

Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation

Report

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Application title:

Microreserve Stanca-Jeloboc - mode of nature coexistence with human activities

Location:

Moldova Republic (Forest remnants of North Dniester River Basin). The approximate latitude and longitude of the location (Cosauti, Soroca) is E 28°18'15", N 48°14'20".

Accepted/received fund:

£2600 (= \$4685)

Period of realisation:

June 2006 – August 2007

Summary of project implementation:

The proposed project aimed at (1) conservation of the riverbank forest remnants and their biodiversity in north-east Moldova by (2) developing ecotourism as a way to involve communities in and make nature help itself (see Photos 1-2). The Microreserve Stanca-Jeloboc is a natural-historical site in Soroca district, Dniestr River Basin, a shelter for many rare and endangered species; however, the forests are in danger. We organised a campaign to gather national/republican authorities and local authority/community in the heart of very area. We worked together with local people; we made local authority be more informed about the role and importance of these habitats for biodiversity and for maintaining natural integrity. Ecotourism, or often called here rural tourism, is a chance. We created a group, we are a group, and we still work on. (See also annexe with twelve photos of activities and site of implementation).

General report

I. History of submission and proposed activities:

A full proposal of the project *Microreserve Stanca-Jeloboc - mode of nature coexistence with human activities (Moldova Republic, forest remnants)* was sent to the Rufford Small Grant scheme in March 2006, and three reference letters were already sent or received by the RSG board in several days after.

The overall scenario and major activities planned within the project were to:

- 1) Initiate a local conservation group at Soroca district by setting up an Environment and Ecotourism Centre – All project time.
- 2) Organise a Summer School for young ecologists/pupils from 4 localities surrounding the area (Cosauti, Iegoreni, Iorjnita, Soroca), which will offer knowledge in biodiversity, environmental management and conservation, as well as importance and uniqueness of the Microreserve – July-August 2006.
- 3) Launch an ecotouristic route in Soroca district that will end at the Microreserve Stanca-Jeloboc, where several tracks will be established – July-September 2006.
- 4) Organise a public information campaign through mass-media: local seminars with stakeholders, making of a short documentary about the Microreserve, a TV round table which will be broadcasted on the national TV, setting up a web page, publishing of articles in national and international journals, booklets and leaflets – All project time.

II. Project activities and achievements (see also annexes and photos):

1. We initiated a local environmental and ecotourism centre in Soroca district (Soroca town, Cosauti and Iorjnita villages), and member of the conservation and development group are:

Aurel Lozan – environmentalist, researcher

Andrei Dumbraveanu – environmentalist, TV activist

Vasile Sarghii – local authority (Primar of Cosauti and Iorjnita villages)

Valeriu Andrievschii - local entrepreneur/recycling plastic waste initiative in Soroca

Oleg Barca – manager *Intersortrans* company, Soroca district, local

Ion Lozan – local craftsmen community/stone business and local NGO.

Viorel Toma – computer class teacher at local school Cosauti

- 1.1. Constitution of a local NGO *Public association for development and integration Moldprogress* (Organizatia obsteasca *Asociatia pentru dezvoltare si integrare civica Moldprogress*) is on the way to be registered at the magistrate of Soroca town/district. A meeting of members of the group on 12th July 2007 have formulated the scope and goals of a local NGO. Members are: Valeriu Andrievschi (chairman), Oleg Barca, Alexandru Barca and Aurel Lozan (members). Area and objectives of such a local NGO are: development and better environment in the Soroca district, promoting groups and initiative for social integration, and recycling waste activities.

