



# RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT OF HAY MEADOWS IN TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA

Implementation of result-based schemes for upscaling farm landscape practices and the ecosystem.



*Breite Oak Tree Reserve, a 74-hectare nature reserve sitting on a plateau atop Sighișoara, Romania*

The Romanian case study focuses on the management of hay meadows according to results-based schemes which include the protection of the rare local biodiversity. Here the individual scheme is still largely utilized because of legislative constraints and minor collective-oriented activities in hay meadows work. The prevailing traditional practice-based scheme is not perceived as the best option anymore because farmers want to be paid for their knowledge rather than being regulated by strict individual contracts.

The shift to result-based schemes allows the identification of crucial characteristics in the pilot areas to be potentially supported and implemented in other regions. The area is facing a decline in its traditional rural economy leading to bad management practices in grasslands such as overgrazing and excessive fertilization. The results-based scheme instead maintains traditional farming practices such as small-scale mowing and grazing systems, while trying to upscale the typical payment regime within the National Rural Development Programme.

Following a 3/4 year pilot scheme run in the area, more than 30 species of plants and flowers were tested as bio-indicators of high nature value to assess the management efficiency and environmental implication of the landscape. Farmers have full discretion in choosing the management practices, and they get monetary compensation according to the number of species acknowledged in the field.





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## Outcomes

The pilot-scheme was tested for 3 years in the two bio-geographical areas: continental and alpine southeast Transylvania, where 31 species of vegetation were used as biological indicators for HVN assessment of the grasslands. While providing natural ecosystem protections and biodiversity conservation, the results-based scheme applied was able to involve and motivate numerous farmers.

It thus established a successful payment regime according to the number of species in the landscape, with additional payments for specific sustainable and harmless practices such as manual mowing or light machinery mowing. The two areas combined brought together more than 70 farmers for a total of 163 hectares of land. Unfortunately, the results-based scheme didn't go through the policy-making process and was not absorbed in the agro-environmental programme.



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