

Project submitted (CE Interreg IVB, 2nd call)

Promoting collection and use of wild plants to reduce income disparities in Central Europe

Acronym: Traditional and wild; Priority 4.2; CE project code: 2CE245P4

Lead Applicant: Corvinus University of Budapest (Hungary)

Partners: Development Agency Kozjansko (Slovenia), Local Community foundation of the Banjšice and Trnovo plateau (Slovenia), Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry Brno (Czech Republic), Regional Agrarian Chamber of the South Moravian Region Brno (Czech Republic), WWF Hungary (Hungary), Village Local Authority Kunadacs (Hungary), South-Transdanubian Regional Resource Centre Public Benefit Company (Hungary), Association for Development and Promotion of Podkarpackie Voivodeship "PRO CARPATHIA" (Poland)

Project team Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry Brno:

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With demographic and land tenure changes in CE leading to rapid urbanisation, marginalised groups consisting of women, the Roma ethnic minority and the elderly, have been left behind in rural areas with no or limited opportunities for income generation and for contributing to the economy. Traditionally these groups used to engage in collecting wild plants for various uses as a way of supplementing their income. Indeed the CE region has been an important source of useful plants (for medicinal purposes, aromatic, culinary uses etc) that have been exported to other parts of Europe (e.g. Germany represents a huge market). However, this long-lasting tradition is being lost and with it the knowledge about the plants and opportunities for income-generation.

The *general objective* of the project is to improve livelihoods of vulnerable groups, particularly the Roma, the elderly and women, in rural parts of CE.

The *specific objective* is to implement by 2012 a pilot model that is socially and culturally acceptable, economically-sound and environmentally viable for wild plants collection, cultivation and processing in order to provide a sustainable source of income to vulnerable groups in selected areas of the participating CE states.

Partnership. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia face similar issues and have made re-integration of marginalised groups a priority. A transnational approach will help to develop a common strategy and address the problem in a comprehensive fashion since it cuts across borders. There are 9 partners in 4 countries in the partnership including experts in academia, policy and practice who, together, will be able to tackle grassroots issues in their own areas while feeding into a broader joint model.

Main activities:

The 1st and 2nd packages will focus on management and communications.

The 3rd work package will: 1. develop a strategic analysis of socio-cultural and economic profiles of target population; 2. develop a capacity building strategy; 3. develop manuals and training modules; 4. gather and analyse data on the types of plants; their specific qualities, collection, cultivation and processing techniques.

The 4th work package will: 1. Define the specific target group, identifying the areas for collection and cultivation, the characteristics of the region and the markets; 2. Provide training to target groups on cultivation techniques, organic certification, processing, etc; 3. Disseminate technologies, such as processing equipment; 4. Ensure sustainable sourcing of plants; 5. Disseminate lessons learned.

Expected outputs: 1. Database 2. Socio-economic analysis 3. study on traditional plants 4. Capacity building strategy 5. Toolbox and manual 6. Film 7. Leaflets 8. Study trips 9. Target groups and areas identified 10. Market and income generation strategy 11. 200 people trained 12. Processing equipment bought, people trained to use it 13. Sustainability principles for plant collection & cultivation 14. 6-7 resource assessments conducted and management plans developed 15. 200 people trained in sustainable cultivation 16. Certification granted to products 17. Packaging for at least 7 products. 18. Participation at fairs 19. Lessons learnt report 20. 1 event

Core outputs: a model on generation of employment for vulnerable groups through sustainable collection and cultivation of useful plants (transnational tool) developed and implemented; capacity-building and employment strategy developed; 200 people trained in sustainable collection and cultivation of useful plants; final report and meeting to disseminate lessons learnt from project.

Expected results: Improved employment options for vulnerable groups in target regions; improved capacity among target groups to sustainably collect and cultivate plants; sustainable approach to plant use; dissemination of model beyond project sites.