivated territory of the Ottoman Empire. In 1878 the Congress of Berlin awarded North Dobrudja to Romania and a strip of land later known as South Dobrudja to Bulgaria. As a result of the second Balkan War, Bulgaria ceded (1913) South Dobrudja to Romania. The Treaty of Neuilly, signed in 1919 between Bulgaria and the Allies of World War I, gave all of Dobrudja to Romania. In 1940, however, the German-imposed Treaty of Craiova forced Romania to transfer South Dobrudja to Bulgaria.

The entire Dobrudja/ Dobrogea has an area of 23,100 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of slightly more than 1 million. Two-thirds of the territory and nearly three-quarters of the population are in the Romanian part.

Major cities are Constantza, Tulcha, Medgidia and Mangalia in Romania, and Dobrich and Silistra in Bulgaria.

**Constantza** (old names: Kustendji, Kustendja, Köstence) is a seaport on the Black Sea and the capital of Constantza county, Romania. Its area is 1,121.66 sq.km and the population of the town is 310,471. In the vicinity there are mineral springs, and the seaside recreation also attracts many visitors in summer. The chief local industries are tanning and the manufacture of petroleum drums. The opening, in 1895, of the railway to Bucharest, which crosses the Danube by a bridge at Cerna Voda, brought Constantza a considerable transit trade in grain and petroleum, which are largely exported; coal and coke head the list of imports, followed by machinery, iron goods, and cotton and woollen fabrics. The harbour, protected by breakwaters, with a lighthouse at the entrance, is well defended from the North winds, but those from the South, Southeast, and Southwest prove sometimes highly dangerous. The Black Sea squadron of the Romanian fleet is stationed here. Mamaia is a beach resort immediately to the north.

**Tulcha** (population: 92,000) is a city in Dobrogea, Romania. It is the capital of Tulcea County. Built in the 8th century BC and mentioned in the documents of Diodor in the 3rd century BC under the name of "Aegyssus". Ovid mentioned it in the *Ex Ponto*, saying that it was named after the founder, the Dacian Carpyus Aegyssus. In the 1st century, it will be conquered by the Romans, which will make a base for the Roman fleet defending the Roman Empire's north-eastern borders, building tall



defence walls and towers, ruins of which are still visible. It was then ruled by the Byzantines (8th - 9th century), Genovese (10th - 13th century), it was part of the local feudal kingdoms of Balica, Dobrotici and since 1390 ruled by Wallachian Mircea cel Batran. In 1416 it was conquered by the Ottoman Empire, being renamed "Hora-Tepé" or Tolchu. In the 1848, it was still a small shipyard town. It became a city in 1860 when it became a province capital.

**Medgidia** is placed between the Danube and the Black Sea, 39 km off Constantza, the town is the centre of a road and rail knot, from East to West and from North to South. Its geological specificity allowed the Canal to cross from Constantza to the Danube, thus being linked by the rivers Rhine – Main – Danube directly to the centre of Europe till Rotterdam. The general aspect of the relief is of a plateau, with reduced height. The basic rock is limestone, covered with thick deposits of loess. The climate is temperate-continental, with short and cold winters and warm summers. The natural resources comprise limestone deposits and kaolin sand.

**Mangalia** (population: 40,000) is a city and a port on the Romanian coast of the Black Sea. A Greek colony named Callatis was founded in the 4th century BC during the rule of the Macedonian king Amyntos III. Since the 9th century it was known by the Turks as Pangalia, by the Romanians as Tomisovara and by the Greeks as Panglicara and it was one of the most important ports on the west coast of the Black Sea.

**Dobrich** is a city of about 111,000 people. It is located in Southern Dobrudja, a region in north-eastern Bulgaria. Its name derives from the name of one of its ancient rulers - boyar Dobrotitza. Throughout the centuries it was also known as Hadjioglu Bazardjik (between 15th - 19th c.) and Tolbukhin (1949-1991). Nowadays, Dobrich is a district centre and one of the biggest cities in north-eastern Bulgaria (8th biggest city). Dobrich is known as the capital of 'Golden Dobrudja'. It is 512 km north-east of the capital Sofia, and 37 km south-east of Yovkovo, the frontier post at the border with Romania. Furthermore, it is conveniently located only 30 km away of the Black Sea, close to a number of popular sea resorts including Albena, Golden Sands, Balchik, and Roussalka. Varna – a city of over 300,000 people, and one of the two main cities along Bulgarian sea coast, is approximately 50 km away.

**Silistra** is a port city of north-eastern Bulgaria. Population: 42,000. It lies on the southern side of the lower Danube River which until this point forms the country's border with Romania. Founded as the Roman Durostorum, Silistra was a fortress of great strength, occupying the north-east corner of the famous quadrilateral (Ruse, Silistra, Shumen, Varna), but its fortifications were demolished in accordance with the Treaty of Berlin, 1878. The city was part of Romania between 1913 and 1940.

## GENERAL ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS<sup>1</sup>

### Demography

In terms of demography both regions are of a decreasing population, although the indicators for Bulgaria are higher (-3.5%), while in Romania the population growth indicator is just 0.36%. The population density of the Bulgarian NER is 49.7 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> thus ranking among the least populated territories in Bulgaria. The rural population in the Bulgarian section is almost equal to the urban one and is above the average for the country: in Dobrich by some 5% and in Silistra by some 25%. The

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<sup>1</sup> More details are presented in Appendix I: General Outline of the Project Region (based on data from the Joint Programming Document 2003 - 2006)



urban population prevails in Romania it is 72.99% and is largely concentrated along the coastline, which is a result of the industrialisation and the tourism development opportunities.

### **General economic structure**

The NER Bulgaria is characterised by a well-developed agricultural sector, the share of which in Dobrich and Silistra districts is 2.5 times higher than the average for the country. In agriculture the structure of employment is better than the national structure, while in the industry it is worse. The unemployment rate is 23.2% and is higher than the average for Bulgaria – some 18%.

In the same time, the SEDR of Romania is among the most developed and well-balanced. Its economic potential resides in local resources, tradition and experience in most of the economic and social activities related to the sea and river transport. The economic potential is further boosted by its leading location on the Black Sea at the crossroads of major shipping routes linking Central Europe with Asia. The main industrial sectors comprise the agriculture, tourism, trade, shipping, manufacturing of machinery, chemical and petrochemical industry, electric and thermal energy, wood and paper processing.

### **Agriculture**

The agriculture dominates the local economy. It is based on the very fertile arable land, the favourable physical environment and good climate. The agricultural sector played an important role in the border regions during the last decade, as the main contributor to employment creation and economic growth. Co-operatives, leaseholders and private farms currently constitute the main agricultural production entities. Most of them, however, are not well equipped and rely on outdated agricultural equipment and machinery. With regard to the farm structures, the programme region is characterised by having a large proportion of small private farms focusing on arable and livestock farming.

The arable land of Dobrudja represents 25.83% of Bulgaria's total farmland, while the arable land constitutes circa 96.13% of all land in the region. The agriculture is highly specialised in cereal production, which allows for intensive use of agricultural equipment and a higher degree of mechanisation. This has created significant demand for larger plots of land and the relatively high land price in the region.

The arable land of the Constantza County makes 15.7% of Romania's total farmland, and arable land constitutes some 65% of the total. The cultivated land structure is characterised by vegetable and cereal production. In 2001, cereals represented 65% of the total cultivated area (317,122 ha), out of which grain was cultivated on 216,736 ha. Wine growing ranks high in the SEDR Romania's economy and covers 4.2% of the total agricultural landmass in contrast to the Romanian national average of 1.7%.

### **Enterprises**

The most developed industrial areas are concentrated in and around the municipalities of Constanta and Silistra. The main sectors contributing to economic growth and employment in the CBC region are machinery manufacturing, chemicals, energy production, food processing, beverage and tobacco products and textile production.

The economic industrial indicators are relatively high. The basis for industrial development exist: occurrence of well-organised urbanised centres, comparatively well-developed infrastructure - the main development axes of Bulgaria was and still is Sofia – Varna, the latest being one of the two main seaports of Bulgaria (the third one is Balchik located in the same region). The FDI per capita are the second highest after the South West Region. The enterprise density is close to the country average

and the net revenues are 24.5 thousands BGL per enterprise, a little below the country average. The opportunities for enterprise development in the region are relatively favourable for all sectors of the economy and for most of the municipalities in the region.

In 2000, 16.4% of the working population in the South-eastern Development Region of Romania was employed in industry. The more important industrial sectors include the food industry 21%, oil extraction and processing 18%, ship building and repair 16%, electric and thermal energy 13%, cement and asbestos cement products 10%, chemical industry 5% and textile industry 5%. According to the latest available statistics there are 16,396 SMEs in the region. They generated approximately 11% of the total income generated by the SME sector in Romania. This places the region in an advantageous position with regards to the SME sector.

## **Tourism**

With its geographic features and cultural heritage the CBC region has arguably underused tourism potential. The tourism industry has made an important contribution to employment creation and economic growth in the region over the past two decades. The Bulgarian district of Dobrich and the Romanian County of Constantza have benefited from the impact of a flourishing mass tourism industry attracting both domestic and foreign tourists.

In Bulgaria most of the tourism infrastructure is concentrated in the Dobrich district, especially in the municipalities along the Black Sea coastal zone. Mass tourism is the main type of tourism and remains the main source of employment and contributor to economic growth. The main markets are Russia, Germany and the United Kingdom as well as neighbouring countries. In addition to coastal mass tourism, the NER Bulgaria also offers a range of natural and cultural attractions including Zlatni Pyasatsi Nature Park, Kaliakra Nature Reserve, the Durankulak and Shabla Lakes (Protected Sites), and Sreburna Lake (Managed Reserve) - internationally designated Ramsar Sites, the last is World Heritage Site also.

The tourism assets of the Romanian South-eastern Development Region are considered diverse and attractive and have facilitated the development of a domestically and internationally competitive tourism industry. As a result the SEDR Romania together with the Bulgarian NER Bulgaria benefits from the most advanced and sophisticated tourism industry. The tourism sector is stimulated through the promotion of local resources including the encouragement of domestic tourism as well as raising international awareness of the Romanian seaside and other types of tourism through the international travel trade.

## **PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Dobrudja/ Dobrogea covers the north-easternmost part of the Balkan Peninsular. It also comprises the south-westernmost section of what was once known as the Great European Steppe, and representing the transition from the steppes to the xerothermic broadleaved forests.

Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is a vast plateau with an elevation of up to 200 m. It is comparatively deeply cut by river valleys - once permanently running and now almost completely dry, in its higher eastern part. The most representative is the Suhata Reka dry valley. It rises from the western foothills of the Frangensko Plateau, runs along the whole length of the plain, crosses the Romanian border as Canaraua Fetii, and after the Oltina Lake flows into the Danube. The eastern part is the Black Sea coastal region where the plateau reaches its lowest points and ends with high picturesque sea cliff at

Kaliakra Cape and Yailata locality; and further north is transformed into a low-land characterised by lakes, lagoons and wetlands.

In terms of tectonics Dobrudja/ Dobrogea possesses a typical placid structure comprising deep Paleozoic fundament of Hercene age with thick almost horizontal Mesozoic-Tertiary superstructure covered by Pleistocene loess. The loess had an important role to play in the formation of the relief of the region. It had filled the negative forms and had obliterated the contrasts of the former karst relief. In addition, the loess had great soil-forming functions and contributed highly to the forming of the most fertile soil in the region – the chernozem, which together with the climatic conditions brought to the development of forest-steppe vegetation.

The climate here is of well expressed continental character, strongly influenced by the Black Sea along the coastal strip. In winter the climate-forming influence of the north-eastern air masses is rather strong. The annual temperature differences are quite sharp. The average January minimum is -20 C and the average July maximum is 24 o C. The rainfall is of well expressed summer (June) maximum and winter (February) minimum. The average rainfall is comparatively low varying between 450-550 mm. The snow cover lasts for two-and-a-half to three months. However, the expression of the strong north-eastern winds in winter result in blowing away the snow cover and cause forming of thick snow-drifts, affecting the unequal distribution of soil humidity.

The water regime of the rivers, fed by the rainfall, snowfall and the karst, is predetermined by the climatic characteristics. The flow module is extremely low 0.5- 1 l/ sec/sq km predefined by the scarce rainfall, the significant evaporation and the highly penetrable loess and carbonate foundation, and the comparatively low inclination of relief.

The soils of Dobrudja/ Dobrogea are in direct relation to the loess. From the north to the south the development of carbonate soil, the typical leached and podzolised chernozems. The higher elevation sections are covered by grey forest soils.

## **BIODIVERSITY CHARACTERISTICS**

Dobrudja/ Dobrogea forms the last southernmost remnant of the Great European Steppe reaching from the Pannonian Plains of Hungary to the Ukraine-Kazakh steppes. The region preserves some of the last remaining steppe biome elements on the Old Continent. It demonstrates the transition from the steppes to the thermophylous broadleaved forests. That is the reason for which the primary steppe of Dobrudja/ Dobrogea and especially in the inland of the plateau was studded in oak forests and brush. The forests were once composed of Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) and pubescent oak (*Quercus pubescens*). Riparian longose type forests (with lianas and creeping vegetation) occurred along the river valleys.

The primary steppe, including in Dobrudja/ Dobrogea, started changing under the influence of human activities as early as the Neolith. The arable lands first replaced the more fertile forest and brush communities and latter on – the grass associations. Together with grazing they have changed the appearance of the region. Many species from neighbouring phytogeographic regions invaded the forest steppes, and the grass communities became more expressed. These, however, have been strongly influenced by man which major participation of the bread grass (*Chrysopogon gryllus*). The deforesting of Dobrudja/ Dobrogea had taken place in the historical times – there are evidences about it in the works of the chroniclers of Alexander the Great and the Roman writer Ovid, who lived in the 1st century BC Dobrudja/ Dobrogea resembled so much the Ukrainian landscape, that the Latin and Byzantine authors called it Scythia Minor. Before it was completely transformed into a cul-

tural steppe, large dry meadows and stony habitats covered substantial parts of it. In the beginning of last century the botanist Bozhimir Davidoff gave a brilliant description of the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea virgin soils with the yellow-reddish colours of its spring aspect, the diverse colour pallet in summer and the silvery-yellow pattern of fall. The same author collected data proving the existence of massive broadleaved forests, which provided shelter even for bears, till the 19th century. Some geographic names, like the Bear Valley (Ay Dere) still evidence for this.

Now-a-days the only remnants of the primary steppes and forest-steppe still occur in small patches along the dry-river valleys in the inland zone and in the coastal region where the chalk is shallowly laid and the soil-forming processes began comparatively soon in geological terms. The largely influenced by humans vegetation of Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is dominated by agricultural communities.

