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Report on Cross Visit Romania

4- 7 July 2016, Sighisoara, Romania



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Introduction

The AgriSpin Project aims at creating space for agricultural innovations, “through amplifying good examples of innovation support systems and through multi-actor learning about ways to stimulate innovation and remove obstacles” (AGRISPIN Grand Agreement). The research approach for achieving such an aim is based on the in-depth exploration of a number of selected innovation cases during 13 cross visits (CV) in the project partners’ countries. Participants/ project partners in each CV endeavour to gain a deeper understanding of innovation processes and inspiration for improvements of the services being offered, finding a method for exploring innovation practices and the role of support service providers and contributing to the creation of a professional network of innovation support agents(Grand Agreement).



Fundatia Adept office

During the Romanian Cross Visit four innovative cases were studied:

Case 1: Innovative markets: Community enterprise

Case 2: Innovative markets: private

Case 3: Viscri Farmers Association

Case 4: Model Sheepfold

The team that visited Romania consisted of the following partners:

1. Mark Gibson - Teagasc
2. Thomas Fisel - VLK
3. Michael Kügler - VLK
4. Maite Andrés - HAZI
5. Damiana Maiz - HAZI
6. Eleni Zarokosta - University of Athens
7. Eelke Wielinga - ZLTO
8. Essi Tarsia - ProAgria
9. Alessandra Gemmiti - Regione Toscana
10. Nat Page - Fundatia ADEPT Transylvania
11. Cristi Ghergiceanu - Fundatia ADEPT Transylvania
12. Ben Mehedin - Fundatia ADEPT Transylvania
13. Laura Chirila - Fundatia ADEPT Transylvania
14. Razvan Popa - Fundatia ADEPT Transylvania
15. Liliana Gherghiceanu - Fundatia ADEPT Transylvania

Program of the cross visit in Sighisoara, Romania

4th July 2016

20.00 – 22.00 Dinner and Networking. Presentation of the general programme.

5th July 2016

09.15 – 10.30 ADEPT general presentation

10.30 – 13.00 - Visit I - Saschiz, SES Fruleco, Innovative markets: Community enterprise. Case analysis.

13.00 - 14.00 - Lunch

14.30 - 18.00 - Visit II - Saschiz -Innovative markets: private, Anca and Charlie Dalmasso. Case analysis.

20.00 – Dinner

6th July 2016

10.00 - 12.00 - Visit III - Viscri Association

12.30 - 13.30 - Lunch

14.00 - 16.00 - Visit IV - Model sheepfold

16.30 – 19.30 - Cases III and IV Analysis. PPP's Analysis & Preparation for the Symposium.

19.30 – 22.00 - Dinner & Social Activity

7th July 2016

09.30 - 12.00 - Symposium

12.00 - 13.00 - Lunch

General features of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System in the region

(Some material in next lines drawn from *Family Farming Knowledge Platform, FAO*)

- Romania has a long tradition in family farming; it was the pillar on which Romanian society developed. Family farm activities are not limited to agriculture. They also comprise important social activities for the community and family, preserve traditions and crafts, attract rural tourism and agro-tourism, and help to protect the environment through extensive agricultural practices.
- After the First World War, Romania became one of the largest producing countries of agricultural commodities in Europe, exporting mostly maize, wheat and other grains. The reforms made by the Government at the time helped families secure a living, by giving them land and know-how in the field.
- The connection between people and their land was embedded in Romania's rural society and it is still present in today's villages. The Second World War destroyed all the agricultural infrastructure and communism took over rural life. Large state farms were built and the land was taken away from the people. Most farmers were moved to the cities and were employed in newly developing industry. Those left in the villages worked at low productivity levels for the state farms.

- The farming know-how gathered over centuries, along with traditions and crafts, was lost. The new industrialized agriculture system took over and family farmers were replaced by simple employees. The only land people kept was that around their houses, where they kept growing some crops for the family.
- After 1989, many moved back to the villages due to the closure of the industry plants. They and those who still lived there became farmers in order to survive. Their methods were poor and their means were very limited. In Romania agriculture employs most rural inhabitants, and most farms are less than 5 hectares.
- Experience of communism made people very reluctant to join any form of association; families individually worked the small and fragmented parcels of land inherited from their pre-war ancestors. The persistence of the fragmented land structure of Romania through the last 20 years, despite the expectations of many land consolidation experts, is largely due to the important role subsistence and semi-subsistence farming plays in providing livelihoods where pension and welfare payments are extremely low, food prices are similar to those in developed countries, and access to credit is very difficult.
- These small-scale farmed landscapes, strongly associated with family farming, are still under increasing pressure due to loss of economic viability, failure to provide adequate living conditions for young farmers, and resulting abandonment. Taking land away from the families had a huge negative impact on rural social consciousness and the effects of this can be seen today. Rural society was shaken to its core. Family values and traditions built over centuries were lost, the landscape and the environment suffered and the peasants were in a great distress, not being able to secure their most vital needs. Irreversible damage was also done due to huge migration from the villages to areas where people could earn a short-term, non-sustainable living. Abandoned villages and families found themselves rethinking what their real values were.
- Smallholding-based production has persisted, especially in Romanian mountains and upland regions. However, livestock numbers have fallen since 1990, initially as a result of the dissolution of state and cooperative farms, and later due to rises in input costs and loss of market share, as a result of cheap imports after Romania's accession to the European Union (EU) in 2007. The sharpest decrease in cattle numbers began in 2009 when the milk market failed. Many small farmers sold their cattle because the milk price was too low. Worldwide, and in Romania alike, the trend was to develop a performing agriculture. Subsidies help mostly large farms achieve performance, but they had almost no impact on the poverty of rural areas. This bipolarity has been increasing over time. It is painful to accept and understand the damage done by the shift away from the cell on which rural development was based: small scale family farming.
- In Romania agriculture employs most rural inhabitants, and most farms are under 5 hectares. There are 3.9 million farm holdings in Romania, the majority of which are family farms of extensive semi-natural grassland pastoral systems and mixed farming systems. These semi-natural small-scale farmed landscapes are of significant economic importance. For example, the 1 million holdings between 1 and 10 hectares (3.1 million hectares, 20 per cent of Romania's agricultural area) are classes as semi-subsistence farms producing for home consumption, local sales and for their extended families. Yet these farms are estimated to produce 25-30 per cent of national food consumption. The traditional farmhouses and courtyards are gathered into villages. Crops are grown on the arable valley floors, and the valley slopes are given over to hay meadows and large expanses of communal grazing land for both sheep and cattle, which are managed separately. The typical family farm consists of a farmhouse, barns and sheds for cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens and hay; a vegetable patch for household use, and an apple, plum and pear orchard.

