

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole**

**Grants Director**

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#### Grant Recipient Details

<b>Your name</b>	Razvan Deju
<b>Project title</b>	Sustainable management in Vanatori Neamt Natural Park's European bison population
<b>RSG reference</b>	16_04_06
<b>Reporting period</b>	July 2006 - July 2007
<b>Amount of grant</b>	4950 £
<b>Your email address</b>	ecosilvex2000@yahoo.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> of May 2008

**1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.**

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Education			x	Three theoretically and field trainings sessions addressing educational component were achieved. There were involved schools and ecological clubs within the project reference area. For theoretically sessions, was used an existing Ecosilvex's manual about bison and a PowerPoint presentation called ' <i>Teledetection and bison monitoring</i> '. For the field training session, children were divided in several crews and the animals were identified by radio-telemetry system. As well, the participants learned about bison in freedom (spoons, tracks, feeding etc), interaction between human and bison, potential threats, etc.
Survey monitoring	a		x	The activity of monitoring of European bison population intended to get real results regarding bison behaviour in semi-freedom conditions (180 hectares for 13 animals' herd – 6 males and 7 females). In August 2006, a bison female was radio-collared and already were performed first results in relation with refugees, habitat preferences, etc. The results are not very clear due the short monitoring period which included wintertime (animals have a lower spatial distribution in comparison with the seasonal vegetation). Precious observations were performed by rangers during theirs monitoring using direct observations (behaviour, suitable habitats, resting, damages, etc).
Database			x	The materials and method for research were decided. We realized that identifying the major vegetation types in the Park's area is not enough, so in order to find different conditions for vegetation types, we took into consideration new aspects: forest site, forest type, flora type and canopy of the forest. Using Romanian Forest classifications and terminology we determined 28 specific cases for Park's area. We must notice that the conclusions for these cases will be easily apply anywhere in Romanian Carpathians or anyway

				in Carpathian chain after equivalences between national forest classifications will be done (Romanian, Polish, Ukrainean or Slovak).
<b>Corridors</b>			x	<p>National and natural parks in Romanian Carpathians provide the largest potential area for free-ranging bison population, however due to isolation of some parks by anthropogenic barriers and their sub-optimal habitat for this species, only two groups of parks can be seriously considered as suitable for bison introduction.</p> <p>First assessments of most suitable habitats as bison refugees in freedom indicate 5 protected areas in the Nort-Eastern Romanian Carpathians: Calimani National Park, Ceahlau National Park, Cheile Bicazului-Hasmas National Park, Muntii Rodnei National Park and Muntii Maramuresului Natural Park, all above parks being placed in near proximity of Vanatori Neamt Natural Park.</p> <p>The second area is located in the South-Western side of the country.</p>
<b>Forest management plan</b>			x	<p>Proposals of modifying existing forest management plan were submitted, in order to assure good conditions for bison herds respecting also FSC's principles.</p> <p>Some of our proposals were included in the new "Guide for forestry practice in protected areas" (the retain of dead wood, clear cutting allowed just for areas less than 1,0 ha and only for some species, buffer zones around most watercourses, etc.)</p>
<b>Public awareness</b>			x	<p>Due to this project the public attention was focused on the presence of bison in semi-freedom and about impending releasing in freedom (local authorities, Vanatori Neamt Natural Park's staff, local stakeholders, volunteers, etc. are deeply involved in public awareness actions).</p> <p>Two leaflets in Romanian version (one of them is about Natura 2000 – bison is a priority species in the Nature 2000 network and the other is about bison in freedom) were edited and distributed to the target groups of the present project: local environment NGO, local communities, local authorities, children and schools within the reference area, etc.</p> <p>As well, two high dimensions panels (2 x 3 m)</p>

				were conceived with technical support of local NGO's and volunteers and were fitted on the field.
<b>Sharing experience</b>				Between 18-20 <sup>th</sup> of May 2007, at Oglinzi resort took place a workshop called <b>Sustainable management of free European Bison in Romania</b> with participation of representatives of local NGO's, Vanatori Neamt Natural Park Administration, stakeholders, teachers, etc. The aim of the workshop was the dissemination of the results achieved within this project and the presentation of the strategy <b>Sustainable management of free European Bison in Romania</b> developed also under this project, for the first time in Romania. As a result of the project, 500 copies of this strategy was printed and distributed to the stakeholders (environmentalists, teachers, students, local authorities, etc.)

**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

- 1). High interest in activities related by education. The training sessions, weren't enough for all children. (the excess of participants per each training session, wasn't a limitativ factor for performing the activities in normal conditions).
- 2). High request of promotional materials (T-shirts, leaflets) due of huge interest of teachers and childrens within the project's reference area. (there were edited in adition leaflets in order to cover the schools necessities. These new leaflets were edited by Ecosilvex 2000 contribution).
- 3). The strategy **Sustainable management of free European Bison in Romania** represented a real challenge for all the team because the subject it was a premiere, also it was the firt time when our team was involved in such kind of work.

**3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

- youth were deeply involved, especially in training sessions, even in creation of leaflets and panels;
- there were identified the most suitable sites for bison reintroduction in the near future in the Oriental Carpathians (national and natural protected areas);
- this project represents a pilot one, that gave only demonstrative solutions and from this point of view represent just a step not an end. To solve these problems at a large scale, a bigger project is required;
- the strategy represents the first step in order to have a special legal approach for European bison;

**4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).**

5.

The local communities involved in this project were local schools (children's and teachers), local NGO's, local authorities, etc. Some of them acquired new skills (telemetry, finding tracks, elaborating promotional materials) which will be useful in their future activities.

As a result of project implementation was achieved a high level of acceptance and information level for local communities, according to biodiversity.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

This project was just a step with several objectives (education, survey and monitoring, dissemination, etc), being a part of initiative of bison reintroduction in Romania. At the end of 2009/ beginning of 2010 the first group of animals will be released in freedom in the most suitable sites for bison home range within the park area. This will suppose the continuation of this project but at a higher level. It has to be mentioned that the part of the Carpathian range in Romania (more than a half) may provide the majority of potential natural refuges for the bison in the future.

**6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?**

The results will be shared by different ways: dissemination through debates, seminars, promotional materials to all interested target groups, meetings with representatives of other protected areas, etc.

**7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?**

The proposed period July 2006 - July 2007 was respected, no delays were registered.

**8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Local travel (fuel)	350	350	-	-
Accommodation and meal – subsistence payments for 3 education trainings series	900	900	-	-
Consumables -Cd's, folders, papers, etc.	300	300	-	-
Equipment +field data collection	1200	1200	-	-
Editing/printing/distributing materials	1500	1500	-	-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 panels 2m/3m dimensions</li> <li>• 2 informative leaflets</li> <li>• Book Sustainable management of free European Bison in Romania</li> </ul>	500 500 500	500 500 500		
workshop – accommodation and fuel for participants	700	700	-	
Other	-	-	-	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4950</b>	<b>4950</b>	-	

**9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?**

- the improvement of environment legislation framework in Romania
- the establishing of first group of bison in freedom at Vanatori Neamt
- the identification of new suitable sites for bison in freedom in the Oriental Carpathians
- the designation an ecological network in N-E of Romania for bison
- official approval for **Sustainable management of free European Bison in Romania**

**10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?**

The RSGF logo was used on the all materials elaborated within this project (panels, strategy, leaflets, t-shirts).

The RSGF has received copies of strategy, leaflets and T-shirts made within the project. As well, the RSGF has received pictures with panels in the field.

**11. Any other comments?**

Due to RSGF the dream of European bison in freedom in Romania became closer to reality.