The forest-steppe areas in Romania are continental grasslands dominated by species of *Stipa* (*S. tirsia*, *S. lessingiana*, *S. ucrainica*), *Carex humilis*, *Chrysopogon gryllus*. The vegetation was evidently changed by human activity. Some forests were cut and some areas were used for agriculture. The typical steppe landscape is dominated by xerothermic grasslands with graminaceous species of *Agropyron*. In the dry halophytic steppe the representative species belong to genera of *Artemisia*, *Puccinellia*, *Salicornia*, *Limonium*, etc. The majority syntaxonic units are included in the *Festuco Brometea* class and especially in *Festucetea Brachypodio-Chrysopogonetalia*, *Brometalia erecti* and *Stipo-pulcherrimae-Festucetalia pallentis* orders. The coastal and halophytic vegetation cover the sand dune systems and the coastal sandy areas. Remarkable examples are the Danubian-Balcanic (*Puccinellia* sp.) halophytic grasslands in complex with halophytic vegetation (*Salicornia* sp., *Suaeda* sp., *Limonium* sp.) and halophytic Pontic grasslands with *Scirpus maritimus* var. *compactus*, *Juncus gerardi*, *J. maritimus*, *Limonium gmelinii*, *Artemisia santonicum*, etc.

In Bulgaria the situation is quite similar. Recently the country has accomplished studies for identifying its potential Natura 2000 sites. The sites identified along the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea coastline include the following habitat types<sup>2</sup>: Western Pontic steppes (BG10); Termophylous and surpa-Mediterranean oak woods (BG03); Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) (2120); *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand (1310); Hard oligomesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.(3140); Riparian mixed forest of *Quercus robur*, *Ulmus laevis* and *Ulmus minor*, *Fraxinus excelsior* or *Fraxinus angustifolia* along the great rivers (*Ulmion minoris*) (910F); Embryonic shifting dunes (2110); Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) (2120); Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation (3150); Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation (8210).

The habitats of European conservation significance are the most numerous in Kaliakra site, coinciding with the respective strict nature reserve of Kaliakra. The habitats there comprise: Reefs (1170); Vegetated sea cliffs of the Mediterranean coasts with endemic *Limonium* spp. (1240); Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*)(\*important orchid sites) (6210); Subcontinental peri-Pannonic scrub (40A0); Eastern sub-Mediterranean dry grasslands (*Scorzoneratalia villosae*) (62A0); and Submerged or partly submerged sea caves (8330).

The inland Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is characterised by lesser number and diversity of habitats. However, the regions of Harsovska reka and Suha Reka as well as the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Plateau are of a specific interest. The EU Directive 92/43 habitats identified there are: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*) (\*important orchid sites)

(6210); Thermophilous and supra-Mediterranean oak woods (BG03); *Salix alba* and *Populus alba* galleries (92A0); Eastern sub-Mediterranean dry grasslands (*Scorzoneratalia villosae*) (62A0); and Subcontinental peri-Pannonic scrub (40A0).

In terms of flora the aspect of the region of Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is predefined by the grass vegetation. It is composed mainly of gramineous grass. The total floral diversity is assessed to include more than 450 plant species. The steppe flora is mainly composed of Pontic species (32%), continental Eurasian species (27%) and definite Mediterranean element (15%). Among them are a number of flowering plants that are threatened and/or endemic. Typical for the inland sections are *Achillea clipeolata*, *Galium rubioides*, *Minuartia mesogitana*, and *Cleistogenes bulgarika*. The coastal zone is also quite rich floral components of conservation concern. The largest localities of species like narrow-leaved peony (*Paeonia tenuifolia*), *Limonium latifolia*, common rue (*Ruta graveolens*), *Sideritis syriaca*, Lessing spear-grass, and Caucasus wormwood occur in the region of Kaliakra cape, where the steppe elements are most preserved. Two local endemics: Kaliakra campion (*Silene caliacrae*) and Kaliakra centaury (*Centaurea caliacrae*) are also found.

The contemporary scarce Dobrudja/ Dobrogea forests are mostly composed of different oak species – pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), durmast oak (*Quercus petraea*), Italian oak (*Quercus frainetto*) and Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*), combined with maples, wild pears, and hornbeams. The forests cover some 15% of the area on the Bulgarian side and about 5% of the land on the Romanian side of the border. The Bulgarian section of the project region is characterised by comparatively preserved and well-managed forest-protection belts. In Romania, where these are not present, substantial desertification process is observed – soil denudation caused by wind and rain and an increasing aridity of the local microclimate. In addition, mass withering of certain trees is registered, provoked by the introduction of alien species. And last but not least the remaining forests in both countries are isolated from each other, which deprive the wildlife of European and even global importance from the ecological corridors needed for its survival.

The fauna of the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea region contains a rich variety species enlisted either in the EU Habitat and Bird Directive Annexes, in the Bern Convention Annex I or in the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. Among them are emblematic cornerstone species like the wolf (*Canis lupus*), the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna peregusna*), the steppe polecat (*Mustela eversmanni*), the pine marten (*Martes martes*), the otter (*Lutra lutra*), the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea endemic Newton hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*), the grey hamster (*Cricetulus migratorius*), the southern birch mouse (*Sicista subtilis*), the common hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*), the brown bat (*Myotis myotis*) and the long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). The number of birds exceeds 130 and the threatened among them are over 30. Some of the more important being the ruddy shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*), the red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*), the imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), the levant sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), the saker (*Falco cherrug*), the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), the stone curlew (*Burhinus oedicephalus*), the eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*), the rose coloured starling (*Pastor roseus*), the black-headed bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*). Of a special interest are also the great bustard (*Otis tarda*) and the little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) – typical steppe elements.

Given that Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is an important section of the second most important European migratory route – Via Pontica, it becomes clear that the need for a more balanced and sustainable regional development is a must and an issue of international importance. Beside the number birds

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<sup>2</sup> Only the communities listed in the Annexes to the EU Habitats Directive (considering amendments proposed by the new accession countries) are specifically mentioned, with their respective NATURA 2000 codes.

nesting in, or visiting the area during the migration, Dobrudja/ Dobrogea provides reproduction habitats for species of European importance like the golden jackal (*Canis auritus*), the long-fingered bat (*Myotis capaccinii*), the long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicila*), the barn owl (*Tyto alba*). Extremely interesting is the herpetofauna of the region - the eastern spadefoot (*Pelobates syriacus*), the Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), the large whip snake (*Coluber jugularis*), the Dahl's whip snake (*Coluber najadum*), the red-headed whip snake (*Coluber rubriceps*) - the most rare European species of this kind, the Montpelier snake (*Malpolon monspessulanus*), the rat snake (*Elaphe quatuorlineata sauroromates*), the worm snake (*Typhlops vermicularis*), the slender glass lizard (*Ophisaurus apodus*).

The Dobrudja/ Dobrogea biodiversity spatial protection is still far from being reliable. Larger protected areas occur only along the Black sea and Danube coastline, where relatively large wetland protected areas are declared in the Bulgarian section, as well as one strict nature reserve, preserving typical steppe ecosystem.

The Bulgarian coastal protected areas comprise (from the south, to the north):

- **Baltata** longose forest managed reserve (IUCN category V) – total area 198 ha. The site protects a native longose forest with its inherent flora and fauna. It is located along the valley of the Baltova Reka River.
- **Kaliakra** strict nature reserve - total area 680 ha, including 400 ha of the adjacent marine areas. Being the habitat for a variety of rare and threatened steppe species, the reserve contains important in the European scale biological diversity. The marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna peregusna*), the rose coloured starling (*Pastor roseus*), the pied wheatear (*Oenanthe pleschanka*) are among the species of extreme national and international importance breeding in the area. The adjacent cliff is the habitat for the threatened subspecies of shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*). It is also one of the sites where the globally threatened monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) had been last sighted in Bulgaria.
- **Lake Shabla** protected site (IV category IUCN) and a Ramsar site No 801 - total area 404 ha. It comprises two brackish, coastal lakes connected by an artificial canal. The lakes overlie an horizon of sand 4-5m thick deposited on top of a rich peat layer; evidence of a long marsh period. Limestone forms huge karst fields in parts of the wetland. The site is an internationally important area for the endangered Red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*), providing wintering habitat for over 75% of the world population and up to 180,000 wintering White-fronted geese (*Anser albifrons*). The site supports various species of breeding birds and endemic birds and the endangered plants *Cladium mariscus*, *Nuphar lutea*, *Nymphaea alba*. The wetland serves as water supply for domestic and industrial use, agriculture irrigation, fishing, angling and livestock grazing.
- **Lake Durankulak** protected site (IV category IUCN) and a Ramsar site No 293 - total area 350 ha. It was added to the Montreux Record on 16 June 1993. The wetland is a slightly saline, coastal lake in an advanced state of nutrient-enrichment, supplied with water by two springs. The area is important for several species of breeding birds and numerous species of wintering and staging birds. Some 70% of the whole population of the globally threatened red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*) is wintering in the region of Shabla and Durankulak lakes located near each other. A diverse algal flora consisting of over 70 species is present. Various rare and endemic fish species occur at the site. Due to the combined impacts of nutrient-enrichment, groundwater abstraction, and virtually unregulated hunting the site is particularly threatened.

- **Lake Srebarna** managed reserve (IUCN category V) – total area 1,357 ha. It is a Ramsar site No. 64, World Heritage Site, Biosphere Reserve. The site was added to the Montreux Record on 16 June 1993. The site was extended from 600 ha to 1,357 ha in 2002. It is located on the southern bank of the River Danube 18 km west of the town of Silistra, and the major part of the site is the freshwater oxbow lake Srebarna (the last extant oxbow lake along the Bulgarian bank of the Danube), including an adjacent part of the River Danube and the river island Komluka covered by seasonally flooded forest of *Salix* sp. and *Populus* sp. The lake is a eutrophic wetland densely overgrown with emergent and submerged aquatic vegetation, sustaining both representative and rare wetland habitats. It is a biodiversity hot spot with some 2,748 taxa recorded, among them many red-listed plant and animal species, including some globally threatened species, and hosts more than 50,000 migratory and wintering water birds. After a long period of deterioration due to a dam construction separating the lake from the river, the lake has suffered from, among other things, erosion of the river bed, severe nutrient-enrichment, and accelerated vegetation succession, and as a consequence the site was included in the Montreux Record in 1993. A small-scale restoration project (digging out a connecting canal) was undertaken in 1994 and conditions have been reinstated to a great extent. Poaching remains a persistent problem. A management plan, developed with support from the Ramsar Small Grants Fund, has been approved.

The inland Bulgarian Dobrudja protected areas are much lesser in size and completely insufficient. Namely the larger among them are the protected sites of **Bezhanovo** (122 ha), **Rositsa** (213 ha), **Loznitsa** (405 ha), **Tay-Kuysyu** (the Bustards' Valley 3,620 ha former steppe, last habitat of bustards in Bulgaria), **Medzhit Tabya** (17 ha), **Golyamat Cheshma** (1.5 ha), **Pametnika** (34 ha), **Karakhuz** (75 ha of native lime-tree forest), **Orlova moghila** (43 ha of remnants of steppe forests and peony locality), **Yaylata** (45 ha of typical steppe cliff along the coastline).

Several nature monuments preserve specific biodiversity features: **Alexandriiskata Gora forest** (71 ha), **Arboretum** (4 ha), **Vratata** (2.4 ha) and **Peshterata** (8.5 ha). In addition, **Suhata Reka dry valley** and **Kanagyol dry valley** are also proposed for posing under protection.

In the Romanian Dobrogea section, the protected areas are even lesser in size. These include:

NAME	TYPE	SURFACE (HA)
Cheia	Complex	285.00
Valul lui Traian	Complex	5.00
Istria-Nuntasi	Complex	120.00
Grindul Chituc-Golovita-Smeica	Complex	900.00
Hagieni forest	Flora	207.40
Alah-bair hill	Flora	25.00
Fantanita-murfatlar	Flora	19.70
Dumbraveni forest	Flora	345.70
Canaraua Fetii	Flora	168.30
Agigea's dunes	Flora	25.00

NAME	TYPE	SURFACE (HA)
Techirghiol Lake	Fauna	10.00
Esechioi forest	Fauna	168.10
Credinta fossil place	Paleontologic	6.00
Seimeni fossil place	Paleontologic	0.50
Topalu recife	Paleontologic	8.00
Aliman fossil place	Paleontologic	14.62
Cernavoda fossil place	Paleontologic	3.00
Gura Dobrogei with Lilioci and La Adam caves	Speleologic	15.00
Limanu cave	Speleologic	25.30

Apparently the protected area network in Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is underdeveloped and need serious efforts to meet the conservation needs of the globally important biodiversity surviving in the region. Moreover, the extensive coastal region is quite favourable for designating a cross-border marine pro-



tected area. The bases for this exist – Romania has already designated a marine protected area of 5,000 ha, between the isobaths of 5 and 26 meters, just north off the Bulgarian-Romanian border. It is worth investing efforts in designating a larger protected area, desirably with a nature park status, comprising terrestrial and marine sections.

Both the steppe elements preserved so far and their natural habitats are posed under significant pressure in the whole Dobrudja/ Dobrogea region. The steppes have been ploughed up; the forests have almost completely disappeared. The vast wetlands have been drained and converted to agricultural areas, or destroyed as a result of dyke construction, alteration of natural river courses, conversion of valleys and lakes to reservoirs, and conversion of native forests to poplar and locust plantations.

The intensive tourism development has added to the negative impact caused from human activities, especially along the Black Sea coast. Beside the large resorts constructed in the middle of last century lots of new complexes were built in the last 5 years and the existing ones were significantly enlarged. The number of visitors has increased by tens of times. The intentions for mass tourism development are still increasing and the pressure on nature resources is expected to limit critical limits.

The introduction of nature-friendly resource use techniques is of a paramount necessity to ensure the survival of the rich biological diversity of a worldwide value. Favourable options in this direction will be the encouraging of sustainable agriculture and development of ecotourism. The first may seem not so realistic, given the large scale intensive cultivation of the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea plains, but still steps to promote the establishment of wildlife corridors/ habitats within these fields should be undertaken as soon as possible. This should be combined with a massive environmental awareness rising programme for local farmers and authorities. The ecotourism development options, on the other hand should be carefully studied and detailed proposals developed, including cost/ benefit and stakeholder analysis.

All project ideas presented below should serve for development of a general framework, to provide more programme oriented approach. Horizontal relations between them should be established and maintained to ensure the long-term sustainability of each activity.

## **THEMATIC FIELD SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL LAND USE POLICY: STRENGTHENING OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE AND THE PROCUREMENT OF ADEQUATE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR LAND USE PLANNING**

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### **PROJECT 1: ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

#### *Description of the proposal: objectives and cross-border effect*

This section of the proposal envisages the establishment of Joint Regional Planning Committee to discuss and propose solutions to issues concerning both the biotic and abiotic environment. The key element of this section of the proposal is the effort to provide for informed public participation of representative stakeholders into the regional decision-making process. The informed public participation involves not only the information aspect, but also the capacity building and increase the nature conservation awareness among different stakeholders. This requires establishment of regional-wide cross-border “dialogue platform” – the Committee. It will be a multi-stakeholder entity designed to discussing, finding solutions and resolving conflicts in view of significant regional cross-border environmental topics. This is also like to catalyse the process of consolidation of the key stakeholders and mobilising them for advocating the nature protection and bringing it in the focus of the political and public agenda.