- The Rural Development Programme supported young farmers, encouraging them to stay in the rural area and to secure themselves a decent life. The programme entailed almost 13,000 projects, at €236 million. Based on our experience, only by continuing to give incentives for small farms can we achieve viable development in rural areas and a healthy economy. The effects of this support will be seen long-term; not only will people learn to connect to the market, use better technologies, educate themselves better and protect the environment, but the communities as a whole will keep their traditions and will be able to flourish. Sustainability of family farms can be ensured only if they are supported in various forms on a long-term basis, providing advice on the application of environmentally friendly technologies and maintaining local traditions of animal husbandry and farming. Thus, it is necessary to identify more accurate specific needs of family farms and provide a package of measures with regard to both agricultural and non-agricultural specificities for these farms to develop both at national and community level.
- The agriculture sector in Tarnava Mare region in particular, and in Romania in general, is characterized by the lack of a structured support service system and the collapse of the traditional cooperatives/associations.
- The policy framework is not very supportive for the small scale farmers. Small scale farmers don't have access to information, there is no national organization/institution to offer consultancy to access EU funding.
- Family farms use environmentally friendly techniques, can offer excellent quality products and keep rural areas alive. Small- and medium-scale agriculture employs a large number of farmers.

The role of Fundatia ADEPT Transylvania in this system

- Fundatia ADEPT has been working for 12 years in the Tarnava Mare area (a Natura 2000 site) of 85 000 ha. This area has 8 communes, 28 villages, 28,000 population. The area is also a Local Action Group (LEADER Measure).
- ADEPT has carried out rural economic development activities over this period linked especially to helping the economic survival of small-scale farming communities.
- Its activities and projects involve marketing, product development and rural entrepreneurship, tourism development (we have established a Tourist Information Centre, a bike trail, smartphone application) practical measures for preservation of biodiversity (for example agri-environment schemes), transfer of knowledge to the local people, and raising awareness to the authorities about the problems this area is facing in terms of sustainable use and economic viability.
- ADEPT implements integrated rural development projects in central Transylvania in order to conserve biodiversity, through research leading to practical conservation measures; to develop sustainable rural economies, through training and technical assistance, to build local capacity to gain access to economic benefits from biodiversity-friendly activities (agri-environment grants, marketing, product development), to develop sustainable communities and increased local participation in development projects and to increase awareness of the links between environment and prosperity, through publications, schools activities, festivals. ADEPT is constantly focused on influencing the national policy, through cooperation with central government in design of rural development policies.

Presentations and stories of the cases

ADEPT has chosen the four cases to be studied during the cross visit, being regarded by ADEPT as the most innovative ones in the Romanian context of small scale farmers.

CASE 1: INNOVATIVE MARKETS: COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE SES FRULECO

SUMMARY

SES Fruleco. Community processing / marketing scheme. Baskets, branding, mobile phone apps, and cooled delivery vehicle. Diversifying the products using local resources

Initial idea – 2006. Fundatia ADEPT needed a company to take care of all the commercial activities.

2008 – the processing unit built and equipped for demonstration purposes

2013 – 2015 – new equipment for diversification of production.



producers. Therefore ADEPT team developed a project to build a community facility, with the objective of demonstrating the simplest facility that would comply with the minimum food hygiene rules imposed by EU and to offer an alternative for economic viability of Tarnava Mare Area. The project was initiated and implemented in 2006 - 2008, the processing unit was built and equipped for demonstration and production purposes.

The project was financed through different grants at different stages of implementation: at first it was financed through Darwin Initiative, afterwards Norwegian funding supported installation of model processing units and further investment was supported by Sectoral Operational programme Human Resources: further model processing units, refrigerated transport and branding/marketing. 30 producers were involved in this projects.

In each stage ADEPT looked for funding opportunities, wrote the projects, applied for different grants and implemented the activities.

In 2013–2015 ADEPT purchased new equipment for diversification of production: refrigerators, apple juice press.