- 1.2. We have managed to initiate a small local group among pupils of the junior school Cosauti (leader, local primary teacher Mrs L. Palanciuc) by organising a thematic seminar - *Nature Conservation in our Village*. Pupils of primary school have attended an extra free class of *Natural Sciences*, each given a booklet (see Photo 9).
2. A two days summer school *Biodiversity and Conservation* has been organised in August 2006 with participation of 12 pupils and young ecologists/biologists from localities: Cosauti, Iegoreni, Soroca and Chisinau. Training courses with pupils interested in certain fields (biodiversity: zoology, botany; conservation: management, ecotourism) have been component parts of the summer school. We organised a trip to the local forest complex Stanca-Jeloboc, where we offered our knowledge and experience in the field. The importance of protecting local forests and the unique diversity in a coexisting liaison with human pressure on were main subject of the training. The embedded trip and summer school have been part of the movie (see Photo 3).
3. It has been presumed to organise and launch an ecotourism route in Soroca district that would end at the Microreserve Stanca-Jeloboc, however, we organised and launched two ecotourism routes, as follow (see Photos 4-6):
 - a) National route (Moldova) - Chisinau-Soroca-Cosauti-Stanca-Jeloboc complex [Chisinau-Soroca=160 km, Soroca-Cosauti=10 km]
 - b) Regional route (Moldova-Ukraine) – Soroca-Cosauti-Stanca-Jeloboc-Jampol-Busha complex [Soroca-Cosauti=10 km, Cosauti-Jampol=cross the Nistru river, Jampol-Busha complex=5 km].

The tracks included:

- *Moldova*: Soroca fortress, Nistru river, chapel Lumanarea Recunostintei (a candle-like chapel on the top of the cliff forest), Bechir ravine (a man-made cave on the steep riverbank forest near Soroca town), Cosauti village (accommodation at home of local people), Monastery Cosauti, holy water spring, palaeolithic settlement Cosauti (22,000 years of human culture), Geto-dacian traces in the cliff forest (ground walls of 2-3 m height), caverns on the steep banks, the forests with fortunately some still remaining secular oak trees, landscape reserve Cosauti (535 ha).
- *Ukraine*: Jampol town (district town in Vinnitsa region), National historic-cultural reserve Busha, exhibitions in the open, stone monuments, huge stone walls and the spring, canyon-shaped valley.

We see the tourism (ecotourism/rural tourism) activity being an indispensable component of cooperation on both national and regional (with neighbouring Ukraine) levels. This is still unexploited field. It can bring benefits to local populations by making them coexists with natural landscape around. Such places should be used as recreation areas and, at the same time, educational centres.

4. A nationwide public informational campaign through mass-media has been provided:
 - 4.1. A booklet has been prepared, printed and designed by *Tipografia din Balti SRL* (Printing-house Balti) in 2006 (June-July), 1,000 printed in Romanian and disseminated during the

project. The Rufford logo has been used and an appropriate note about the Rufford Maurice Laing Small Grants Foundation and its financial support has been made.