In addition, local dynamic dialogue groups at the national level, i.e. one in Romania and one in Bulgaria, are envisaged to be set in order to ensure the inclusion of nationally important topics that also have international dimension. These groups could be either mono- or multi-stakeholder ones, depending upon the issues discussed and needs identified.

The methods of work largely involve initiating, organising and coordinating public debate through the establishment of a Joint Regional Planning Committee building upon the Romanian and Bulgarian national thematic and/ or sectoral forums of the stakeholders identified. The main objective being to provide informed public participation in the regional decision-making and policy formulation process, concluding with the development of a Regional Cross-border Sustainable Development Strategy.

The project is intended to open and explore new partnerships, e.g. these among the local administrations and the business and NGOs. This tool suggests for ensuring the necessary networking and facilitating capacities by hiring experienced specialists.

Substantial element of this project is the region-wide opinion poll to be carried out among the stakeholders involved in the beginning and respectively the end of the project, to provide valuable indicators for the changes provoked by the project.

To be prepared for the above-described significant role the stakeholders will be provided with specific training. Important aspect here is that the different stakeholders will be brought together at the trainings thus increasing the opportunities for exchanges and sharing opinions and ideas. The specific work with the stakeholders is also viewed as a way to continue the know-how transfer from countries of excellence within the EU and Bulgaria and Romania.

### *Potential leading and cooperation partners*

The leading partner on this topic could either be the Constanta County Administration/ Constanta County Council or the Dobrich District Administration. Gradually other interested counties/ districts from the broader cross-border region, e.g. Tulchea, Silistra, Russe, etc., may join the process.

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### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

This section has no investment part.

### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The capacity building part, however, is quite substantial. It includes the:

- Carrying out a stakeholder analysis in the two regions.
- Identifying the concrete environmental issues to debate: like, water/ air/ soils pollution; erosion; wind-mills; development of Natura 2000; infrastructure, etc.
- Organising and carrying out of series of working meetings with the identified stakeholders for preparing the cross-border Joint Regional Planning Committee; its work to be supported by a Technical Working Group, also involved in the generation of the regional Geographic Information System (GIS).
- Establishing a national multi-stakeholder platform – Joint Regional Planning Committee, meeting once/twice a year to facilitate the taking of regionally recognised decisions concerning concrete issues.
- Providing methodological, logistic and technical support for the national level dialogues platforms.
- Establishing national dynamic dialogue groups between Constanta County and the Dobrich District, local administrations, PAs staffs, business, NGOs, etc., to discuss local agenda and propose concrete actions.
- Capacity building of the stakeholder groups chosen at national level: in networking, conflict resolution, project management, communication, campaigning, development of democratic structures, etc.
- Organising the representative opinion poll to register stakeholders attitude towards nature protection in the beginning and in the end of the project. This should be carried out by experienced national agency to guarantee the reliability of the results
- Seite: 14  
Organising a joint study tour with officials from Dobrudja/ Dobrogea to at least two different European (EU 25) countries to learn about regional and land use planning, nature conservation, conflict resolution methods, the use of GIS, etc.

- Training in using, administering and maintaining GIS and Information and Communication system for regional purposes.

#### *Tentative Costs in EURO: 590,000 (100%)*

• Hiring experts for stakeholder analysis and design of multi-dialogue tools .....	20,000
• Meetings of the cross-border committee.....	60,000
• Facilitators .....	20,000
• Meeting materials .....	20,000
• Meetings of the local groups .....	40,000
• Study Tour to at least two of the EU countries.....	150,000
• Training for stakeholder groups .....	100,000
• Training by experts from countries of excellence.....	100,000
• Opinion polls.....	30,000
• Promotion campaigns .....	50,000
• TOTAL.....	590,000

#### *Estimated project duration*

The project is envisaged to last for three years. All the activities, except of the opinion polls will be permanent. The opinion polls are to be carried out in the beginning and in the end of the project.

Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities

The follow up activities should be ensured mainly through the Constanta County Administration/ Constanta County Council and the Dobrich District Administration. Additional support could be provided through EU channelled funding like INTERREG and LEADER.

#### *Remarks*

Proposal discussed with:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **PROJECT 2: INTRODUCE CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR LAND-USE PLANNING: GENERATE AND MAINTAIN REGIONAL GIS**

### *Description of the proposal: objectives and cross-border effect*

This proposal strives for the generation of a regional cross-border Geographic Information System and making it operational, given that the introduction of contemporary management tools is vital for the long-term maintenance and management of the environment and its sustainable use. In the broader sense this includes both the biotic factors (biodiversity) and the abiotic ones (soils, water and air). The equipment needed for the functioning of the system will be purchased and installed in stations on both sides of the border. The proposal also envisages training of the staff to be responsible for the GIS generation and maintenance.

The Joint Regional Planning Committee proposed in the previous section of this package - again covering issues of both the biotic and abiotic environment - shall undoubtedly benefit from the introduction of the contemporary spatial management tools, and namely the regional GIS of Dobrudja / Dobrogea. The development of a geographical informational system in compliance with the highest international standards will also contribute to the enhancement and the mainstreaming of the information. The databases will be adequate to the needs of the region providing optimal analysis basis to guide the managerial conclusions and diagnoses. This GIS system will become a sine qua non tool in decision-making process, e.g. the adoption of social-economic development strategies, prognoses and programs of the county/ districts; the coordination of the activities of the local councils of the communes and towns with a view to providing public services; the approval of the buildings, maintenance and modernisation of roads, bridges, as well as the entire infrastructure belonging to the county communication means; the approval of the technical-economic documentation for the county interest investment works; for elaboration of regional trans-border nature conservation strategies; proposing solutions and actions in emergency cases: excessive flooding, fires, species overpopulation/ calamities, etc.

The GIS or large parts of it, could also be made available to the general public – schools, students, resources users, investors, etc., thus enabling them to take informed decisions and participate effectively in the process of sustainable development of the region. The tool will be developed will service not only the environmental but also other sectors, like infrastructure development, public health, industry, etc., could benefit from the existence of regional trans-border GIS. The decisions taken on this basis shall concern the whole cross-border region as the System shall serve to evaluate the effect of the decisions taken on the environment.

The region already established certain fundamentals in this direction. The so-called Bulgarian-Swiss Forest Programme has initiated separate effort for the elaboration of a model GIS for General Toshevo Local Forestry Station. The Forest Research and Management Institute of Romania in Bucharest has also began digitising all available forest information by local forestry stations. The Russe District Government (part of the district falling within the planning region) plans to elaborate a regional GIS and make it partially publicly available.

Besides the above use as a decision-making facilitation tool, the very process of elaboration – data compilation and processing, the training of the staff and the further operation of the regional trans-border GIS will play the role of a mediator and facilitator of the cooperation for the various stakeholders on both sides of the border both nationally and in the cross-border aspect.

### *Potential leading and cooperation partners*

The leading partner on this topic could either be the Constanta County Administration/ Constanta County Council or the Dobrich District Administration. Gradually other interested counties/ districts from the broader cross-border region, e.g. Tulchea, Silistra, Russe, etc., may join the process.

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### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The investment comprises IT hard and software, suitable to establish a comprehensive Regional Information System including Content Management and Web Mapping components. The system components, like GIS, Databases, Webserver and others, shall be suitable to generate, edit, visualize and present of Geographic Information from different sectors like Nature Conservation, Ecotourism, Urban Planning, Agriculture, Forestry etc., as well as its long-term maintenance and utilizing in the regional decision-making process. The different GIS components will create the backbone of a regional GIS infrastructure. All investments shall be accompanied by a comprehensive training to educate a critical mass of system administrators and users.<sup>3</sup>

The following tentative list gives an overview of the equipment required for setting up of Geographical Information System:

- 2 plotters format A1
- 2 scanner A1
- 2 digitiser boards A0
- 8 graphic stations including software needed
- 2 Web Server including software
- 8 licenses of a comprehensive Geographical Information System

One actual set of high resolution satellite images or aerial photographs of the entire Dobrudja / Dobrogea region, pre-conditioned that such information is not available already from other national or regional administrations.

### *Tentative Costs in EURO: 200,000 (66%)*

To make the GIS operation the following information has to be procured by the County /District themselves, either by generating it or buying it from other administrations in Bucharest or Sofia: information layers regarding the natural resources and the territorial organisation of the region constituting the informational support needed for the spatial representation of the specific databases (the

county boundaries, administrative units and their borders, roads, railways, surface waters, land-use, the grid of Romania and Bulgaria, etc.)

*Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The capacity building component is to cover the training of eight persons from both countries in using the GIS package to be procured within this project. This involves elaboration of databases and spatial editing of data.

Substantial part of the GIS development comprises the compiling and uploading the data into the databases and the two district/ county administrations should allocate the budget for this. The training of the local staffs for doing it will be provided through this budget. The analyses and interpretation of data and their transporting to the respective decision-making institutions will result in providing the final product of this effort – the elaboration of regional sustainable development plans, where the nature conservation should be the red-line or the cross-cutting issue.

In addition, six to ten persons from each country, representing the different stakeholder members of the Committee should be trained in basic project cycle and human resource management techniques.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** .....**100,000 (33%)**
- Database development.....20,000
- Training the staff.....10,000
- Training the stakeholders .....10,000
- Elaboration of regional sustainable development plan .....60,000
- **TOTAL** .....**100,000**

*Estimated project duration*

The project is envisaged to last approximately two years, including: organising tenders and purchase of the equipment: 8-10 months; training: 6 months; database generation and GIS engineering: 6 months.

It should be noted that some of the activities will be implemented in parallel, e.g. the equipment purchase and the database generation.

*Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities*

The follow up activities should be ensured mainly through the Constanta County Administration/ Constanta County Council and the Dobrich District Administration. Additional support could be provided through bilateral agreements, such as the Bulgarian-Swiss Forest Programme, now developing the General Toshevo model GIS or EU channeled funding like INTERREG and LEADER.

*Remarks*

Proposal discussed with:

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<sup>3</sup> Total investment costs: ca. 200,000 Euro including the aerial photographs.



## **THEMATIC FIELD ECOTOURISM: FEASIBILITY STUDY, ESTABLISHMENT OF A SMALL GRANT SCHEME AND A NATURE TOURISM NETWORK DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT THE ECOTOURISM IN DOBRUDJA/DOBROGEA CROSS-BORDER REGION**

### **PROJECT 1: FEASIBILITY STUDY ON AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A SMALL GRANT SCHEME FOR DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE TOURISM IN THE DOBRUDJA/ DOBROGEA CROSS-BORDER REGION**

#### *Description of the proposal: objectives and cross-border effect*

Ecotourism development represents a proven tool for biodiversity conservation, combining the preservation of natural ecosystems with the sustainable development. The region of Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is characterised by the occurrence of largely underused potential for the development of alternative tourism forms. This potential should be comprehensively assessed, developed and promoted.

The tourism industry makes an important contribution to employment creation and economic growth in the throughout the cross-border region. The Bulgarian district of Dobrich and the Romanian County of Constanta have benefited from the impact of a flourishing tourism industry attracting both domestic and foreign tourists. The main markets are Russia, Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as neighbouring countries. The tourism assets of the Romanian Southeastern Development Region are also considered diverse and attractive and have facilitated the development of a domestically and internationally competitive tourism industry.

However, the tourism (the mass - and the alternative tourism, to the extent it exists) is concentrated only along the Black Sea coastline, while the inland of the region remains largely unknown as a tourist destination.

Bulgaria is amongst the few countries to have developed National Ecotourism Strategy (<http://www.ecotourism.bulgariatravel.org/>), as well as the Action Plan for its implementing. Regional plans have also been elaborated. Two of them cover the Bulgarian section of the project region: The Ecotourism Destination Northern Black Sea Coast and North Eastern Stara Planina Mountain and The Danube River Wetlands Ecotourism Destination.

The presence of specialised alternative tourism national organisations, which can provide the know-how and experience needed and can implement case studies for the region is viewed as a good basis. Such entities are:

- in Bulgaria: the Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (BAAT) (<http://www.alternative-tourism.org/>) and the Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism (BARET) (<http://www.baret.org/>), and
- in Romania: the National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism (ANTREC) (<http://www.antrec.ro/>) and the Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER) (<http://www.eco-romania.ro>)

The above potential, however, needs to be assessed and recommendations for its future development should be made. This could be organised through a feasibility study. Both countries have sufficient national capacity for carrying it out – the above specialised organisations. The study should also consider and make linkage to all relevant strategic and planning documents, such as national and regional development strategies and plans, environment and biodiversity protection strategies

and action plans, ecotourism strategies, etc. The documents and processes developed within or resulting from the CBC, such as the Joint Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Forests Management Plan currently developed should also be considered, etc.

The implementing of this task involves the creation of a multi-disciplinary team of experts comprising tourism experts, sociologists, biologists, foresters, specialists from the humanitarian sciences, etc. The study should cover the whole region and investigate all alternative tourism options, including nature -, cultural -, history -, monastery -, wine -, rural -, etc., tourism. The study should identify the concrete regions/ localities for work and define the specific actions/ steps to be undertaken to allow the ecotourism happen/ develop.

It should provide an overview of the existing funding sources covering not only the grants but also the low-interest loans for alternative tourism development. This information should be systemised and included in the below manuals developed for local stakeholders and the larger audience.

Small grants scheme should be developed and proposed, including the elaboration of its rules of operation. Model projects should be developed, funded and implemented through this scheme.

The same team should develop training manuals for the future owners, entrepreneurs in the alternative tourism.

Finally the feasibility study will be presented to the local stakeholders in the region and promotion campaign should be organised.

#### *Potential leading and cooperation partners*

The leading partner on this topic could either be the Constanta County Administration/ Constanta County Council or the Dobrich District Administration. Gradually other interested counties/ districts from the broader cross-border region, e.g. Tulchea, Silistra, Russe, etc., may join the process.

- Romania, Constanta County Administration/ Constanta County Council  
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- Romania, Constanta Prefecture  
Mrs. Ileana Gugoasa  
tel.: 40 241 611 335  
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- Russe Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water  
Ministry of Environment and Water  
Mirena Boteva, Director  
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e-mail: boteva@riosv.ruse.bg
- Bulgaria, Dobrich District Administration  
Mr. Dincher Mehmedov Hadjiev;  
District Governor  
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fax: 359 58 601 249  
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Mr. Dragoy Dimov Dragoev; Secretary;  
tel.: 359 58 437 60  
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- Romania, Constanta County Administration/ Constanta County Council  
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Ministry of Environment and Water  
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In addition to the leading partners, the specialised organisations for alternative tourism in both countries: the Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism and the Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism, and the Romanian National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism and the Association of Ecotourism in Romania, should be attracted as key implementing partners.

#### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

This section has no investment part.

#### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** .....**486,000 (100%)**
- Hiring national experts for feasibility studies in both countries .....100,000
- Travel and per diems.....60,000
- Purchase of maps, pictures, etc. ....10,000
- Meetings of the local groups.....36,000
- Training manuals production/ publishing .....30,000
- Development of small grants scheme.....50,000
- Implement small grants scheme to fund model alternative tourism .....200,000
- **TOTAL** .....**486,000**

#### *Estimated project duration*

The project is envisaged to last for the three years, as the first year will be dedicated to the elaboration of the feasibility study and the following two shall be dedicated to developing and implementing the small grants scheme.