The main actors involved in the processes were ADEPT team, the local small scale producers and the local authorities ADEPT was in contact with. Unfortunately there is no support agency for small scale farmers in Romania, ADEPT playing the role of advisor and mediator between small scale farmers and authorities, ensuring a two-ways communication. ADEPT has always brought up to the tables of discussion with Romanina authorities the specific issues small scale farmers were facing. At the same time, ADEPT lobby for a more flexible policy framework for small producers, aligned with EU regulations.

The Food Barn became a community kitchen, helping local producers to prepare their products respecting the minimum food hygiene regulations and, therefore being able to sell easier their products. The Food Barn became a model to be followed by other rural communities as well.

At the same time ADEPT helped the local producers to better market their products, by creating a local brand, Tarnava Mare, offering permanent advise on packaging the promoting the products and offering access to different fairs, markets and events to local producers and helping them to diversify their products and incomes.

The success factors were the continuous flexibility, availability and enthusiasm of ADEPT team. Although the policy framework was not supporting the development of small scale producers, and although the authorities were quite reluctant, at first, ADEPT succeeded to overcome all these obstacles thought constant dialogue with both parties (local producers and farmers and authorities).

As innovative points we mention: the Food Bran shows value of linking small-scale producers for their mutual benefit: the community kitchen is used by local Farmers, one food-safety authorization is needed for multiple producers and the consumables are bought together to reduce direct costs. Another innovative point is the fact that the local producers attend events as one group and they promote all the products from the area.

By meeting the EU's food safety and hygiene regulations rigorously, Food Barns such as the one in Saschiz can boost income for local people as they provide an authorized facility for creating and preserving added value traditional food products.

There are numerous town halls, common ownership associations and NGOs in the area that are eager to replicate the Food Barn project carried out by Fundatia ADEPT.

In 2015, ADEPT created the company SES Fruleco to carry out commercial activities. As a partner in the project "Social Economy - driver of economic development in regions Bucharest - Ilfov , Central, North West and South Muntenia POSDRU 173 / 6.1 / S / 148 732" ADEPT set up a social enterprise to restructure economic and social development of communities at the Sighisoara - Târnava Mare.

The main objective of the project is to eradicate poverty or solve one or more problems (such as education, health, technology, environment) which threaten people and society, not to maximize the profit.

HNV Fruleco SES aims to contribute to local development and social cohesion, with a high potential for generating and maintaining stable employment. Currently, the social enterprise includes seven full-time employees, of which five persons belong to vulnerable groups (Roma). All persons employed benefited from proper advise and training.

The company behaves responsibly towards environmental issues. Staff employees receive remuneration at markets, benefiting from better working conditions than the standard.

Through all this activities ADEPT aims to achieve its strategic objective: to improve the viability of small scale farming by supporting farming communities to access markets for local products ad other rural development opportunities, with a particular focus on innovative approach, developing and maintaining relationships with farmers and producers and small-scale food producer training, production and processing.

- **What is the innovation?**
 - Community Food Process Unit linked with a more flexible policy framework for small scale producers
 - Local Branding – added value to local products
 - A way for local producers to promote together the area as a whole and direct cost savings
- **Key actors and their role** in the process
 - ADEPT team
 - 30 local producers
 - small scale farmers
 - authorities
- **Role of the support agency**
 - No active support agency in the given context
- **Success factors**
 - flexibility, determination, creativity of ADEPT team
 - good collaboration with the local farmers
- **Fail factors**
 - a rigid policy framework and reluctant authorities at first. But these factors have been overcome though ADEPT perseverance.
- **Regional and/or historical particularities**
 - lack of a personalized policy framework for small scale farmers
 - no support agency for small scale farmers and producers
- **Results:**
 - Improved incomes from local products, Used as a model – many visitors from other villages/areas
- **What we hope for:**
 - other ideas on regional marketing linked to nature image.
- **Specific recommendations**
 - Build on existing paths, regulations, initiatives in other countries with shared vision
 - Do links with other Romanian foundations and associations
 - More cooperation with industry
 - Create an Association of local producers
 - Look for partnership with private business

- **Lessons** that can be generalized
 - There is always a way to get things done if there is enough determination and creative thinking
 - ADEPT's flexibility allowed for quick decisions and changes of approach towards authorities, in order to achieve the proposed objectives.

CASE 2: INNOVATIVE MARKETS: CASA DE PE DEAL, GUESTHOUSE

SUMMARY

- Local producer benefited from the young farmer grant and investment measure under National Rural Development Plan. Integrated project guesthouse, bike hire, small scale production.
- 2008 initial idea
- 2009 finish the processing unit
- 2013 online shop
- 2016 ice-cream production for local events
- 2016 2 rooms available for guests



STORY

Anca and Charlie met during an ERASMUS visit in Romania and decided to establish themselves in Saschiz area, close to Anca's family. Anca inherited her childhood house from her grandfather and they both worked for Fundatia ADEPT in 2006 – 2008.

One of the drivers for their initiative was that they are provided not such a large range of jobs available for young people. The small-scale farming communities in Romania were no longer viable economically, leading to ex-migration and land abandonment. They identified the need for improved income for High Nature Value landscapes through adding value to products linked to natural image and the need for clearer hygiene rules, for processing and authorization of direct and local sales.