- 4.2. Local seminars have been organised:
 - a) two at the Cosauti village/ local authority (Primaria): host Mr V. Sarghii (local authority [Primar]), members of the local council of Cosauti and Iorjnita villages, and local people;
 - b) one at the Sorooca ecological district agency: host - Mr V. Raileanu (head), other participants - Ms T. Taralunga (NGO Agenda Locala 21 Sorooca), V. Sarghii (Cosauti authority), A. Dumbraveanu (project team, ONG Ave-Natura), Aurel Lozan (project manager), two students from Sorooca town interested in nature conservation and landscape management.
- 4.3. Moldavian-Ukrainian meeting in July 2006 in the field, at the landscape reserve Cosauti (Stanca-Jeloboc complex) with participation of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Moldova Republic, Dr Constantin Mihailescu, and director of State Environmental Management Service of the Vinita district, Iavorsky Elena, as well as local authorities from both sides. We agreed that this micro reserve is a component part of a future transboundary reserve, a natural park, where such spots as Stanca-Jeloboc forest remnant with its historical and cultural heritage would be the core areas. Natural resources are of common interest and they should be protected jointly by making a common cause with local people to stop the forests and its components from being destroyed, and we are now in the middle of a forest which could be the core of a future common, without borders, park for peace – this was the outcome of the meeting. The local Monastery kindly offered room/office space for Moldavian-Ukrainian field meeting and round table/lunch party in July 2006 (see Photo 7).
- 4.4. Local workshop *Micro reservation Stanca-Jeloboc – Nature conservation and local development* in the Sorooca district, Cosauti village, at the Cosauti-Jorjnita authority's office, held between 6 and 7th July 2007. The host Mr Vasile Sarghii, local authority (Primar) of two villages - Cosauti and Jorjnita. Other participants: Valeriu Cojocaru (local craftsman/entrepreneur community), Ion Lozan (local craftsmen business community/NGO *Regele pietrii* (=King of Stone), Local Church superior (Cosauti), Andrei Dumbraveanu (NGO *Ave Natura*, cameraman, ecologist-publicist), Victoria Lozan-Donica (ecotourism activist, manager), 3 local people, 6 children (V. Andrievschi's plastic waste team) (see Photo 3). A field trip during our workshop to the Stanca-Jeloboc forest complex: Nikon Zaporojan, chief architect of the Chisinau city (capital of Moldova); Ion Lozan (local business/craftsmen community); Vicor Lozan, painter, director of local Cosauti art school; Victoria Lozan-Donica (eco-activist, project team); 2 member of Sorooca city magistrate; local architectural authority; A. Dumbraveanu and A. Lozan (project team). Main goals of the workshop were: (1) the future of Stanca-Jeloboc historic-natural complex, (2) local development and nature conservation, (3) tourism and environmental protection (see Photos 10-12)
- 4.5. Euro TV broadcast on November 2006 included a film *Escape to Paradise (Evadare în paradis)*. Euro TV is a regional broadcasting TV providing information for the two-thirds of the territory of Moldova.

- 4.6. SOR TV broadcast on April 2007 included a film *Stanca-Jeloboc – expanding the reserve (Stânca-Jeloboc – o rezervație în extindere)*. The studio SOR TV is a regional TV covering 10% of the territory of Moldova (districts: Soroca, Florești, Șoldănești).
- 4.7. TV round table (March-April 2007) at the faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences of the Moldavian State University, lead by Andrei Dumbraveanu, with participation of Aurel Lozan (Dr. of biology, environmentalist) and Alexei Palancean (Dr. of biology, Botanical Garden of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, NGO activist, forest ecology). Main subjects of discussion were: (a) protected areas of Moldova and their future; (b) human-nature relationships in context to nature conservation and management, and (3) environmental tourism as a chance to coexist and maintain indispensable habitats for biodiversity. Protected area index in Moldova is one of the lowest in Europe, with no national parks. To pledge for a rational coexistence we should take into account the needs of local people. The environmental tourism could be a chance for living side by side, maintaining valuable landscapes and habitats as indispensable home to biodiversity (see Photo 8).
- 4.8. The article in Romanian, *Protected areas and Promoting Rural Tourism (Ariile protejate – și promovarea turismului rural)* has been published in the materials of the Institute of Sociology and Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova.
- 4.9. A webpage *Cosauti Village and Stanca-Jeloboc Forest* (in Romanian, English and Russian), including photos, has been constructed under the official site of the Ministry of culture and tourism of Moldova (<http://www.turism.md/eng/topheritage/69/>) (for details see the UNDP Sustainable Tourism Development Project in Moldova, contacting person/responsible - Mr Petru Tarlev, e-mail: promo@turism.md - for tourism issues, tel. +373 22 233350).
- 4.10. A proposal/article *Protecting Riverbank Forests of Moldova* has been submitted, reviewed, and accepted (August 2007) by the organising committee for inclusion in the materials of the 4th International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability which will be held between 4th-7th January 2008 in Malaysia. Details of the presentation have been added to the public conference website at <http://S08.cgpublisher.com/proposals/7>.
- 4.11. A number of NGOs have been either directly involved or indirectly contributed to our activities. Somewhat, NGO community has helped us distributing information/materials of the project and/or managing events or other technical problems. The list is provided:
- *Ave Natura* – national NGO with several branches throughout the country
 - *Fagus* – centre for forest resources conservation in Moldova
 - *Silvic progress* – a national NGO
 - *AOTIS* – a national NGO working on rational using and alternative sources of energy
 - *CONTACT* Soroca branch, national NGO
 - *REC Moldova* Balti office (northern Moldova)
 - *Agenda Locala 21 Soroca* – a local (Soroca district) NGO
 - *The king of stone* – a local (Soroca district) NGO