#### *Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities*

The follow up activities should be ensured mainly through the Regional Forestry Boards, protected areas administrations, Regional Tourism Councils, Regional Environmental Authorities, etc. After the accession to the EU additional financial support could be provided through INTERREG, Life or LEADER programs.

## Remarks

Proposal discussed with:

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### **PROJECT 2: DEVELOPMENT OF A “NATURE TOURISM NETWORK” ALONG BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER, INCLUDING PROTECTED AREAS AND GAME BREEDING STATIONS**

#### *Description of the proposal: objectives and cross-border effect*

The region of Dobrudja / Dobrogea is a part of the Lower Danube Euroregion. It offers a range of natural and cultural attractions including Sreburna Lake – Managed Reserves and internationally designated Ramsar Site and a World Heritage Property, Durankulak and Shabla Lakes – Protected Sites and internationally designated Ramsar Sites, Kaliakra Nature Reserve, the Zlatni Pyasatsi and Russenski Lom Nature Parks, the mineral water springs of Tuzlata. In addition, there are two World Heritage cultural properties within the closest Bulgarian neighbourhood: the Ivanovo Rock Churches and the Sveshtari Thracian Tombs (the so-called Valley of the Thracian Kings). The tourism assets of the Romanian Southeastern Development Region are also considered diverse and attractive and have facilitated the development of a domestically and internationally competitive tourism.

However, the cultural and natural richness of Dobrudja / Dobrogea (and especially it's inner part) is not properly interpreted and remains completely underused for tourism purposes, although the above-mentioned Bulgarian National Ecotourism Strategy and Action Plan briefly mentions it. The region need to develop a joint attractive tourism package in order to be able to utilise to the maximum its potential. Such tourism package could be developed under the motto “nature tourism network” and encompass the existing protected areas and the preserved nature of the state game breeding stations, but it might also include some of the cultural and historical tourism attractions. It would be best for the design of the product that it was preceded by the feasibility study on the alternative tourism potential. Such a study will provide justification on the design of the network – the identification of the key sites, “nodes of the net” and the activities for their further elaboration and transforming into an “actual” tourism product.

Further on - the development of the “nature tourism network” will be a pilot case study, having the objective to demonstrate the whole process of development of alternative tourism product and possibly the benefits from such a soft mode of nature resources use. Steps in the direction of designing a cross-border nature focused tourism product are already made. The WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme elaborated the so-called Lower Danube Ecotourist Routes, encompassing and combining the areas of Russenski Lom Nature Park, the Ivanovo Rock Churches Heritage Property, the Svestari Thracian Tombs Heritage Property, the Srebarna Heritage Property and Biosphere Reserve and the Danube Delta Heritage Property and Biosphere Reserve.

In addition part of the infrastructure possessed and managed by the Russe and Varna Regional Forest Boards (RFB) could be used for development of ecotourism. These are primarily the state game breeding stations, where the best (in terms of landscape and biodiversity values) forests are still preserved, where facilities exist like hunting huts, higher quality roads, observation towers, hides, they are well equipped (4x4 vehicles, binoculars, etc.), which could be used as main or secondary access points for the development of ecotourism. Last but not least, they also have the human potential – well trained in wildlife tracking, staff. The Russe RFB expressed clearly their readiness for this. The RFBs would need only some additional support – mainly training and partially some equipment.

The discussions in the region have also indicated that there is substantial interest for establishing information visitors centres and/ or refurbishing and updating the programmes of the existing ones. There the tourists should be getting introduced to the ecotourism opportunities/ packages in the concrete locality with references to the overall ecotourism opportunities of the whole cross-border region. This may include, for example, visits of different protected areas, photo-safaris, cruises and sailing along the Danube, horse-back-riding, rock-climbing in the canyons, etc.

Establishment of several information visitors centres has already been initiated. Some of them are still ideas, and others (Russenski Lom Directorate Information Centre in Russe, Le Balkan Foundation Information Centre near Durankulak Lake, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation Information Centre in Bulgarevo Village, near the Kaliakra Nature Reserve, etc.) are already established but need further support and improvement. If some centres are adequately equipped and their staff properly trained, they could not only service the tourism, but also be used as nature conservation scientific stations, as well as outposts in cases of emergencies, i.e. insects calamities, epizooty cases like the bird flu, etc.

Thus the project on development of a “nature tourism network” along both sides of the border should compulsorily include all favourable sites - protected areas, game breeding stations, information centres, etc. It should envisage the implementation of the activities from the management plans of the protected territories, linked to the ecotourism. To ensure that this “nature tourism network” will be designed and promoted as an unique package, a joint Managing Board should be established. It will approve the corporate identity design and supervise that all the products will comply with it. All of the items proposed below should be preliminarily agreed with the board.

The typical activities include the design and development of interpretative centres and trails, including the elaboration and installation of information boards, interactive elements, production of promotion materials both written and souvenirs. It is important to also provide facilities for disabled people. The access roads also need rehabilitation.

Part of this network could become the former People’s Park of Kobakluka by Dobrich, the forest botanic garden (dendrium) close to General Toshevo, etc. Such sites would need rehabilitation,

elaboration and installation of interpretative infrastructure, development of kids' informal education programmes, playgrounds, as well as facilities for adult tourists like picnic sites, stopovers, etc.

The project must ensure the adequate training of the staff to be involved with ecotourism products servicing. These are the people implementing the ecotourism activities – the people servicing the interpretative centres and trails, implementing the environmental education programmes, etc. The project should also provide for networking and know-how exchange among the staff and the managers involved.

The project is also envisaged to ensure the promotion of the “nature tourism network” as a tourist destination. This could be done through organising visits for tour operators and journalists from the national media and foreigners to the region. Besides the new information centres, trails, and facilities, the rural houses/ hostels will be promoted.

#### *Potential leading and cooperation partners*

The leading partners for this section of the project could be the:

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The cooperation partners could be the local forest administrations and game breeding stations, Nature Parks' Directorates, conservation NGOs, the Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (BAAT) and the Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism (BARET) in Bulgaria and the National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism (ANTREC) and the Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER) in Romania.

*Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

This part covers the design and/ or refurbishing information visitors centres, the elaboration and installation of information boards in the field, production of the elements of interactive programmes, construction of playgrounds, picnic sites, stopovers, rehabilitation of access roads, etc.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO per one unit:** ..... **85,000 (n. a.)**
- Construction of 1 information centre  
(100 m<sup>2</sup>/ prefabricated house; including the electricity, pipelines, sewage, etc.) ... 30,000
- Refurbishment of 1 information centre  
(100 m<sup>2</sup>; including the electricity, pipelines, sewage, etc.) ..... 20,000
- Furniture 1 information centre  
(furniture, TV/ audiovisuals, displaying furniture, etc.) ..... 20,000
- Construction of one trail  
with 10 information boards, stopovers, interactive elements, kids' facilities, etc. .... 25,000
- Rehabilitation of 1 km forest road ..... 10,000
- **TOTAL per unit**..... **85,000**

*Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

This section covers the hiring of experts to design the interpretative programmes for the centres and the trails, the design of the interactive elements, production of promotion materials both written and souvenirs, the kids' informal education programmes.

The costs of the training of the staff to be involved with ecotourism products servicing is included, as well as the expenses for the networking and know-how exchange among the staff and the managers involved.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **760,000 (n.a.)**
- Facilitate the establishment of the "nature tourism network" managing board  
(meetings, communications, translation, facilitation, etc.) ..... 50,000
- Develop the corporate identity of the "nature tourism network" ..... 50,000
- Hiring experts to design the interpretative programmes  
for the centres and the trails, the kids' informal education programmes ..... 200,000
- Production of printed promotion materials,  
including books, booklets, posters, leaflets, etc. .... 100,000
- Souvenirs, local craftsmen to be encouraged ..... 80,000
- Training of local staff/ managers ..... 100,000
- Meetings of the local staff/ managers ..... 80,000
- Promotion with tour operators and journalists  
(through site visits, also foreign journalists) ..... 100,000
- **TOTAL**..... **760,000**

*Estimated project duration*

The project is envisaged to last for three years. The first year will be dedicated to the establishment of the board, identify the sites of the "green network", preliminary studies, design, and other mostly



planning activities. The second year will be occupied with the constructions, production of materials and training. The third will be spent on mounting of the facilities, additional training, promotion, changes required identified by the experience.

#### *Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities*

The follow up activities should be ensured mainly through the Regional Forestry Boards, protected areas administrations, Regional Tourism Councils, Regional Environmental Authorities, etc. After the accession to the EU additional financial support could be provided through INTERREG, Life or LEADER programs.

#### *Remarks*

Proposal discussed with:

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## THEMATIC FIELD PROTECTED TERRITORIES: ENHANCEMENT OF THE SPATIAL PROTECTION IN THE CROSS-BORDER DOBRUDJA/DOBROGEA REGION

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### *Description of the proposal: objectives and cross-border effect*

Dobrudja/ Dobrogea forms the last southernmost remnant of the Great European Steppe and the region still preserves some of the last remaining steppe biome elements on the Old Continent. The steppe in the region started changing under the human impact as early as the Neolith. The steppes have been ploughed up; the forests have almost completely disappeared or fatally fragmented. The vast wetlands have been drained and converted to tillage, or destroyed as a result of dyke construction, alteration of natural river courses, conversion of valleys and lakes to reservoirs, and conversion of native forests to poplar and locust plantations. The intensive tourism development has added to the negative impact caused from human activities, especially along the Black sea coast. Beside the large coastal resorts constructed in the middle of last century, lots of new seaside resort complexes were built in the last 5 years and the existing ones were significantly enlarged. The number of visitors has increased by tens of times. The intentions for mass tourism development along the Black Sea coast are still increasing and the pressure on nature resources is expected to limit critical limits.

At the same time the existing spatial protection in Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is still far from being reliable. Some protected areas occur only along the Black Sea and Danube coastline, where wetland protected areas are declared in the Bulgarian section, as well as only one strict nature reserve, preserving typical steppe ecosystem. The inland Dobrudja/ Dobrogea almost lacks protected areas.

The Bulgarian coastal protected areas comprise (from the south, to the north):

- **Baltata** longose forest managed reserve (IUCN category V) with a total area of 198 ha, protecting a native longose forest with its inherent flora and fauna and located along the valley of the Batova Reka River.
- **Kaliakra** strict nature reserve with a total area 680 ha, including 400 ha of the adjacent marine areas. It contains important in the European scale biological diversity, like the marbled polecat, the rose coloured starling, the pied wheatear, and the adjacent cliff is the habitat for the threatened subspecies of shag. It is also one of the sites where the globally threatened monk seal had been last sighted in Bulgaria.
- **Lake Shabla** protected site and a Ramsar site No 801 with a total area of 404 ha. It comprises two brackish, coastal lakes connected by an artificial canal. The site is an internationally important area for the endangered Red-breasted goose, providing wintering habitat for over 75% of the world population and up to 180,000 wintering white-fronted geese. The site supports various species of breeding birds and endemic birds and the endangered plants *Cladium mariscus*, *Nuphar lutea*, *Nymphaea alba*. The wetland serves as water supply for domestic and industrial use, agriculture irrigation, fishing, angling and livestock grazing.
- **Lake Durankulak** protected site and a Ramsar site No 293 with a total area of 350 ha, added to the Montreux Record on 16 June 1993. The area is important for several species of breeding birds and numerous species of wintering and staging birds, some 70% of the whole population of the globally threatened red-breasted goose is wintering in the region of Shabla and Durankulak lakes located near each other. A diverse algal flora consisting of over 70 species is present. Various rare and endemic fish species occur at the site.

- **Lake Srebarna** is the last extant oxbow lake along the Bulgarian bank of the Danube. The site is managed reserve with a total area of 1,357 ha is a Ramsar site No. 64, World Heritage Property and a Biosphere Reserve. The site was added to the Montreux Record on 16 June 1993. The major part of the site is the freshwater oxbow lake Srebarna, including an adjacent part of the River Danube and the river island Komluka covered by seasonally flooded forest of *Salix* sp. and *Populus* sp. The lake is a eutrophic wetland densely overgrown with emergent and submerged aquatic vegetation, sustaining both representative and rare wetland habitats. It is a biodiversity hot spot with some 2,748 taxa recorded, among them many red-listed plant and animal species, including some globally threatened species, and hosts more than 50,000 migratory and wintering water birds.

The inland Bulgarian Dobrudja / Dobrogea protected areas are much lesser in size and completely insufficient. Namely the larger among them are the protected sites of **Bezhanovo** (122 ha), **Rositsa** (213 ha), **Loznitsa** (405 ha), **Tay-Kuysyu** (the Bustards' Valley 3,620 ha former steppe, last habitat of bustards in Bulgaria), **Medzhit Tabya** (17 ha), **Golyamat Cheshma** (1.5 ha), **Pametnika** (34 ha), **Karakhuz** (75 ha of native lime-tree forest), **Orlova moghila** (43 ha of remnants of steppe forests and peony locality), **Yaylata** (45 ha of typical steppe cliff along the coastline).

Several nature monuments preserve specific biodiversity features: **Alexandriiskata Gora forest** (71 ha), **Arboretum** (4 ha), **Vratata** (2.4 ha) and **Peshterata** (8.5 ha). In addition, **Suhata Reka dry valley** and **Kanagyol dry valley** are also proposed for posing under protection.

In the Romanian Dobrudja/Dobrogea section, the protected areas are even lesser in size. These include:

NAME	TYPE	SURFACE (HA)
Cheia	Complex	285.00
Valul lui Traian	Complex	5.00
Istria-Nuntasi	Complex	120.00
Grindul Chituc-Golovita-Smeica	Complex	900.00
Hagieni Forest	Flora	207.40
Alah-bair Hill	Flora	25.00
Fantanita-Murfatlar	Flora	19.70
Dumbraveni Forest	Flora	345.70
Canaraua Fetii	Flora	168.30
Agigea's dunes	Flora	25.00

NAME	TYPE	SURFACE (HA)
Techirghiol Lake	Fauna	10.00
Esechioi Forest	Fauna	168.10
Credinta fossil place	Paleontologic	6.00
Seimeni fossil place	Paleontologic	0.50
Topalu recife	Paleontologic	8.00
Aliman fossil place	Paleontologic	14.62
Cernavoda fossil place	Paleontologic	3.00
Gura Dobrogei with Lillieci and La Adam caves	Speleologic	15.00
Limanu cave	Speleologic	25.30

Apparently the protected area network in Dobrudja / Dobrogea is underdeveloped and need serious efforts to meet the conservation needs of the globally important biodiversity surviving in the region. Moreover, the extensive coastal region is quite favourable for designating a cross-border marine protected area. The bases for this exist – Romania has already designated a marine protected area of 5,000 ha, between the isobaths of 5 and 26 meters, just north off the Bulgarian-Romanian border. It is worth investing efforts in designating a larger protected area, desirably with a nature park status, comprising terrestrial and marine sections.