Their Initial idea to build their own small family business came while they were still working for ADEPT, being involved in the process of building the Food Barn in Saschiz and other activities carried on by ADEPT (attendance of the national and international fairs, promoting traditional products, guided tourists tours, building of the Food Barn). They understood and embraced ADEPT's holistic approach, integrating rural tourism & food production.

Their inspiration came from Anca's family, she felt the need to protect her cultural and culinary legacy intact and started by following her mother's pickles recipe and, after a while, they decided to build their own food process unit.



Without any formal support, but lots of energy and enthusiasm the bi-cultural couple managed to have an open dialogue with the authorities dealing successfully with the bureaucracy and started the project in 2008 and finalized it in 2009. They used the advisory services for designing of the processing facility.

A key point was their willingness to challenge authority, and negotiate for suitable standards, rather than accept authority fatalistically.

The main actors involved in the process were Anca and Charlie, the authorities they interacted with, the advisory service for design of the processing facility and ADEPT who offered permanent support to their project. At first, during the building process, Anca and Charlie used ADEPT Food Barn to process their products and they had permanent access to markets, fairs ADEPT organized for local producers.

Their constant strategy was to keep their business small, professional and independent, having a clear vision about their plans. They developed step by step, starting from pickles and jams production, all the time being interested in developing new products. They tried new recipes (from Charlie's family as well – e.g. Milk Jam, home-made ice cream) and came up on the market asking for direct feedback from the consumers. They created their own plan to promote and market their products. They first participated at different fairs, but, in time, in 2013 they created their own online shop and have been practicing direct selling since then.

After a period they diversified their services, organizing brunches for different tourist groups and they built the new area for serving food to bigger groups. They focused permanently on diversification and cooperation with the others, trying to gain supporters and partners in order to promote Saschiz area as a touristic attraction.

Beginning in 2011 ADEPT have built the first 100 KM mountain-bike trails in Romania, to have a new base for the sustainable tourism in the area. Anca and Charlie saw the opportunity to develop their services further, and, in 2015, through a projects supported by the Local Action Group, they bought a few bikes to be rented to tourists coming to the area.

In 2015 they finalized building 2 rooms to offer accommodation to tourists.

They planned their business development step by step, with constant care for quality of their life also, and they became one model for small family enterprises. They offer advice to people who want to do similar things and

share their know-how with open hearts and they have built on good relationship with local farmers, with whom they collaborate by buying the fruits and vegetables they use for tourists, for jams and for preserves.

- **What is the innovation?**
 - Low-tech approach to increase farmer income.
 - Using old grandma recipes to market new products.
 - Involving family in friends to develop the business
- **Key actors and their role in the process**
 - Anca and Charlie
 - Local authorities
 - Advisory service for design of the processing facility
 - ADEPT
 - Local community – small scale farmers and producers Anca and Charlie are interacting with
- **Role of the support agency**
 - No active support agency in the given context
 - They had to start the process for authorizing their food process unit by themselves
- **Success factors**
 - Enthusiasm and bi-cultural background
 - ADEPT constant support. Even before Anca and Charlie had their food processing facility built, they could start the production using ADEPT Food Barn.
- **Fail factors**
 - a rigid policy framework and reluctant authorities at first.
- **Regional and/or historical particularities**
 - lack of a personalized policy framework for small producers
 - no support agency for small scale farmers and producers
- **Results:**
 - Develop new products
 - Online shop for their products and services.
 - Attending different national and international food events.
 - Adding new services in 2015 – renting bikes.
 - Adding 2 new rooms for guests in 2016
 - Helping local producers by buying local ingredients
- **Specific recommendations**
 - Generate financial review of the costs – income
 - Create a financial plan for future development
 - Create a logo
- **Lessons that can be generalized**
 - A small scale business can be developed if there is a clear strategy and development process is followed step by step



CASE 3: VISCRI FARMERS' ASSOCIATION

SUMMARY

ADEPT has developed village associations as centre of innovation and expertise. With support from Innovation Norway, ADEPT have developed a milk collection points (MCPs) for Viscri Association. By improving milk quality and quantity, and assisting with negotiations with milk processing companies, they have increased the price of milk obtained by the farmers, and halted the decline in cow numbers in the area. ADEPT has held a competition among farmer associations, Viscri was a winner and won a Brielmaier mower and training in maintenance.



STORY

At the beginning of 2014 Viscri community organized their annual meeting. The meeting usually takes place in winter and in spring and the community discusses grazing and opportunities/threats for accessing land area payments (direct payments and agri-environment).

The initiative to create the association came from the people themselves, identifying the need to be represented by one common, stronger voice in relationship with authorities. This was the first association in the region, since the communist period, in a corrupt political environment. At that time there was a huge lack of transparency from the local authorities, the Mayor being mainly focused on his personal interests. Nevertheless, this made the association grow stronger.

ADEPT encouraged this initiative and supported the association in its activities. The Association won a competition to win a Brielmeier mower and training in its maintenance/use, through an ADEPT project (but the assessment of applications was carried out by external consultants).

With support from Innovation Norway in 2015 - 2016, ADEPT have developed a milk collection point for Viscri Association, who got support for the building from another NGO, Mihai Eminescu Trust, which whom ADEPT has collaborated before. ADEPT offered support to the association by offering the cooling and quality control equipment.