- *Romanian Ornithological Society Galati branch (NGO Romania)*

III. Future development and perspectives

1. Things are changing. Meetings and long discussions with local community (authorities, craftsmen/business, inhabitants, school), personal contacting of several top persons of the country (Minister of Environment and Minister of Transport of the Moldova Republic) are bringing results. Several seminars, a workshop, a field-school for pupils, a webpage at the official website of the Ministry of tourism and culture, several articles/proposals and numerous meetings with people and NGO community have changed the situation. Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has promised a support for further activities to improve the quality of conservation in the region. Ministry of Transport and road management has promised to include the road segment (10 km) from the junction Soroca/Cosauti (Moldova) and Iampol (Ukraine) to the Monastery and the Stanca-Jeloboc complex/reserve on the roads of international significance, therefore this road portion is planned to be reconstructed. All these will not only contribute to the rural infrastructure improvement in the region, but also to creating conditions for eco-rural-tourism activity based on habitat conservation and even particular species protection.
2. We, as a group and the *Ave-Natura* NGO, have our own plans to continue activities and contribute to a better conservation and management in the region. We see a better development on a regional scale with neighbouring Ukraine, based on historical cultural and economical relationships. Well organised ecotourism can become growing force to oppose degradation and help local people rationally use resources and get some benefit from. We pledge for a friendly interrelationships with no harm to nature and its components.
3. We submitted a grant proposal (to TOYOTA Environmental grant programme FY 2007). We cooperate with the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and a joint project proposal for 2008-2009 was prepared and submitted.

Financial report

I. Activities and planned/accepted budget:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Amount</i>
June 2006	Preparations, booklets & leaflets	Editing, publishing 1000 ex.	100
July 2006	Ecotourism route, local seminars, shootings	Local trips, 4 localities, 3 pers.	200
August 2006	Summer school for young ecologists	Transportation, meal (10 pupils)	300
September 2006	Working with authorities	Trips (staying)	100
October 2006	Setting up a local environmental group	Computer, internet etc. Salary for two local people	600 200
November 2006	Web net construction & publicity	Computer work	-
December 2006- April 2007	TV round table & eco-movie	Moviemaking & broadcasting	600
May 2007- June 2007	Local seminar: authority, initiative group etc. Capacity building, encouraging local group	Local trips	100
July 2007	Workshop <i>Micro reservation Stanca-Jeloboc – Nature conservation and local development</i>	Participants: NGO, authorities, schools, other groups	400
August 2007	Project completion		-
Total			2600

II. Received amount of money/budget for the project:

4685 USD received 4.08.2006 in the BC Victoriabank SA fil.nr.11 Chisinau)

III. Activities and detailed budget of the project implementation (USD):

2006 breakdown

<i>Period/date</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Amount</i>
July 10–18 th	Booklet editing, publishing at Printing-house Balti (<i>Tipografia din Balti SRL</i>)	1000 ex, colour. Invoice SY0298668	200
July 15– 23 rd	Trips to Sorooca, Cosauti.	A seminar with local authorities	100
July 25-26 th	Ecotourism group. Three-day route: Chisinau-Sorooca-Cosauti (Stanca-Jeloboc complex/reserve)	10 people, one trip/route Accommodation, food (private home in Cosauti)	200
July	Visiting neighbouring Ukraine – ecotourism route to Jampol, Busa reserve (Ukraine)	6 people (transport, meal etc.)	100
July 20-21 st	Moldavian-Ukrainian field meeting (included invited local and republican authorities, agencies, NGO, locals etc.)	25 people (transport, meal, drink, field eco-party,)	250
July 5 th – August 10 th	Shooting, eco-movie, preparations	Trips within the area, interviews, shootings	500
August 5 th – 7 th	Summer school (localities: Cosauti, Iegoreni,	12 school-children	600