The present proposal focuses on improving the management of the existing protected areas and enlargement of the whole network in view of both countries EU accession process. The latest involving the finalising and promotion of the Natura 2000 network and the establishment of the respective ecological corridors. The following projects are proposed to foster these processes:

## PROJECT 1: STRENGTHENING OF THE MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING PROTECTED AREAS

The strengthening of the existing protected areas, especially the smaller-sized and lower category ones, i.e. the protected sites and some of the reserves, that have no international designation, requires elaboration of Management Plans considering the best European practices. They should be developed in parallel, which will guarantee coherence of their management objectives, measures prescribed, etc. It is also recommended that the teams to develop them include both Bulgarian and Romanian specialists, so that they could exchange experience and knowledge. This will put the basis of a fruitful future cooperation. The management plans should be developed through a participatory approach. This will enhance the public understanding for their need, objectives and tasks and increase the local ownership on their prescriptions (rules and regulations). On its side, this increases the chances for compliance with these rules and regulations. The sites identified so far along both sides of the border for which management plans should be developed include:

- in Romania – 6 main model sites: Hagieni, Dumbraveni, Canaraua Feteii, Esehioi, Murfatlar, and Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Gorge.
- in Bulgaria – 6 main model sites: Loznitsa, Rositsa, Bezanovo, Beli Lom, Suha reka, Kanukgiol (the last two pipelined for official declaration).

The implementation of the fundamental/ key priority activities included in the management plans should be undertaken. This could be organised through a small grants scheme. The process of its establishment includes also the elaboration of rules of operation and selection criteria. The implementing of these scheme will encourage the preceding public participation in the management plans development. The local stakeholders (e.g. land-owners, farmers and other resource users, NGOs, scientific and academic institutions) should be supported to develop projects and implement them through this scheme.

Training of the local administrations responsible for the management of the respective protected areas is recommended. The training topics should cover: fundamentals of the conservation biology; legal framework; development and implementation of management plans; species management; issues of visitor management and safety; sustainable development topics (accent on regional possibilities for sustainable resource use); basic training in fundraising (accent on regionally important funding sources).

It is highly recommendable that the management plans developed within this project are linked with the other activities recommended at the regional level, especially the ones from the Ecotourism, Forestry and Species Thematic Fields.

### *Potential leading and cooperation partners*

The leading partners for this section of the project could be the:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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The cooperation partners could be the local forestries and game breeding stations, regional and national conservation NGOs, scientific and academic institutions from both countries.

Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget

The proposed project has no investment part. If any capital investments were needed, they would be identified within the management planning process. Part of them could be funded through the proposed Small Grants Scheme.

Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget

This section covers the hiring of experts to compile and analyze the information and draft the management plans. It is suggested that two teams are formed to compile and analyze the information, and subsequently draft the plans (any additional studies necessary are also envisaged). The Bulgarian and Romanian team should cooperate very closely to ensure the management compatibility of the prescriptive sections of the documents drafted. The public participation process should be funded within this section, as well as the establishment of the Small Grants Scheme. The costs of the training of the staff managing the respective protected areas is included.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **1,000,000 (100%)**
- Hire a team to compile and analyse the information (two teams – one for each country), and draft management plans (6 in each country), including field studies, digital maps production, etc. .... 200,000
- Consultation/ public participation process – facilitating meetings, rooms, production of information and promotion materials in both countries..... 100,000
- Develop and operate Small Grants Scheme (two schemes – one in each country) ..... 500,000
- Training of local staff/ managers ..... 200,000
- **TOTAL**..... **1,000,000**

### *Estimated project duration*

The project is envisaged to last for two years. The first year will be dedicated to the compilation and analysis, and the management plans drafting. The training and development of the grants scheme will also be accomplished in the first year. The management plans consultation processes are to be organised in the second half of first year. The implementation activities through the grant scheme will be carried out in the second year.

### *Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities*

The follow up activities should be ensured mainly through the existing national protected areas funding mechanisms, regional forestry boards/ ROMSILVA, regional environmental authorities, etc. Additional support could be provided through EU channeled funding like LIFE, Natura 2000.

### *Remarks*

Proposal discussed with:

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## **PROJECT 2: ENLARGEMENT OF THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK**

This activity requires comprehensive expert assessment of the protected areas coverage. It should be made specifically in view of the pending accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union in 2007. Team of experts should be appointed to review the results of the projects, such as the EU Funded Romania-Bulgaria CBC Projects: Identification and Preparation of Future Cross-Border Projects in the Field of Nature Protection and Dobrudja/ Dobrogea and Joint Forestry Management Plan. The Grassland Inventories implemented in both countries, as well as the on-going Natura 2000 national networks development in both countries should also be considered while developing proposals for new or enlargement of existing protected areas. In this aspect specific focus deserves the planning of the trans-border connections between the Bulgarian and Romanian Natura 2000 ecological networks, as well as the in-country eco-corridors between the individual sites. Those are the potentially most fragile territories that are, at the same time, vital for the long-term sustenance of the

biodiversity of the region. The corridors planning effort should build upon the results of the national Natura 2000 inventories and the existing protected areas.

Special attention should be paid to the remnants of the steppe habitats, especially given the plans for extensive afforestation in Romania. The existing patches of typical steppe biotopes, including the secondary ones, should be identified and proposals for their legal protection or other suitable management made. This includes both the declaration of new formally protected areas, or changing the land-use models and including the valuable territories into agri-environmental schemes, support to the biological agriculture, etc. Good basis for the identification effort of typical steppe biotopes, including the secondary ones presents the extensive Grasslands Inventories recently carried out in both countries.

As pointed out in the description section, the region is quite favourable for the establishment of a larger trans-border protected area along the Black sea, possibly of IUCN's category IV or V. Its core zone could be formed by the marine area already protected in Romania and the number of wetland habitats, some with their adjacent terrestrial territories, legally protected in Bulgaria. The process requires carrying out a rapid environmental assessment (REA) of the region to define the boundaries of the territory and recommend the protection regime and zones. To facilitate the process the partnership between the marine institutes in Varna and Constanta, as well as between the managing regional environmental and forestry institutions in both countries should be strengthened. The process requires serious national level political decision and a number of planning workshops will be needed to clarify and adjust the positions of both countries. If accomplished the cross-border protected area will form the first marine, and one of the few terrestrial cross-border parks on the Balkans. It is paramount to involve the national scope NGOs and scientific institutions into the whole process.

#### *Potential leading and cooperation partners*

The leading partners for this section of the project could be the:

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The cooperation partners could be the local district/ county governments, local municipalities, scientific and academic institutions in both countries, including the marine institutes in Varna and Constanta, conservation NGOs, etc.

#### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The proposed project has no investment part.

#### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

This section covers the hiring of teams of experts (one in Bulgaria and one in Romania) to review and assess the protected areas network, and draft the proposals for enlargement/ declaring of new protected areas. The same teams will assess the need to ensure additional spatial protection for the steppe habitats. Parts of these teams will form a separate team (one joint team) which should be involved in the development of the cross-boundary links between the national networks of protected areas and between the national Natura 2000 networks. The Bulgarian and Romanian teams should cooperate very closely to ensure the compatibility of the prescriptive regional protected areas schemes developed. The process of consulting the public should also be funded within this section.

Separate joint team will be hired to develop the coastal trans-boundary protected area proposal.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **700,000 (100%)**
- Hire a teams to assess the territories, analyse the information and draft the proposals. .... 400,000
- Consultation/ public participation process – facilitating meetings, rooms, production of information and promotion materials in both countries..... 100,000
- Hire a team to develop the trans-boundary protected area proposal, consultation/ public participation process included ..... 200,000
- **TOTAL**..... **700,000**

#### *Estimated project duration*

The project is envisaged to last for two years.

#### *Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities*

The follow up activities should be ensured mainly through the existing national protected areas funding mechanisms, regional forestry boards/ ROMSILVA, regional environmental authorities, etc. Additional support could be provided through EU channelled funding like LIFE, Natura 2000.

## Remarks

Proposal discussed with:

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### **PROJECT 3: FOLLOW UP TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL NATURA 2000 ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS**

The further support for the establishment of the Natura 2000 networks in Bulgaria and Romania is crucial for the whole future of the conservation in the two countries. The current project is only envisaged to service the process of enhancing the Natura 2000 national networks at the regional level. It comprises two types of activities:

- 3.1. Development of Management Plans for Natura 2000 Sites. This is concerned with improvement of the management of the sites already identified. This will also provide contemporary managerial tools to the respective administrations.
- 3.2. Development and implementation of public awareness programs for Natura 2000. This component could be carried out exclusively through NGOs. It refers to providing support to both (a) organising public hearings for the sites identified, and (b) carry out extensive promotion campaign on the benefits of living in a territory of an European designation. Production of diverse printed and promotion materials should be covered. Training courses for local stakeholders will also be organised including compensation schemes, funding and twinning possibilities, EU project funding tools and formalities, etc.

The accomplishment of this project, and especially of its second component, will contribute to the development of regional model of increasing the public participation and making the formal procedures for biodiversity management more open and transparent through fostering the public debate around the designation of the Natura 2000 network. The whole process will also prepare the local communities and individuals for not only coinciding, but benefiting from the occurrence of sites of the European ecological network within their neighbourhoods.

#### *Potential leading and cooperation partners*

The leading partners for this section of the project could be the:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russe Regional Forest Board<br/>Tanio Tanev; Director,<br/>7, Skobelev Blvd. 7000 Russe;<br/>tel.: 359 82 821 706, 821 704<br/>fax: 359 82 821 708<br/>mobile: 359 888 807 478<br/>e-mail: rugruse@nug.bg</li> <li>• Varna Regional Forestry Board<br/>Yordan Russev, Deputy Director<br/>10, Radko Dimitriev Str., 9000 Varna<br/>tel.: 359 52 612 734<br/>fax: 359 52 616 227<br/>mobile: 359 887 953 767<br/>e-mail: rugvarna@nug.bg</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constanta Forestry Directorate<br/>ROMSILVA<br/>Mihai Neacsu; International projects, protected areas, environmental protection<br/>tel.: 40 241 611 035<br/>mobile: 40 726 350 600<br/>fax: 40 241 615 580<br/>e-mail: neacsu_mh@yahoo.co.uk</li> <li>• Russe Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water<br/>Ministry of Environment and Water<br/>Mirena Boteva, Director<br/>7000 Russe<br/>tel.: 359 82 820 771<br/>fax: 359 82 820 779<br/>mobile: 359 888 705 041<br/>e-mail: boteva@riosv.ruse.bg</li> </ul> |
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The cooperation partners could be the Nature Parks' Directorates, conservation NGOs, scientific and academic institutions.

*Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The proposed project has no investment part.

*Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

This section covers the hiring of experts to compile and analyze the information and draft the management plans. It is suggested that two teams are formed to compile and analyze the information, and subsequently draft the plans (any additional studies necessary are also envisaged). The Bulgarian and Romanian team should cooperate very closely to ensure the management compatibility of the prescriptive sections of the documents drafted. The public participation process should be funded within this section, as well as the large Natura 2000 promotion campaign.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **600,000 (100%)**
- Hire a teams to assess the territories, analyse the information and draft the Management Plans..... 400,000
- Consultation/ public awareness and participation process – facilitating meetings, rooms, production of information and promotion materials in both countries ..... 200,000
- **TOTAL**..... **600,000**

*Estimated project duration*

The project is envisaged to last for three years. One-and-a-half year management planning effort, one-and-a-half year public awareness and participation process.

Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities

The follow up activities should be ensured mainly through the existing national protected areas funding mechanisms, regional forestry boards/ ROMSILVA, regional environmental authorities, etc. Additional support could be provided through EU channelled funding, especially Natura 2000 and LIFE.

## Remarks

Proposal discussed with:

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## **THEMATIC FIELD FORESTS: SUPPORT THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE SHELTERBELT AND FOREST MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE IN THE CROSS-BORDER DOBRUDJA/DOBROGEA REGION**

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### *Description of the proposal: objectives and cross-border effect*

Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is a region of transition from the steppes to the thermophilous broadleaved forests. Oak forests and shrubs had once occurred in dense patches within the primary steppe of the plateau. These forests had once been composed of Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) and pubescent oak (*Quercus pubescens*). Riparian longose type forests (of lianas and creeping vegetation) occurred along the river valleys.

The primary steppe in Dobrudja/ Dobrogea started changing under the influence of human activities as early as the Neolithic. Tillage lands first replaced the more fertile forest and brush communities and latter on – the grass associations. Together with grazing they have changed the appearance of the region. Many species from neighbouring phytogeographic regions invaded the forest steppes, and the grass communities became more expressed. This deforestation had taken place in the historical times: there are evidences about it in the works of the chroniclers of Alexander the Great and the Roman writer Ovid, who lived in the 1st century B.C. The Dobrudja/ Dobrogea landscape resembled so much the Ukrainian, that the Latin and Byzantine authors called it Scythia Minor. Before its completely transformation into a cultural steppe, large dry meadows and stony habitats covered substantial parts of it. Even in the beginning of last century the botanist Bozhimir Davidoff collected data proving the existence of massive broadleaved forests, which provided shelter even for bears, till the 19th century. Geographic names, like the Bear Valley (Ay Dere) still evidence for this.

Now-a-days the only remnants of the primary steppes and forest-steppe still occur in small patches along the dry-river valleys in the inland zone and in the coastal region where the chalk is shallowly laid and the soil-forming processes began comparatively soon in geological terms. The contemporary scarce Dobrudja/ Dobrogea forests are mostly composed of different oak species – pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), durmast oak (*Quercus petraea*), Italian oak (*Quercus frainetto*) and Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*). These dominants are sometimes combined with maples, wild pears, and hornbeams. The forests cover some 15% of the area on the Bulgarian side and about 5% of the land on the Romanian side of the border region.

In Constanta County, the “Strategy of Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Forestry” was developed in 2003. This local strategy states the extension of the forests level from 5% (35,000 ha) to 10% (70,000 ha) to reduce the desertification process and to improve the sustainable development conditions. About 70% of the county is the steppe region (precipitation: 300-400 mm per year).

Through the Government Decision no. 1542/18.12.2003, the State Agency of Public Domain (agriculture sector) transferred to the Romanian National Forest Administration (ROMSILVA) around 8,100 ha of land, out of which more than 4,500 ha to be managed by Constanta Forestry Directorate. The main objective is reforestation of arable degraded lands of South Romania, to ensure protection against desertification and dryness process. The Constanta Forestry Directorate reforested some 2,200 ha between 2001-2002, 1,000 ha in 2003 and over 300 ha in 2004.



In addition to the Local Strategy, the National Reforestation Plan foresees that the forests in Constanta County should be enlarged from 35,400 ha (5%) in 2004, to 47,000 ha (6,6 %) in 2008, and 52,700 ha (7,5%) in 2010.

The vast majority of the existing Romanian Dobrogea forests are located in the south-western part of the county managed by the forestry district Baneasa – maintaining the silvo-steppe zone (precipitation: 400-500 mm per year). They represent plantations of secondary forests with only little of the original forest vegetation left. In this region are the more serious problems with fluvial erosion in the hilly areas.