By improving milk quality and quantity, and assisting with negotiations with milk processing companies, they have increased the price of milk obtained by the farmers, and halted the decline in cow numbers in the area. The milk collection point provides shared quality control and cooling /collection facilities for about 20 farmers. By improved quality (training) and quantity (larger bulk tanks, more farmers participating) and direct negotiation with milk processor companies the local community felt the real outcomes of the project. ADEPT has offered training of farmers to improve milk hygiene and training MCP manager to use/maintain the machinery. By negotiating with milk processors and farmer associations being responsible, the milk price up 20-30%. The result Halt in falling cow numbers in the villages concerned. Hundreds of hectares of abandoned hay meadows have been brought back under good management.

The main actors involved in the project were the farmers, the advisory services provided by ADEPT and Mihai Eminescu Trust and the milk processing companies.

One of the main drivers for this initiative was the need to increase milk prices to stop the fall of cow numbers in the area. Each cow lost = 1 ha of high biodiversity grassland abandoned/converted to sheep grazing. Precious High Nature Value meadows are being abandoned because fewer people available to scythe by hand, and fields are too inaccessible/too sloping for tractor use. In some area 30% of hay meadows are abandoned. ADEPT thought on how to bring these meadows back into use, with benefits to local economy and to biodiversity.

ADEPT continues to provide informal technical assistance to the association, encouraging the people to stay together despite all the pressure coming from outside. There could not have been a formalization of this support service ADEPT is offering, as the association does not have the means to support a monthly fee for professional support.

ADEPT promotes this type of cooperation more widely and encourages other communities in working together.

- **What is the innovation?**
 - Strengthening the association as a tool for spreading innovation and improved Quality.
 - Bringing together simple training, small equipment and negotiation for milk prices, we have solved economic and landscape conservation problems with minimal expense.
 - We have also increased viability of the association with innovative mower.



- **Key actors and their role in the process**
 - Farmers from Viscri
 - Milk processors
 - ADEPT
 - Mihai Eminescu Trust
- **Role of the support agency**
 - No active support agency in the given context

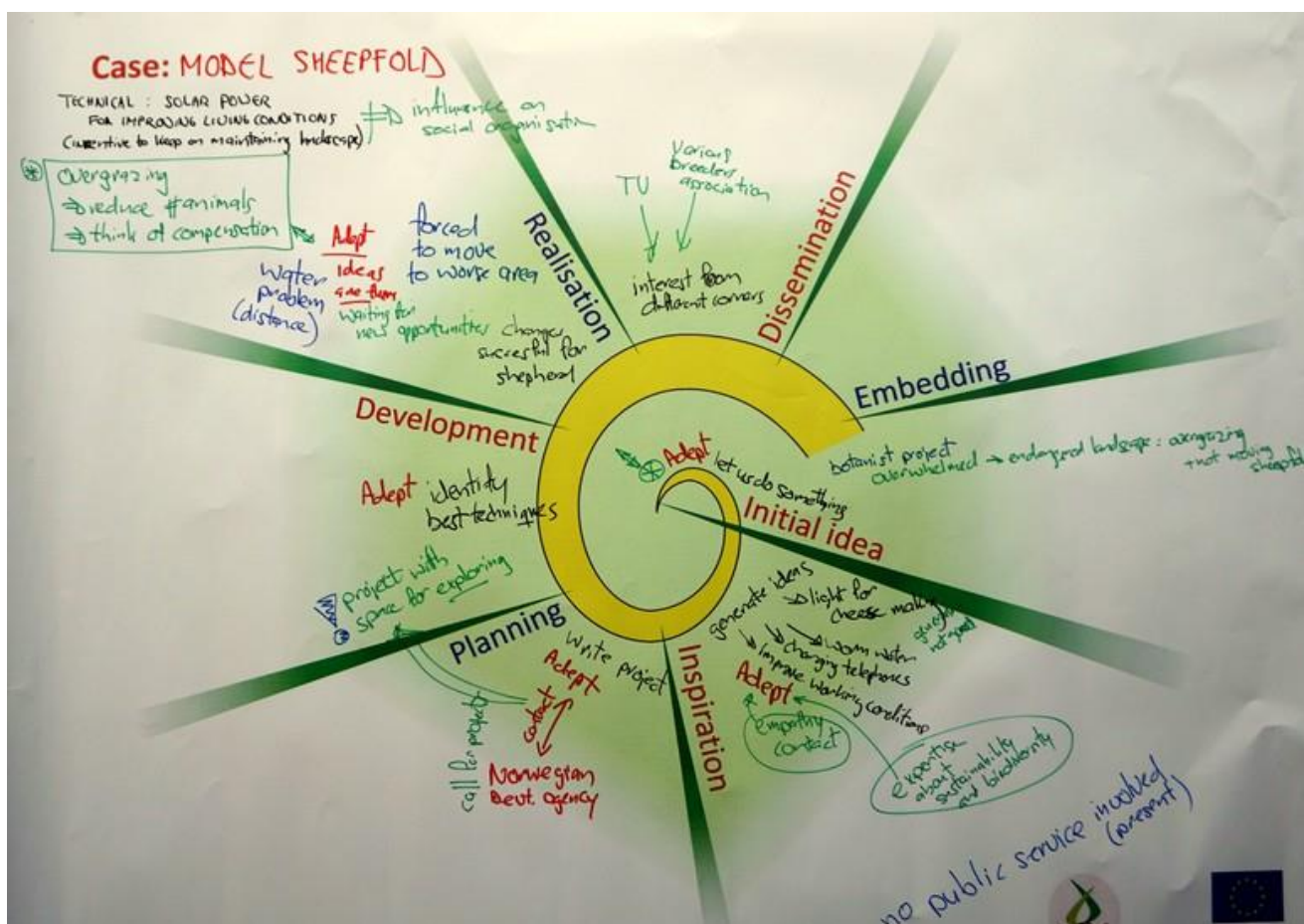
- **Success factors**
 - The mentality of the people – the fact that they realized that only working together the whole community will benefit and each individual as well
 - ADEPT support of the initiative and informal advice.
- **Fail factors**
 - Corrupted local authorities (the Mayor focused only on his personal interests).
- **Regional and/or historical particularities**
 - Corruption
 - the fall of cow numbers in the area.
- **Results:**
 - MCP provides shared quality control and cooling /collection facilities for about 20 farmers.
 - Achieved by improved quality (training) and quantity (larger bulk tanks, more farmers participating) and direct negotiation with milk processor companies. Involved: advisory services (NGO), farmers, milk processing companies.
 - Training of farmers to improve milk hygiene. Negotiation with processors for better prices. Training MCP manager to use/maintain the machinery. Selecting responsible farmer associations. Milk price up 20-30%
 - Halt in falling cow numbers in the villages concerned. Hundreds of hectares of abandoned hay meadows have been brought back under good management.
- **Specific recommendations**
 - More transparency towards the members of the association – find the right way to communicate about activities/plans
 - Establish partnership with other associations and organizations
 - Create a permanent communication environment (regular meetings, quarterly newsletter etc)
- **Lessons** that can be generalized
 - A small scale business can be developed if there is a clear strategy and development process is followed step by step