	Soroca, Iorjnita, Chisinau) <i>Biodiversity and conservation</i>	(transport, meal/lunch, drink, team accommodation, eco-guide)	
September	Computer, internet and publicity	Computer (HDD WD 160GB, VGA ASUS 256MB)	1085
September-October	Local environmental group	Trips to the area, discussions, meetings	50
October	Thematic seminar <i>Nature conservation in our village</i> with schoolchildren.	Cosauti local school	50
November	Euro TV broadcast	Eco-film <i>Escape to Paradise</i>	100
November-December	Publicity, information campaign, meetings	Submitting proposals (articles), fundraising	

2007 breakdown

March 25 th - April 5 th	TV round table (shootings at Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences of the Moldavian State University)	3 people participating in, 2 students, 2 technical personnel	500
April	Eco-film <i>Stanca-Jeloboc – expanding the reserve (Stâncă-Jeloboc – o rezervație în extindere)</i>	SOR TV studio broadcast	
April-May	Web page at the official site of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism	Information, photo, meeting, discussions	100
May	Local group and environmental initiative	Meeting, discussions	100
June 25-30 th	Local seminar in Cosauti (Soroca)	Meeting, 5 people	50
July 6-7 th	Local workshop in the Cosauti village (authority, local community, NGO, local craftsmen/business)	10 local people + 3 project team (accommodation, transportation, meal, drink)	600
July 15-20 th	Local seminars in Soroca and Cosauti (authority, district administration, business community, local people)	2 meetings (transportation, food, accommodation)	50
July-August	NGO community (Soroca, Cosauti, Chisinau)	Meetings, discussions	50
August	Project completion	Report (general, financial)	

Total: **4685** USD

IV. People engaged in project activities and amount of money received for certain tasks

(costs already included in the Activities and Detailed Budget of the Project Implementation, see p. 3):

<i>N/o</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Amount (USD)</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Implication</i>
1.	Andrei Dumbraveanu + TV technician	1000	Shooting + TV	Project team
2.	Victoria Lozan	300	Ecotourism, guide	Project team
3.	Viorel Toma	60	Computer class	Project team
4.	Elena Iepure	60	Biology teacher	Involved

5.	Vasile Sarghi	50	Local authority	Involved
6.	Larisa Palanciuc	10	Primary teacher	Involved

Annexes. Pictures of the implementation site and activities with comments.

Photo 1. The Stanca-Jeloboc bank forest in Moldova (Soroca, Cosauti) – an outstanding natural landscape (650 ha of actual forest, 530 ha already included in the protected area network). Smooth snakes (*Coronella austriaca*), a vulnerable species in both Moldova and Ukraine, and rare Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar*) occupy dry and sunny slopes. Caverns still harbour populations of greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*). Saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*, IUCN endangered red-list), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), booted eagle (*Hieraeetus pennatus*) have also been recorded here.



Photo 2. The Monastery Cosauti, founded in 1726, destroyed many times, rebuilt in 90th. Along with the holy water spring, believed to have curative properties, they are component part of people's life and true inspiration for tourists. The nearby Palaeolithic settlement Cosauti takes us back through 22,000 years of human culture in the area. Historical traces of Geto-Dacian tribes and the remains of a fortress (ground walls of 2-3 m in height) can be seen on the top of the Stanca-Jeloboc forest cliff.



Photo 3. A day in the forest: summer school for pupils in the Stanca-Jeloboc (Cosauti, Sorooca, August 2006). This is the Jeloboc forest, yet still living old-growth oak trees are witnesses of more than 500 years history in the area. In the centre: our cameraman (Dr A. Dumbraveanu) and Dr Ion Ciaicovschi – a motivated naturalist loving nature and these forests, one of my first nature teacher and field companion while exploring forests (died in September 2006).