The remaining native forests, as well as most of the biological diversity is preserved in protected areas and/ or in the dry valleys. Remaining forests are isolated from each other, which deprive the wildlife of European and even global importance from the ecological corridors needed for its survival. Fifteen forest protected areas exist in Constanta county, all managed by Forest Directorate of Constanta. There are plans to expand existing protected areas and to declare certain sites or parts of the sites as Natura 2000 sites (at present 6 sites have been selected for Natura 2000). The Natura 2000 elaboration activities in Romania started in the year 2005. A national biodiversity strategy was prepared in 2000 and a new draft is under revision.

In Bulgaria the National Forestry Board and its regional and local bodies are directly responsible for the management both of the forests protected areas and about 95% of the total forest area in Bulgaria.

In the Bulgarian Dobrudja the forest cover is more significant compared to Romania. The north-eastern section of the region is more hilly and the forests there are more abundant. This region is managed by the local forestry station of Silistra and the state game breeding stations of Dulovo (Karakuz) and Tervel. However, the native forests here are almost absent – about 1/3 of the forest cover is formed by plantations of exotic species like honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), robinia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), etc. A comparatively large part of these plantations have been established on territories covered by primeval steppe habitats and natural forests (mainly secondary oak forests).

The fact that the forests in Bulgaria are more spacious is also a result from the well-developed shelterbelt system in Bulgaria, with an area of about 20,000 ha (1,300 km length on the territory of Russe Regional Forest Board and some 5,000 km length on the territory of Varna Regional Forest Board). The shelterbelt system was established here mainly in 1950s and 1960s and that has contributed to gathering of vital experience on this issue. The shelterbelt system is 90% complete. As a result of this erosion and desertification problems are not reported as serious in Bulgaria. However, the shelterbelt system needs some improvements in order to maintain its value in the future. During the last 15 years the maintenance of the shelterbelt has worsened due to the lack of adequate equipment. Some additional lines are needed and restoration of a part of the existing shelterbelts is also necessary. The Regional Forestry Boards in Varna and Russe strongly apply for procurement of such equipment.

As a result of the conservation efforts from the second half of the nineties and the beginning of present century, parts of the forest along the border with Romania are covered by protected areas, some pipelined for declaration. Important data about the conservation value of the Bulgarian Dobrudja was collected, and the coordination between the responsible institutions and the local communities has been improved. In addition, the Natura 2000 identification process initiated in Bulgaria in 2002 has already designated a number of potential Natura 2000 sites in Dobrudja, among which are two vast ones: the Harsovska Dry River valley and the Suha Reka Dry River valley, as well as a number of smaller sites in the rest of Dobrudja, mainly in the vast plateau, neighbouring the Black Sea coastline. In 2003 Bulgaria has approved its National Forest Strategy and Policy providing

guidelines for the sustainable forest management in the future decade. In 2004 a new National Environmental Strategy with an extensive chapter on biodiversity conservation was approved. References for forest habitats conservation are provided in this document.

Although the situation with the forest in both countries of the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is slightly different the forestry related problems are similar. In the areas where the forest shelter-belt system is not well developed and/ or maintained substantial desertification process has occurred – soil denudation caused by wind and rain, and an increasing aridity of the local microclimate. Such areas are more abundant in Romania, mainly in the territories managed by the three forestry districts: Hersova, Cernavoda and Basarabia.

At present, the level of public awareness of the importance of protecting and managing forests appropriately in both countries has increased (also owing to the recent (2005) floods). Due to the environmental problems recognition there seems to be a considerable support for better management and afforestation projects among local authorities and general public.

In addition it is important to note that the currently running project: Preparation of a Joint Forest Management Plan for Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Forest will provide the planning/ strategies of the following activities:

- Development of a system of forest corridors ensuring the communication, continuity and inter-connection of protected areas and protection forest curtains network in both countries. These corridors will be designed to provide shelter and facilitate cross-border migration of wild life. This element is a priority for both countries.
- Development of a afforestation/reforestation plan including determination of the potential land to be reforested with a view to extending the surface of natural forest and creating buffer zones around protected areas; measures to combat the desertification process in Dobrogea (a serious problem mainly on the Romanian side); agricultural degraded land potential to be afforested (mainly on the Romanian side); ecological limitations and support measures for developing sustainable tourism - such as eco-tourism - in Dobrogea cross border region, with the purpose of developing the tourism potential for some of the protected areas. The last element is a priority for both countries.
- Identification and improvement of the forest shelterbelts system in the Romanian border area, based on the Dobrogea ecological network and fitting in the already existing shelterbelt system in Bulgarian border area.
- A joint management framework for a future common monitoring system with a permanent information exchange between Bulgarian (Silistra and Dobrich administrative counties) and Romanian forest administrations (Constanta county) about wildlife species, including biodiversity conservation. The purpose is to produce a common wildlife monitoring report annually in spring which enables the countries to monitor and evaluate the development of selected key species. This element is needed for both countries.
- Development of a short integrated strategy for forest protected areas in Dobrogea Region, including an analysis and strategy for (potential) secondary use, especially for ecotourism. This element is needed for both countries.
- Assessment of opportunities and risks and identification of institutional and investment measures to be implemented. This element is needed for both countries.

The proposed thematic field comprises several common projects to be jointly implemented on both sides of the border, and a few items in which one of the countries is definitely leading.

### PROJECT 1: ASSESSMENT OF THE FORESTS IN THE REGION OF DOBRUDJA/ DOBROGEA

A team of experts (foresters and conservationists) should be formed to study the potential and draft the action plan for establishing a “Forest Network” which should include all the remaining forests of the regions: the economic forests, the protected areas and the shelterbelts and connect them in a united network. It should be based on the strategy/ action plan provided by the currently running project: Preparation of a Joint Forest Management Plan for Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Forest (p. 1, 2 and 3 above). The whole forest network should be managed on the basis of the ecosystem approach. It should be providing not only the connectivity corridors between the currently isolated patches but also as much as possible the connections with and within the Natura 2000 sites in the region.

#### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The proposed project has no investment part.

#### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The capacity building part involves the fees of the team of experts and the field study expenses.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **200,000 (100%)**
- Fees ..... 100,000
- Field study costs ..... 100,000
- **Total** ..... **200,000**

#### *Estimated project duration*

The whole study could be accomplished within one year.

### PROJECT 2: JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF A TECHNICAL PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SHELTERBELT SYSTEM IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION

It is expected that the currently running project: Preparation of a Joint Forest Management Plan for Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Forest (p. 3 above) that will ensure the political framework for the joint development of the shelterbelt system technical plan. In general, the realizing of the project depends exclusively on the existence of long-term political consensus for the establishment of wide-scale shelterbelt system in Romania.

Following this official “approval” a joint team of foresters should be established to plan the system for shelterbelt system in Romania. The Bulgarian specialists will provide the know-how and help the Romanian foresters in the physical planning of the system. This should be accomplished through extensive field visits in Romania, exchange visits to Bulgaria and training seminars. In any case the connectivity between the two shelterbelt systems should be sought.

In addition to planning the Romanian shelterbelt system, conditions should be established for the better management of these in Bulgaria. That includes procurement and provision of the technical equipment to support their management. Their biodiversity value should be assessed, as well as their role as ecological corridors, including to service the Natura 2000 network. Team of conservationists should provide this research. Were applicable they will make recommendations for enhancing the shelterbelt when replacing/ renewing them.

Last but not least the existing shelterbelts along the roads – in both Bulgaria and Romania – should be assessed and their improvement planned in the light of the specific Dobrudja climate conditions. The strong northeast winds during the summers and winter should be considered. The summer winds are normally hot and cause droughts resulting in desertification processes, while the winter winds are cold, bringing heavy snowstorms and cause serious problems – settlements isolation, cutting off the roads, railways, etc. Hence, such shelterbelts will help prevent these problems in the cross-border region. In the same time, differing in type by the field protection shelterbelts, being normally thick and low/ bushy they would form different microhabitats for many species – birds, bats, rodents, invertebrates, etc.

To ensure that the local people accept the shelterbelt concept and its reason a large scale promotion campaign should be planned and organised. The information on the influence of the shelterbelts on the field's productivity, possessed by the General Toshevo Dobrudja Agriculture Institute should be utilised and exposed widely.

#### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget:*

The investment part comprises the procurement of the shelterbelt management machinery (fees for procurement, tenders organising, actual costs of tractors).

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **520,000 (28%)**
- Fees for procurement, tenders organising ..... 20,000
- Costs of machines: tractors and milling/ cutting machine  
(250,000 EURO per RFB x 2 RFB)..... 500,000
- **Total** ..... **520,000**

#### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

This includes the costs of the planning of the Romanian shelterbelt system, the costs of studying the options of making the Bulgarian shelterbelts more environmentally friendly, the study of the road-belt system. The budget of the public awareness programme is also included here.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **1,350,000 (72%)**
- Fees for planning the Romanian shelterbelt system and costs of maps, etc. .... 300,000
- Field trips to plan the Romanian shelterbelt system ..... 200,000
- Fees to study the potential to make the Bulgarian shelterbelt system  
more biodiversity friendly ..... 150,000
- Field trips to make the Bulgarian shelterbelt system more biodiversity friendly .... 100,000
- Study of the road belts system ..... 300,000
- Public awareness..... 300,000
- **Total** ..... **1,350,000**

#### *Estimated project duration*

The project is expected to last three years.

### PROJECT 3: ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EUROPEAN CENTRE OF COMPETENCE ON THE SHELTERBELTS

The region possesses substantial experience – more than 50 years – of shelterbelt establishment and management. In fact the system, of course not in these scale, had initially been developed in the region, at the end of the thirties of last century, when the territory was owned by Romania. Further on the Romanian foresters experience was sustained by their Bulgarian colleagues, to result in one of the most comprehensive shelterbelt systems in Europe. This experience should be preserved and further developed. It could be used by other countries experiencing the same/ similar climatic conditions and respectively problems.

The centre operation could be based in both countries: the part of it based in Bulgaria (Dobrich or General Toshevo) offering the practical experience on shelterbelts management and maintenance; and the part in Romania collecting and promoting contemporary field experience and data on the development of a new shelterbelt system. The information on the influence of the shelterbelts on the field's productivity, possessed by the General Toshevo Dobrudja Agriculture Institute should be utilised and exposed widely.

The possibility to set up the centre within the frames of a joint venture between the national forestry research institutes/ universities should be explored. Other option is to set it up as an independent entity, but it should in any case be supported by national institutions (either academic/ university or forestry management – Romsilva, National/ Regional Forest Boards). This requires purchase of equipment and equipping two work places (one in each country), purchase two vehicles to facilitate the know-how exchange and travel within and between the countries. Development of a strategy and working plan for the centre is needed. The actual operation (two positions, travel and communication) should also be supported for two years to allow for compiling the information and the initiating of the activities, for the further operations the nationally available budgets should be used.

#### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The investment part of the budget involves the purchase of the technical equipment (computers, printers, scanners, plotters, phone/ fax machines, copiers, etc.) and the costs of two vehicles.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **160,000 (50%)**
- Equipment (x two sites) ..... 100,000
- Vehicles ..... 60,000
- **Total** ..... **160,000**

#### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The capacity building section involves the development of the strategy and working plan of the centre and the covering of actual operation (two positions, travel and communication) for two years.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **155,000 (50%)**
- Strategy and working plan development (fees and workshops)..... 25,000
- Staff (2 people x 2 years, including technical assistance)..... 80,000
- Communication and other miscellaneous ..... 20,000
- Travel, etc..... 30,000
- **Total** ..... **155,000**

#### *Estimated project duration*

The project is expected to last two years.

### **PROJECT 4: SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING THE OAK FOREST FROM COPPICE TO SEED ONES**

Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is a region of transition from the steppes to the thermophilous broadleaved forests. Oak forests and shrubs had once occurred in dense patches within the primary steppe of the plateau. These forests had once been composed of Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) and pubescent oak (*Quercus pubescens*). Being intensively logged in the past, now the coppice forests define the aspect of the region. For decades they have been managed through a very short rotation cycle – 40 - 50 years. Resulting from this one of the most serious forestry and ecological problems emerged – these coppices are now massively drying out. They have to be replaced and the intention of local foresters, supported by political will, is to transform the coppices into natural seed forest stands. There are two principal ways of action: a) where natural regeneration occurs it should be supported by carefully thinning the surrounding thick coppice; and b) clear cutting in small spots and replanting native oak seedlings. The encouraging of the natural regeneration is considered better from both economic and environmental point of view.

The local foresters in the two countries have initiated the process of oak forest transforming. They experiment different techniques for this. In any case they need support in supplying adequate equipment. In fact such has already been supplied to Romania, within the frames of this CBC. Now it is proposed that this is also provided to the Bulgarian part.

In addition, experience exchange between Romania and Bulgaria is proposed. This is going to be organised through joint seminars and exchange visits.

#### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The investment part of the budget involves the purchase of the technical equipment (tractors (more than 221 KW, 25 to 40 KW and 40 to 60 KW), cutter/ miller machine, ploughs, trailers, shrubs cutters, motor saws for the needs of the two Regional Forest Boards in Bulgaria: Varna and Russe. The higher power (more than 221 KW) are needed for the transforming through clear cutting, while the smaller-power equipment will be used for the transformation through encouraging the natural regeneration.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** (without VAT and custom taxes)..... **1,934,000 (94%)**
- Tractors more than 221 KW (x 2 RFB) ..... 320,000
- Milling/ cutting machine for the more than 221 KW tractor (x 2) ..... 134,000
- Tractors 40-60 KW (x 10) (x 2) ..... 700,000
- Trailers for the 40-60 KW tractors (x 10) (x 2)..... 120,000
- Tractors 25-40 KW (x 10) (x 2) ..... 400,000
- Trailers for the 25-40 KW tractors (x 10) (x 2)..... 50,000
- Ploughs for the 25-40 KW tractors (x 10) (x 2)..... 20,000
- Milling/ cutting machines for the 25-40 KW tractors (x 10) (x 2)..... 60,000
- Motor saws (x 50) (x 2) ..... 70,000
- Shrub cutters (x 50) (x 2) ..... 60,000
- **Total** ..... **1,934,000**

#### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The capacity building section includes joint seminars in the two countries, including such lead by professors in forestry from the national universities and research institutes. Field visits will also be encouraged and supported.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **120,000 (6%)**
- Training seminars ..... 60,000
- Field exchange programmes ..... 60,000
- **Total** ..... **120,000**

#### *Estimated project duration*

The project will continue two years, as it requires following the vegetation seasons.