CASE 4: MODEL SHEEPFOLD

SUMMARY

- Example of traditional farming methods being supported by technical expertise.
- The project provides solar panels for sheepfolds so that shepherds can improve their living conditions while staying with their flocks of sheep in the hills in the summer.
- The solar panels will give them electric light, and power to charge their mobile phones to keep in touch with their families and to be able to use hot water to increase the hygienic condition up on the hills.
- Idea has already spread more widely





STORY

Between 2011 and 2015 ADEPT was involved in a project to prepare the management plan for the Natura 2000 site. Overgrazing was one of the main problems identified.

In the first phase, after a few field studies and direct contact with the actors involved, ADEPT revealed a number of limitations and needs for the members of a sheepfold. The most common problems were the low number of personnel compared with the number of sheep, very limited hot water supply, long distances to the water supply, difficulty in assembling and dismantling the sheepfold construction, and lack of electrical supply.

The difficulty in assembling and dismantling the sheepfold construction inhibits the regular moving of the sheepfold, which is required every week to prevent damage to the grasslands. This has led to excessive intervals between moving, 3 to 4 week intervals during the summer. This leads to a significant deterioration of the soil, where the sheep are kept for longer time. Lack of electricity and warm water is also one of the biggest issues for shepherds in the area, since it prevents night-time cheese-making, and reduces cheese quality from lack of ability to clean equipment properly.

Based on the evaluation of the challenges and considering the discussions with the three shepherds identified as partners in a pilot project, a series of measures were proposed, aiming to improve the sheepfolds conditions. In 2011 ADEPT successfully applied to Innovation Norway, with whom we have carried out previous projects, under a project proposal "Ecosystem Services from High Nature Value farmland - Green industry – Romania", with the component "Sustainable sheepfolds – waste management and renewable energy".

In May 2015, ADEPT ordered the first photovoltaic and solar panel system in order to test them with the first shepherd. The results are amazing. The shepherd is very happy because he has energy to charge the mobile phones, lights during the night and they discovered that there is enough power stored in the system that can be used with electrical tools as drills or other small equipment.

After these good results ADEPT ordered another 2 systems that were delivered to the other 2 shepherds. We have done some calculation according to the technical specification of the systems and the number of days used we ended up with 1,3 MWh/year produced by the 3 systems installed.

Initially, ADEPT wanted to build a mobile unit that was supposed to incorporate all the equipment, but during the discussion with the shepherds we realised that the best way is to have a fix metal structure on which to fit all the parts. It takes about 15 minutes to disassemble the equipment and this is done 2 times a year. We have organised 3 groups (29 people) for visiting the shepherds, as part of this project.

ADEPT have also created a technical brochure on sheepfold specification so that it can be easily replicated. The brochure is freely available.

- **What is the innovation?**
 - Combining innovation with tradition to maintain historic management linked to traditional food and local incomes, and traditional way of life in villages.
 - Allowing conditions for touristic activities as income diversification.
- **Key actors and their role in the process**
 - Shepherds
 - ADEPT acting as advisory service
 - architects
 - alternative
 - energy specialists
 - geologists
- **Role of the support agency**
 - No active support agency in the given context
- **Success factors**
 - The openness of the shepherds involved in the pilot project
 - Innovation Norway flexibility – the solutions could be adjusted along the way after the feasibility study was carried on
 - ADEPT constant support
- **Fail factors**
 - Corrupted local authorities (the Mayor focused only on his personal interests, not willing to support this kind of initiatives in the area).
- **Regional and/or historical particularities**
 - Overgrazing
- **Results:**
 - innovative sheepfolds.