Photo 4. An ecotourism group in the Stanca-Jeloboc forest, Soroc, Cosauti (August, 2006). Hiking is a lovely thing that many people do here. Steep slopes with small caves and projecting calcareous rocks towards the forested banks of Nistru River are quite attractive. *“We love climbing rocky slopes covered by trees and shrubs. We like spending time in the heart of nature”*



Photo 5. National historic-cultural reserve “Busha”, Jampol, Ukraine (August, 2006). *It’s a true museum in the open with more than 130 original stonework; craftsmen and sculptors are regularly gathering here during exhibitions. Our Moldavian expedition, supported by both local administrations, is in a visit to Ukrainian counterparts. People of both riversides are very friendly; no wonder we share (ecologically) same ecosystems and, in fact, same natural resources.*



Photo 6. National historic-cultural reserve Busha, Jampol, Ukraine (August, 2006). *Exposed rocks give us evidence of ancient life, under water, of marine protozoa that form a calcareous shell. Nowadays, these calcareous stones harbour unique cavern fauna. Tall walls of stone covered by forests and a water stream running towards Nistry River make us feel relaxed. It’s an outstanding natural scenic canyon-shaped valley, a place for recreation.*



Photo 7. Moldavian-Ukrainian meeting in Stanca-Jeloboc forest, Moldova, Soroca (August, 2006). In centre – Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Moldova (Dr Constantin Mihailescu), Head of the Administration of environment and natural resources of Vinnitza region (Mrs Elena Yavorskaya), Head of Soroca Ecological territorial unit (Mr I. Raileanu), Chairman of The Ecological Party Green Alliance of the Republic of Moldova (our cameraman, Mr Andrei Dumbraveanu). On right – Ukrainian delegation: Jampol district authority and Ecological inspection. On left - pupils from local schools (Soroca, Cosauti, and Iorjnita).



Photo 8. TV round table (retransmission) and eco-shootings, Chisinau (March 2007). From left to right: Aurel Lozan, Andrei Dumbraveanu and Alexei Palancean (Dr. Biology, ecologist, forest management).
“How to combine conservation and tourism activity? How to coexist to rationally use natural resources and minimally produce changes in ecosystems?”



Photo 9. Computer and information class at the secondary school Cosauti (March, 2007). There are pupils interested in ecology and nature conservation, so we try to help and get them involved in learning something new and useful. We had long discussions, we even argued, but we all agreed – coexistence is the way to be able to live side by side. *“Every book they take in the school library will be now accompanied by our booklet”.*



Photo 10. Local workshop (at Cosauti-Jorjnita authority's office, July, 2007). From left to right: local Church superior (Cosauti), Ion Lozan (local craftsmen business community/NGO *Regele pietrii* (=King of Stone), Mr Vasile Sarghii (local Primar/ authority), local inhabitant, Mr Valeriu Cojocaru (local craftsman/ entrepreneur community). *“Locals are interested in their future. Local authority (Primar) is optimistic and willing to help. We involved him in the project activities, he is already helping us”.*



Photo 11. Local waste recycling group in Soroca (July 2007). Our workshop focused also on V. Andrievschi's plastic recycling initiative. Everyday he is transporting people from and home back on his own old "Lada" car. He gives them a chance to earn some money. Some of them are really interested in; they bring bags full of plastic to get 2 lei per 1 kg. *"We support his intention; waste is nowadays a true burden for landscapes, even in Moldova. A well organised ecotourism means clean environment"*



Photo 12. Last day of our local workshop in the "Stanca-Jeloboc" forest (July 2007). *Our eco-guide, Mrs Victoria Lozan, is among craftsmen-architectural community. Stone craft activity is a local brand, maintaining some local groups and people at comparative economic survival. One can still find stone works reflecting animals (owl, stork, and hoof) and plants (rose, trees). It is also a solution for fighting unemployment - for some people this is the only one source of income. People from all over the country come to local craftsmen community to order stone monuments and various objects from local stone; they also visit local sites and spend some time in the natural landscapes, in the curative spring area. All these, combined with local traditions and customs, could be part of a very fruitful tourist activity in the area, a survival for environment and its components.*