#### *Potential leading and cooperation partners for the whole thematic field*

The leading partners for this section of the project could be the:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russe Regional Forest Board<br/>Tanio Tanev; Director,<br/>7, Skobelev Blvd. 7000 Russe;<br/>tel.: 359 82 821 706, 821 704<br/>fax: 359 82 821 708<br/>mobile: 359 888 807 478<br/>e-mail: rugruse@nug.bg</li> <li>• Constanta Forestry Directorate ROMSILVA<br/>Mihai Neacsu; International projects, protected areas, environmental protection<br/>tel.: 40 241 611 035<br/>mobile: 40 726 350 600<br/>fax: 40 241 615 580<br/>e-mail: neacsu_mh@yahoo.co.uk</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varna Regional Forestry Board<br/>Yordan Russev, Deputy Director<br/>10, Radko Dimitriev Str., 9000 Varna<br/>tel.: 359 52 612 734<br/>fax: 359 52 616 227<br/>mobile: 359 887 953 767<br/>e-mail: rugvarna@nug.bg</li> <li>• General Toshevo Dobrudja Agriculture Institute<br/>9520 General Toshevo<br/>tel.: 359 58 27 454<br/>fax: 359 5731 44 48<br/>e-mail: dai_gt@dobrich.net</li> </ul> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



The cooperation partners could be the local forestries and game breeding stations, regional and national conservation NGOs, scientific and academic institutions from both countries.

*Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities for the whole thematic field*

The present proposals have direct interactions and rely on the implementing/ results of the currently running project: Preparation of a Joint Forest Management Plan for Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Forest. The follow up of these activities could be initially provided through the SAPARD funding also available for sustainable forestry activities. The LIFE and Natura 2000 could be addressed for the specific conservation activities concerned with the spatial protection of species. Both countries also have internal funds for the regular forest management once the analyses are provided and the respective systems set.

*Remarks*

Proposal discussed with:

- Russe Regional Forest Board  
Tanio Tanev; Director,  
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tel.: 359 82 821 706, 821 704  
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Mihai Neacsu; International projects, protected areas, environmental protection  
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mobile: 40 726 350 600  
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- Roumen Januarov, Governor  
Russe District Administration  
6, Svoboda Sq.  
7000 Russe  
tel.: 359 82 812 205  
fax: 359 82 820 092  
e-mail: governor@rousse.spnet.net
- Institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Science  
See list attached
- Varna Regional Forestry Board  
Yordan Russev, Deputy Director  
10, Radko Dimitriev Str.  
9000 Varna  
tel.: 359 52 612 734  
fax: 359 52 616 227  
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- Tsanko Nikolov, Director,  
Dobrich State Forestry District  
5, Marin Drinov Str.  
9300 Dobrich  
tel.: 359 58 600 678  
fax: 359 58 600 658  
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- Dimitar Marinov, Head  
Administrative Control, Regional Development and State Property Directorate  
Russe District Administration  
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## **THEMATIC FIELD SPECIES CONSERVATION: LONG-TERM PRESERVATION, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF FAUNA OF CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE IN DOBRUDJA/DOBROGEA CROSS-BORDER REGION**

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### *Description of the proposal: objectives and cross-border effect*

The fauna of the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea region contains a rich variety species enlisted either in the EU Habitat and Bird Directive Annexes, in the Bern Convention Annex I or in the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. Among them are emblematic cornerstone species like the wolf (*Canis lupus*), the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna peregusna*), the steppe polecat (*Mustela eversmanni*), the pine marten (*Martes martes*), the otter (*Lutra lutra*), the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea endemic Newton hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*), the grey hamster (*Cricetulus migratorius*), the southern birch mouse (*Sicista subtilis*), the common hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*), the brown bat (*Myotis myotis*) and the long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).

The number of birds exceeds 130 and the threatened among them are over 30. Some of the more important being the ruddy shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*), the red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*), the imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), the levant sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), the saker (*Falco cherrug*), the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), the stone curlew (*Burhinus oedicnemus*), the eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*), the rose coloured starling (*Pastor roseus*), the black-headed bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*). Of a special interest are also the great bustard (*Otis tarda*) and the little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) – typical steppe elements.

Given that Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is an important section of the second most important European migratory route – Via Pontica, it becomes clear that the need for a more balanced and sustainable regional development is a must and an issue of international importance. Beside the number birds nesting in, or visiting the area during the migration, Dobrudja/ Dobrogea provides migratory and breeding habitats for species of European importance like the golden jackal (*Canis auritus*), the long-fingered bat (*Myotis capaccinii*), the long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicila*), the barn owl (*Tyto alba*).

Extremely interesting is the herpetofauna of the region - the eastern spadefoot (*Pelobates syriacus*), the Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), the large whip snake (*Coluber jugularis*), the Dahl's whip snake (*Coluber najadum*), the red-headed whip snake (*Coluber rubriceps*) - the most rare European species of this kind, the Montpellier snake (*Malpolon monspessulanus*), the rat snake (*Elaphe quatuorlineata sauromates*), the worm snake (*Typhlops vermicularis*), the slender glass lizard (*Ophisaurus apodus*).

The Dobrudja/ Dobrogea important and highly vulnerable species diversity deserves specific conservation effort.

The present Thematic Field offers a set of projects targeting the long-term preservation, management and maintenance of the region's fauna of conservation importance. The project ideas presented are dedicated to either direct species conservation, both in situ and ex situ, and some through captive breeding programmes or integrating the species conservation concepts into the regional development plans and sectoral policies, e.g. infrastructure development, energy, forestry and agriculture, etc.

## **PROJECT 1: INTEGRATE SPECIES CONSERVATION CONCEPTS INTO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND SECTORAL POLICIES**

The Dobrudja/ Dobrogea region is part of the second largest European migratory corridor – Via Pontica. Millions of birds fly over the territory annually. Just the migrating storks are more than 500,000 annually, the rearing raptors are over 100,000, etc. The abundance of lakes and wetlands allocated along the Black Sea coastline make it especially preferred for rest and wintering of a number of birds, among which are the globally threatened red-breasted and white-fronted goose the whole populations of which spent the winter there in some years. In addition, the area neighbours directly one of Europe's most important bird habitats – the Danube Delta. The bird migratory corridors often coincide with that of bats. The protection of the migratory species and respectively of their corridors is a subject of the Bonn Convention, of which both countries are members, as well as of the EU Birds Directive.

At the same time, being the largest plain region Bulgaria, and one of the largest in Romania, Dobrudja/ Dobrogea is viewed as extremely favourable site for the construction of windmills. The plans for their construction are also strongly supported by the national and regional governments as the windmills are viewed as significant alternative energy source and important part of the local/ regional economy. The problem arises because their construction plans do not consider the natural migration corridors. Beside the damage to the wildlife, the windmills threaten the landscape value of the region as they are built in the highest sections and are clearly visible, thus creating significant problem to the tourism development. The managers of one of the largest Bulgarian sea resorts - Albena, located close to Dobrich, also protested against the installation of such facilities close to their boundaries. In view of these problems, it is suggested that a joint Romanian/ Bulgarian team of experts on birds and bats; landscape and tourism specialists and windmill engineers, should study the region and map the most suitable sites for building the facilities. This map will be especially useful to local and national planners/ decision makers and facilitate the process of selecting the territories. Best practice guide on the biodiversity safe windmill construction should be produced and disseminated.

Additional problem to the migrating species, especially birds present the existing high voltage electric power lines. Such exist all over Dobrudja/ Dobrogea region and many birds become victims in their migration. For example the number of the storks annually killed just in the Bulgarian section of the region varies between 100 and 200 annually. It should also be pointed out that only partial assessment of the problem is made so far. There are no systematic data on species other than storks, there is no information about the impact of the different mode of hanging of the wires on the pylons, etc. Therefore the size of the problem should be seriously assessed by a joint Romanian/ Bulgarian team. The hot-spots along the electric power lines routes should be identified. Proposals for changes of the construction of the pylons should be made jointly with the responsible authorities and owners. Case-studies for replacing/ transforming the hanging on the pylons at the hot-spots should be organised. Best practice guides on the construction of environmentally friendly electric power pylons should be developed and disseminated. Efforts will be made to channel the guidelines recommendation into the national legislation of both countries.

Beside the migratory species many smaller-sized animal species (small mammals, amphibians and reptiles) are killed in transport accidents. And in many cases it is a matter of globally threatened species like the European souslik, the Newton hamster, the lesser mole-rat, and European marbled and steppe polecats. For the time-being the constructions of special underpasses for such species is neither considered, nor seriously looked at. At the same time extensive plans for construction or rehabilitation of the roads are envisaged, and be most probably submitted for funding through the EU

funds, including CBC funding. This would provide favourable opportunity to develop guidelines for integrating the biodiversity concerns into the transport sector and accomplish several case-studies in the region. A joint Romanian/ Bulgarian team of biologist and road engineers should study the region and identify the hot-spots. The same group should review the European experience in this field, including the respective legislation. Proposals for constructing the underpasses along the roads will be made. Best practice guides on the construction of environmentally friendly roads should be developed and disseminated. Efforts will be made to channel the guidelines recommendation into the national legislation of both countries. In addition, case-studies for construction of underpasses at the hot-spots combined with the road rehabilitation should be organised.

#### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The investment part of the budget involves the funding of the reconstruction of case-study electric power pylons at the hot-spots and the construction of the case-study underpasses at the road hot-spots.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **500,000 (50%)**
- Environmentally friendly power lines case-studies..... 200,000
- Roads underpasses case-studies ..... 300,000
- **Total** ..... **500,000**

#### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The capacity building includes the forming of three joint Romanian/ Bulgarian teams to deal with the three topics above, the production of guidelines, the consultation processes, etc.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **480,000 (50%)**
- Windmills study..... 100,000
- Power lines study..... 100,000
- Underpasses study ..... 100,000
- Consultation processes (3 x 2 countries)..... 120,000
- Guidelines production (3 x 2 countries) ..... 60,000
- **Total** ..... **480,000**

#### *Estimated project duration*

The project will continue three years.

#### *Potential leading and cooperation partners for the whole thematic field*

The leading partners for this section of the project could be the:

- Bulgarian Society for Preservation of Birds,  
BirdLife Bulgaria  
Varna Regional Branch  
p. box 492, 9000 Varna  
tel.: 359 52 302 536  
mobile: 359 887 787 030  
e-mail: varna@bspb.org
- National Museum of Natural History  
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
1, Tzar Osvoboditel Blvd., 1000 Sofia  
tel.: 359 2 987 50 72  
tel.: 359 2 988 51 15 (ext. 673)  
e-mail: simov@nmnh.bas.bg

- Institute of Zoology  
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
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fax: 359 2 988 28 97  
e-mail: bai\_bobo@yahoo.com
- Central Laboratory of General Ecology  
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
2, Yurii Gagarin Str., 1113 Sofia  
tel.: 359 2 736 137  
fax: 359 2 870 54 98  
e-mail: uzunov@ecolab.bas.bg

The cooperation partners could be the regional forestry boards/ local forestries and game breeding stations, district governments and local municipalities, regional and national conservation NGOs, other scientific and academic institutions from both countries.

*Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities for the whole thematic field*

The follow up of these activities could be initially provided through the LIFE and Natura 2000. The ISPA funding could also be address, especially in view of the activities concerning the roads rehabilitation.

*Remarks*

Proposal discussed with:

- Nada Tosheva, Program Director  
Petko Cvetkov, Regional Partnerships Co-ordinator  
Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation  
75, Sredna gora Str., Sofia 1303  
tel.: 359 2 920 99 75  
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- Ivailo Ivanov, Varna Regional Coordinator  
Bulgarian Society for Preservation of Birds,  
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Ministry of Environment and Water  
22, Maria Louisa Blvd., room 306  
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tel./fax: 359 2 981 72 08  
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- Institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Science  
See list attached

## PROJECT 2: PRESERVATION OF THE STEPPE MAMMALS COMPLEX

The Dobrudja/ Dobrogea steppe mammals complex is threatened mainly because of the disappearance of the typical habitats. These include the remnants of the steppes - the semi-natural grasslands and arable lands, canyon-like systems integrated into the largest remnants of the last European plain thermophilous oak forests. The mammal species of the complex that are of specific conservation interest include the European souslik, the Dobrudja endemic Newton hamster, the lesser mole-rat, the grey hamster, the southern birch mouse, and their main predators the European marbled polecat and the steppe polecats. The first six species form the core of a relict (post-Holocene) steppe faunal complex. All envisaged species form a unique faunal complex, occurring in Bulgaria and Romania only. The populations of the European marbled polecat and the southern birch mouse inhabiting the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea region form the largest part of their global populations. Most probably the situation with the European souslik, the Romanian hamster and the lesser mole-rat has been the same. Their home-ranges have been constantly declining due to the ploughing of the grasslands. Other reason is the forests succession, resulting from abandoning of the agriculture lands. Last but not least, is their direct extermination as pest species, resulting from the low level of awareness on the species' conservation importance. The data on the distribution of these species have been insufficient and no Action Plans for their Conservation have been developed at national or regional level.

The project aims are to undertake the first steps to the long-term conservation of the globally threatened species of steppe mammals in the most important section of their area of distribution, accomplishing the following:

- study their occurrence, population status and habitats;
- clarify their conservation status in the region and propose measures for their spatial conservation, reduction of the human pressure and the restoration of their habitats – resulting in Species Conservation Action Plans;
- enhance the awareness on the species, working with the school-children, hunters and farmers as target groups;
- organise a regional workshop to present the results with the relevant IUCN's Species Survival Commission sub-groups.

The trans-boundary project region will be studied to identify the status of the species and assess the quality of their habitats. The threats – both direct and indirect, on the species and the habitats will be defined. Mapping of the sites of occurrence of the species of interest will be provided. Based upon this the Species Conservation Action Plans for the longer-term protection will be developed, including the elaboration of a draft proposals for their territorial protection.

Parallel to the studies, but taking into account their results a leaflet for the promotion of the species at the national and international level will be published. It will be in full colour and richly illustrated. In addition the project envisages the printing out and large dissemination in the project region of a poster and a series of stickers.

Specific attention deserves one of the symbols of the steppe ecosystems and cornerstone species for the steppe mammal communities – the marbled polecat. Scarce efforts have been done on global scale for its conservation. However, few steps have already been taken – a population conservation Action Plan has been developed in Bulgaria. This recommends the accomplishment of a captive



breeding programme, which requires establishment of a field centre. The centre could be based in any of the countries. The facility shall service the captive breeding programme but could also serve as Steppe Mammals Field Study Centre. It could be developed to be used by scientists from all over Europe interested in steppe large fauna field research and protection.

#### *Description of the investment part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The investment part involves the construction of the fields centre – proposed to be a 200 m2 prefabricated house and the captive breeding facilities – also some 200 m2, including cages, fences, breeding dens, hides for scientists to observe the animal behaviour, observation tower for visitors, etc.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **140,000 (20%)**
- Construction of the field centre (200 m2/ prefabricated house; including the electricity, pipelines, sewage, etc.) ..... 60,000
- Construction of captive breeding facilities ..... 150,000
- **Total** ..... **210,000**

#### *Description of the capacity building part and percentage of the overall project budget*

The capacity building is to cover all the studies, the elaboration of the Species Action Plans and organising the process of their official approval, the organising of workshops (including the international workshop), the public awareness programme.

- **Tentative Costs in EURO:** ..... **770,000 (80%)**
- Studies (fees and field costs)..... 350,000
- Action plans (drafting, approval and publishing) ..... 140,000
- Workshops..... 70,000
- Public awareness..... 210,000
- **Total** ..... **770,000**

#### *Estimated project duration*

The project will continue three years.