- Items include easily movable design for sheepfolds (which need to be moved periodically in the summer to prevent local damage), solar panels for powering mobile phones, electric lights, electric fencing, and solar panels for hot water.
- **Specific recommendations**
 - More involvement of independent advisory needed in the process
 - Shepherd's attitude – should more friendly with visitors, more customer oriented
- **Lessons** that can be generalized
 - There is always room for combining innovation and tradition as long as there is good will and vision

Symposium – agenda

➤ Introduction

Who is who and what is AgriSpin?

➤ Summaries of previous Cross-Visits

5 minutes highlights

➤ Presentation of Pearls, Puzzlings and Proposals

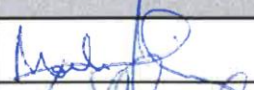
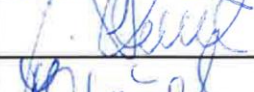

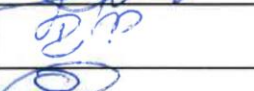
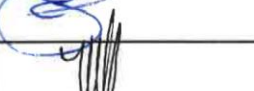


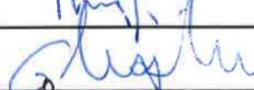
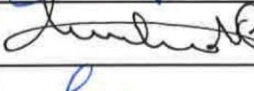
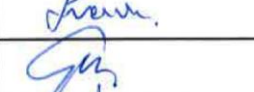


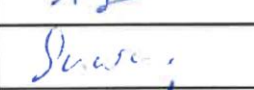
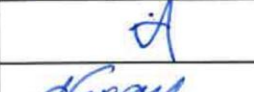
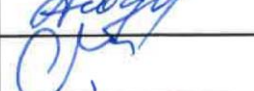
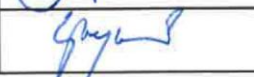






➤ Comments from guests, discussion

➤ Take home messages





Participants List AgriSpin Romania Cross Visit 4 -7 July

No	Name	Organization	Day	Signature
1	Mark Gibson	Teagasc	7.07.16	
2	Thomas Fisel	VLK	7.07.16	
3	Michael Kugler	VLK	7.07.16	
4	Maite Andrés	HAZI	7.07.16	
5	Damiana Maiz	HAZI	7.07.16	
6	Eleni Zarokosta	University of Athens	7.07.16	
7	Eelke Wielinga	UHOH	7.07.16	
8	Essi Tarsia	ProAgria	7.07.16	
9	Alessandra Gemmiti	Regione Toscana	7.07.16	
10	Nat Page	Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania	7.07.16	
11	Cristi Gherghiceanu	Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania	7.07.16	
12	Ben Mehedin	Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania	7.07.16	
13	Laura Chirila	Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania	7.07.16	
14	Liliana Gherghiceanu	Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania	7.07.16	
15	Razvan Popa	Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania	7.07.16	
16	Dan Cismas	Local Farmer	7.07.16	
17	Sebastian Aldea	Local Farmer	7.07.16	
18	Lucian Rares Suciu	Agriculture Input Consultant	7.07.16	
19	Jolt Borbely	Deputy APIA Targu Mures	7.07.16	
20	Elena Neagu	Local Farmer	7.07.16	
21	George Catean	Local Farmer	7.07.16	
22	Lucian Suciu	Local Farmer	7.07.16	

PEARLS

The importance of Networking

- Building strong and wide networks
- Make use of VIPs and their networks
- Sincere and empathetic approach with community
- Need to map out roles within network

Funding

- Need to have flexible funding sources
- Need good mix of funding
- Project (Norway Grants)
- Institutional (Orange)
- Need a professional approach to funding applications

Diversification

- Synergy between tourism activities and economical activities
- Reduces reliance on one income stream

Capacity Building

- First involve local people and build trust
- Identify needs and develop innovative solutions in partnership with community
- Need to develop sustainable solutions that make optimal use of local resources
- Important to build resilience within groups in to overcome challenges

Ambition

- Passion for the future of the territory essential
- Activities of support service must fit closely with the needs of the people
- Respect and integrate the tradition of the area and natural resources while developing innovative solutions

Free actor (ADEPT)

- Creates pathways through/around bureaucracy
- Enable communities to innovate e.g. pilot projects
- A strong team with good mix of skills required
- Interface between farmers and administrators
- Willingness to solve problems at local and national level
- Flexible to react to problems as they arise (size)
- Empower/enable communities

PUZZLES

Replicability of ADEPT further than the local level:

- Can ADEPT model be replicated/scaled, should be more than local
- Is the network is based on friendship and trust?
- Network is a skill that can be thought

Dependency on private foreign funding

- What would happen if this sources would no longer be available?

Connection with local administration:

- Local governance? – the role of local authorities or of the regional services?
- What happens if an administration is considered as incompetent?

How to empower farmers to move from “survivors” to “initiators”:

- How to do it properly to empower the famers to become initiators?
- Be careful with involving “survivors”

Bureaucracy:

- There is a need for intermediaries, there is a big gap between the needs/ difficulties the farmers are facing and the competent authorities

What happens if ADEPT is not there?

- There is a dependency in relationship with ADEPT
- How to make ADEPT more consolidated/ ADEPT a permanent institution

Lack of support organizations:

- No support from public agencies
- Can farmers solve problems without advisory services
- Bottom up innovation support
- Lack of state advisory service

PROPOSALS

Inner governance of ADEPT:

- ADEPT look more for famers as your managers
- Farmers as drivers in ADEPT
- Keep spirit in ADEPT high requires continuous maintenance
- Share of vision with the target group – shepherds!

Networking:

- Build on existing paths, regulations, initiatives in other countries with shared vision
- Do links with other Romanian foundations and associations
- More cooperation with industry
- Create an Association of associations
- Look for partnership with private business

Funding of ADEPT:

- Look for donors like Orange that allow you to support also “question marks”
- Find collaboration with long perspectives
- Look for partnership with private business

Services and Target Groups:

- Funding for farmers’ exchange programmes in EU (e.g ERASMUS PLUS)
- Help people to be more self aware

- Teach people the skill of writing proposals and for procurement and farmers to improve quality of production
- Help farmers to find balance between traditional farming and acceptable income
- Training of networking skills in the CECRA network (training standard for advisors)
- Concentrate to avoid that young people are leaving / Focus on new generation, promoting value awareness
- Promote the benefits of cooperating, show successful examples of cooperation
- Focus on consumers training
- Organize events to empower local people
- Marketing for HNV (High Nature Value) products

Lobbying and influence on policy

- Be involved in public decision-making
- Make Romania's Rural Development Programme funding more flexible and small farmer friendly
- Help to establish the Regional Chambers of Agriculture with outside assistance
- Go to have a louder voice
- Be prepared to become national
- Don't waste energy with conflicts with administration
- Involve the authorities in ADEPT's work



SYMPOSIUM – SUMMARY OF GUESTS' DISCUSSIONS

- A need for a Programme dedicated to school leavers who could do some practice in the farm. It would be a win-win situation in the long run. There is a big necessity to have trained personnel.
- A big need for an effective Chamber of Agriculture with representatives in each commune.
- Advisory services are important in reducing bureaucracy .
- Lack of information available to the farmers.

- The Rural Development Program is badly done, it helps mostly big farms.
- There was a consultation in RDP and even though they received feedback from the territory, they ignored it and still keep to their initial plan.
- Even the Payments Agency finds bureaucracy quite overwhelming.
- Existing associations are not so good for small farmers, there is a great need for an association-/confederation at national level that could represent small and medium farms' interest.
- ADEPT can do a small part of the advisory services.
- The farmers don't think that the farmers could afford to pay for the advisory services. For at least 5-10 years these would need to be financed by others (state, NGOs).
- Create a common processing at the village level.
- The need to create a critical mass. There are some farmers who can start the way. The farmers themselves can be the "ambassadors" for the new ideas, they are the most entitled to make the real change in the system. It is very important that the initiatives come from the farmers. There is a need for a few farmers who lead the way ... and for dissemination of ideas.
- Farmers are not jealous of their ideas ... They are happy to discuss them ... They do not see other farmers as competitors.
- It is quite difficult to find all the legal information, if you want to start something. Access to information is quite limited. It would be ideal to have a central bureau where the information needed by the farmers could be well structured.

TAKE HOME MESSAGES:

- ADEPT should work more with farmers and involve them more formally in the decision making process.
- We need time and good communications in order to decrease the farmers' fear of bureaucracy.
- The farmers should make pressure for reduction of bureaucracy. This is the proper role for associations, but they lack capacity. Associations are hampered by lack of trust between farmers. The problem of changing the mentality can be changed through cross visits.
- Learning again from examples presented from the other cross visits. Some of these examples could be replicated.
- Bureaucrat: an individual who stays behind the desk and has no clue about what he is doing. Maybe they don't have the right passion. If there would be the right people at the right place, some changes could appear. There should be a link between information and the institution.
- ADEPT team – very passionate about what they are doing and very well connected.
- Community identity and pride, this would bring added value.
- A lot of great activities happening at the local level. They should be translated at the national level. In Ireland there are very strong farmers unions that represent their interest and they have a very strong influence on the laws and general environment. If there would be a better collaboration between the actors in Romania we could have a stronger voice.
- The fact that we are different is a big advantage. Trying to create an uniform approach will be wasteful. Diversity is good.
- ADEPT should keep the passion, principles unaltered and generate new partnerships with authorities and other organizations and farmers.
- Cross visit exchanges are essential for the farmers not only abroad but also in the local community. It is important to create a real network at the regional level and collaborate better (not only knowledge exchange, but some products/services exchange between the members of the community).
- Even a small community which sticks to its values and principles can generate change at a larger scale.
- It is encouraging for ADEPT staff that members of the cross visit recognized the value of their work.

- Small groups can do big things, creating a prosperous society. People should work together in order to achieve good things.
- The area has beautiful landscape, good food, hard work and passion. The Basque organization would be willing to cooperate with ADEPT in the future as there is a common vision shared between the two areas.
- Even though so geographically away from the Basque country, there are a lot of similarities. There is huge potential for the future to develop. There are a lot of treasures here.
- When meeting a new Saxon association in Germany, they could be asked when will they come and invest in their home village in Romania.
- Farmers say that even though they have been working in agriculture since 1981, now they face the worst situation ever. The Government is not supporting farmers at all.
- Training people would be an essential point to focus on further.
- The passion within in ADEPT is the key asset and there is a limit to the size of such an organization if we would want to keep this passion. There is a need for such an organization to motivate the others.