#### *Potential leading and cooperation partners for the whole thematic field*

The leading partners for this section of the project could be the:

- Varna Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water  
Ministry of Environment and Water  
Teodora Karaivanova, Director  
4, Jan Palah Str., 9000 Varna  
tel.: 359 52 634 581, 634 579  
fax: 359 52 634 593  
mobile: 359 888 517 559  
e-mail: varna@riew.org
- Environment Protection Agency  
Loreley Dana Jianu  
Biologist – Senior Counselor  
23, Unirii Str., 900532 Constanta  
tel.: 40 241 546 596, 40 241 546 696  
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mobile: 40 745 015 416  
e-mail: ipncta@tomrad.ro  
e-mail: iloreley@yahoo.com

The cooperation partners could be the regional forestry boards/ local forestries and game breeding stations, regional and national conservation NGOs, scientific and academic institutions from both countries.

*Interaction with and correlation to other EU and internationally funded activities for the whole thematic field*

The LIFE and Natura 2000 should be addressed for the specific conservation activities concerned with the spatial protection of species.

*Remarks*

Proposal discussed with:

- Nada Tosheva, Program Director  
Petko Cvetkov, Regional Partnerships Co-ordinator  
Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation  
75, Sredna gora Str., Sofia 1303  
tel.: 359 2 920 99 75  
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- Ivailo Ivanov, Varna Regional Coordinator  
Bulgarian Society for Preservation of Birds,  
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Framework Contract AMS/451 Lot N°6  
Letter of Contract N° FRIPTU 2 TER PHARE - RO - DPAO/CBC

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# Promotion of Sustainable Development and Conservation of Biodiversity in the Bulgarian - Romanian Cross-Border Region

Dobrudja/ Dobrogea Project Area

Ideas for Potential Projects Eligible for 2005-2006

Funding Under CBC Grant Scheme for Environment

*Final Report - Annexes*

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## Annex 1: GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT REGION

(based on data from the Joint Programming Document 2003 - 2006)

### 1. DEMOGRAPHY

The main demographic indicators of the component NUTII regions are shown in the table below.

Table 1: The Bulgarian / Romanian border region – population indicators

	TOTAL POPULATION	POPULATION GROWTH/ DECLINE (1994-2000)*	POPULATION DENSITY PER KM <sup>2</sup>	URBAN POPULATION	RURAL POPULATION
NER Bulgaria	376,463	-3,5%	49.7	209,461	167,002
Bulgaria	8,149,468	-3,3%	73,4	5,576,857	2,572,611
SEDR Romania	746,041	-0.36%	105.5	541,698	204,343
Romania (1999)	23,206,720	-3.23%	97.3	12,579,876	10,597,876

Sources BG: The National Statistical Institute; Eurostat.

Sources RO: The National Commission for Statistics; the National Human Development Report, 2000; 2002

\* The reference year is 1992 (The year of last Census). For percentage, the calculation formula is:  $(1992-2000) \times 100 / 1992$ .

#### 1.1. North East Region Bulgaria

The decreasing population, although comparable to the Bulgarian national average, is higher than in the other Bulgarian CBC regions.

The population in NER Bulgaria is with its density of 49.7 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> among the least populated territories in Bulgaria.

The rural population share in the NER Bulgaria is above the Bulgarian national average - In Dobrich by some 5% and in Silistra by some 25%.

#### 1.2. South East Development Region Romania

Population density is above the Romanian national average of 97.3 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>.

The infant mortality rate is 23.4‰ compared with the Romanian national average of 18.6‰.

The urban population of the SEDR Romania is 72.99% that is largely concentrated in the coastal area. This is mainly due to the industrialisation and tourism job opportunities that exist along the coast.

In contrast to the other regions in the programme region there are several minorities in the SEDR Romania.

### 2. GENERAL ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

#### 2.1. North East Region Bulgaria

The NER Bulgaria is characterised by a well-developed agricultural sector. The share of agriculture of Dobrich and Silistra districts is 2.5 times higher than the national average. The sectoral structure of the GVA for 1998 was as follow: agriculture - 26.0%, industry - 23.2% and services - 50.0%. The employment structure in agriculture is better than the national structure, and worse in industry. NER

Bulgaria has an unemployment rate of 23.2% and so has the second highest unemployment rate within the programme region.

The employment in the primary sector plays a special role in the NER Bulgaria and this role will continue in future. The secondary and tertiary sectors are not so important although the opportunities for development of these sectors are good.

## 2.2. South East Development Region Romania

The SEDR Romania is one of the most developed and well-balanced areas in Romania. Its economic potential resides in local resources, tradition and experience in most of the economic and social activities related to the sea and river transport. The economic potential is further boosted by its leading location on the Black Sea at the crossroads of major shipping routes linking Central Europe with Asia.

Due to the historic evolution of the SEDR Romania and of the pressures of the market the economy has a complex character. The main industrial sectors are agriculture, tourism, trade, shipping, manufacturing of machinery, chemical and petrochemical industry, electric and thermal energy, wood and paper processing.

Industrial decline has affected the region, partly due to the restructuring of the large industrial units (such as the naval shipyard in Mangalia).

*Table 2: The Bulgarian/Romanian border region – Economic indicators*

	NUMBER OF EMPLOYED (IN 2000)			SHARE OF THE GVA (1999)	GDP PER CAPITA NATIONAL = 100, 1999	GDP PER CAPITA IN EUR, 1999
	AGRICULTURE	INDUSTRY	SERVICE			
NER Bulgaria	59,140	25,412	47,383	14,3	86,9	1,266.1
Bulgaria (total)	781,566	843,670	1,354,902	100.0	100 = 2841	1,456.7
SEDR Romania	11,756	42,712	117,043	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Romania (total)	186,592	1,991,241	2,427,055	n.a.	n.a.	1,799

Sources BG: *The National Statistical Institute; Eurostat.*

Sources RO: *The National Commission for Statistics; the National Human Development Report, 2000; 2002*

## 3. AGRICULTURE

The economic structure of the CBC region is dominated by the agricultural sector, which is based on good arable land, a favourable physical environment and good climate. The agricultural sector played an important role in the border regions during the last decade, as the main contributor to employment creation and economic growth. Co-operatives, leaseholders and private farms currently constitute the main agricultural production entities.

Most of them, however, are not well equipped and rely on outdated agricultural equipment and machinery. With regard to the farm structures, the programme region is characterised by having a large proportion of small private farms focusing on arable and livestock farming.

### 3.1. North East Region Bulgaria

The arable land of the NER Bulgaria accounts for 25.83% of Bulgaria's total farmland, while the arable land constitutes circa 96.13% of the total landmass in the NER Bulgaria. The agricultural land



market in NER Bulgaria and especially in Dobrich and Silistra districts is relatively well developed as compared to the other Bulgarian regions within the programme region. The main reason for this is the high level of specialisation in cereal production, which allows for intensive use of agricultural equipment and a higher degree of mechanisation. This has created significant demand for larger plots of land and the relatively high price in the region.

### 3.2. South East Development Region Romania

The arable land of the SEDR Romania accounts for 15.7% of Romania's total farmland, while the arable land constitutes circa 65% of the total landmass in the SEDR Romania. The SEDR Romania comprises 707,000 ha of land of which 80% is tillable. The natural potential of the SEDR Romania and the climatic conditions are favourable for the development of agriculture. The arable area per tractor is 97.4 ha. The cultivated land structure in SEDR Romania is characterised by vegetable and cereal production. In 2001, cereals represented 65% of the total cultivated area (317,122 ha), out of which graminaceous were cultivated on 216,736 ha. Wine growing ranks high in the SEDR Romania's economy and covers 4.2% of the total agricultural landmass in contrast to the Romanian national average of 1.7%.

## 4. ENTERPRISES

The economic restructuring process has led to the closure of a number of large enterprises. The most developed industrial areas are concentrated in and around the municipalities of Ruse, Silistra and Vidin and Constanta, Slatina and Giurgiu.

The main sectors contributing to economic growth and employment in the CBC region are machinery manufacturing, chemicals, energy production, food processing, beverage and tobacco products and textile production. The table below provides a breakdown of the main economic activities by programme region.

Table 3: The Bulgarian/Romanian border region—Branch/employee indicators (000s and %)

DISTRICTS/ COUNTIES	TOTAL	AGRICUL- TURE, FORESTRY & FISHING	MINING & QUARRYING	MANUFAC- TURING	ELECTRICITY, GAS & WATER SUPPLY	CONSTRUC- TION	TRADE & REPAIRING	HOTELS AND RESTAU- RANTS	TRANSPORT & COMMUNI- CATION	OTHERS
NER Bulgaria	131.93 (100.0)	59.14 (44,8)	0.16 (0,1)	19.85 (15,0)	1.74 (1,3)	3.67 (2,8)	11.24 (8,5)	3.42 (2,6)	7.07 (5,4)	25.66 (19,5)
Bulgaria (total)	2,980.11 (100.0)	781.57 (26,2)	40.68 (1,4)	615.69 (20,7)	59.71 (2,0)	127.55 (4,3)	352.38 (11,8)	85.06 (2,9)	32.79 (1,1)	884.67 (29,7)
SEDR Romania	178.033 (100.0)	8.861 (4.98)	3.294 (1.85)	31.709 (17.81)	7.709 (4.33)	15.756 (8.85)	28.162 (15.82)	8.717 (4.90)	29.021 (16.30)	53.521 (25.16)
Romania (Total)	4,760.52 (100.0)	240.09 (5.05)	154.16 (3.24)	1,659.91 (34.87)	177.16 (3.73)	308.83 (6.49)	578.81 (12.16)	91.19 (1.92)	373.15 (7.84)	1,268,120 (24.70)

Sources: BG – The National Statistical Institute

Sources: RO – The National Commission for Statistics

### 4.1. North East Region Bulgaria

The economic performance of the industrial enterprises in the NER shows relatively high figures. The region has the necessary basis for their development - existence of well-organised urbanised

centres, comparatively well-developed infrastructure - the main development axes of Bulgaria was and still is Sofia - Varna.

Varna is one of the two main seaports of Bulgaria - the third one is Balchik that is located in the NER also. The FDI per capita are the second highest after the South West Region.

The enterprise density is close to the country average and the net revenues are 24.5 thousands BGL per enterprise, a little below the country average. Although the economic diversity at the municipal level is higher compared with the NCR, it is not supposed to create social and other economic problems. The opportunities for enterprise development in the region are relatively favourable for all sectors of the economy and for most of the municipalities in the region.

#### **4.2. South East Development Region Romania**

In 2000, 16.4% of the working population in the SEDR Romania was employed in industry. The more important shares in the industrial production are as follows: food industry 21%, oil extraction and processing 18%, ship building and repair 16%, electric and thermal energy 13%, cement and asbestos cement products 10%, chemical industry 5% and textile industry 5%.

The shipbuilding industry has a strong tradition in the SEDR Romania and its products are exported widely. The shipyards of Constanta, Midia and Mangalia are equipped to build new ships up to 250,000 TDW, to perform repairs and conversion (lengthening and shortening works).

The chemical and petrochemical industry in the SEDR Romania is specialised in producing liquid fuels, petrochemical products and also fertilisers. Some of the leading companies in this field are Petromidia Plant; Energia and Fertilchim Company. The energy sector comprises three main power plants and the Cernavoda nuclear power plant. The electric power produced during 2001 was of 706.5 Mw.

The food industry also makes an important contribution to the economy in the SEDR Romania due to the agricultural and hydro graphic potential and the tradition in this field. It has developed throughout the SEDR Romania and in almost all spheres including milling, bakery, wine, other alcoholic drinks, dairy and meat processing industry, sugar, edible oil, canning of fruits, vegetables, fish and meat.

According to the latest available statistics there are 16,396 SMEs in the SEDR Romania. These are concentrated in the following sectors: manufacturing (1,242); agriculture (251); retail and trade (7,228); wholesale trade (2,029); services (5,415) and construction (231). In 2000, SMEs in the SEDR Romania generated approximately 11% of the total income generated by the SME sector in Romania. This places the SEDR Romania in an advantageous position with regards to the SME sector.

### **5. TOURISM**

With its geographic features and cultural heritage the CBC region has arguably underused tourism potential. The tourism industry has made an important contribution to employment creation and economic growth in the region over the past two decades. This is particularly true in the east of the CBC region: in the Bulgarian district of Dobrich (part of the NER Bulgaria) and the Romanian County of Constanta (part of SEDR Romania) which have benefited from the impact of a flourishing tourism industry attracting both domestic and foreign tourists. In Table 4 and 5 a summary of the key 2001 tourism statistics is presented.

**Table 4: The Bulgarian/Romanian border region – Key 2001 Tourism Statistics**

	NE REGION BULGARIA	SE REGIONA ROMANIA
Domestic visitor arrivals (000s)	72.9	N.A.
Foreign visitor arrivals	103.7	N.A.
Total visitor arrivals	176.6	758
Share of national visitor arrivals	9.6%	15.41
Domestic overnight stays	261	N.A.
Foreign overnight stays	1117	N.A.
Total overnight stays	1378	4802
Share of national visitors	19%	27.21

Sources BG: The National Statistical Institute

Sources RO: The National Commission for Statistics, and the National Human Development Report, 2000

**Table 5: the Bulgarian/Romanian border region – Accommodation Structure**

	HOTELS	HOSTELS	CAMP SITES	OTHER ACCOMMODATION	NUMBER OF BED CAPACITY
NER Bulgaria	68	38	4	N/A	16,342
Bulgaria CBC region	118	49	6	N/A	29,543
SEDR Romania	283	0	60	480	122,598
Romania CBC region	327	3	68	484	128,667

Sources BG: The National Statistical Institute

Sources RO: The National Commission for Statistics, and the National Human Development Report, 2000

## 5.1. North East Region Bulgaria

The NER Bulgaria has a very important share of the total tourism infrastructure in Bulgaria. Most of this infrastructure is concentrated in Dobrich districts, especially in the municipalities along the Black Sea coastal zone. Mass tourism is the main type of tourism in the NER Bulgaria and remains the main source of employment and contributor to economic growth. The main markets are Russia, Germany and the United Kingdom as well as neighbouring countries. In addition to coastal mass tourism the NER Bulgaria also offers a range of natural and cultural attractions including spa resorts in Tuzlata, Zlatni Pyasatsi and Russenski Lom Nature Parks, Kaliakra Nature Reserve (designated MAB Biosphere reserve), the Durankulak and Shabla Lakes – Managed Reserves and internationally designated Ramsar Sites.

## 5.2. South East Development Region Romania

The tourism assets of the SEDR Romania are considered diverse and attractive and have facilitated the development of a domestically and internationally competitive tourism industry. As a result the SEDR Romania together with the Bulgarian NER Bulgaria benefits from the most advanced and sophisticated tourism industry. The tourism sector is stimulated through the promotion of local resources including the encouragement of domestic tourism as well as raising international awareness of the Romanian seaside and other types of tourism through the international travel trade.



## Annex 2: LIST OF CONTACT PERSONS IN INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED

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