



PRO PARK
PENTRU ARII PROTEJATE

Strategy 2015-2020



Strategy 2015-2020

Contents

Acknowledgements.....5

I. Introduction.....6

II. Contex.....7

 2.1. The protected area system in Romania and existing capacity building initiatives 7

 2.2. ProPark – A growing initiative 10

 2.3. ProPark – Preparing for the future 10

III. Our Strategy (2015 - 2020) 15

IV. Action Plan 18

 4.1. Capacity Building..... 18

 4.2. Model approaches for efficient PAs..... 20

 4.3. Education and awareness raising 24

 4.4. Organizational development and management ... 26

Annex 1 31

 1.1 Training events organized from 2008 to 2014 31

 1.2 Projects implemented by ProPark from 2009 to 2014 32

 1.3 Consultancy services conducted by ProPark from 2011 to 20141 33

Annex 2 34

 ProPark organigram - plan..... 34

Acronyms

- EC - European Commission
- IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
- NFA - National Forest Administration
- NGO - Non-governmental Organization
- PA - Protected Areas

Terms used in the document

- PA Administrators - According to the Romanian legislation, it refers either to the specially established administrative (management) teams or to custodians
- PA Administrations- The term is used for the administrative teams, i.e. teams specially assigned by the entities who are managing national and nature parks or some of the Natura 2000 sites for the management of these areas.
- PA Custodians - is the term used for the entities who are managing scientific reserves, nature reserves, natural monuments or some smaller or less complex Natura 2000 sites.
- Capacity building - is much more than training and includes:
 - human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively.
 - organizational development, the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within organizations but also the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community).
 - Institutional and legal framework development, making legal and regulatory changes to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities.
 - ProPark activates mainly in the area of human resource development for protected area management, but sometimes addresses also the other two aspects.

Acknowledgements

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I. Introduction

“A new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move to higher levels.” Albert Einstein

In May 2008 a small group of very enthusiastic people from across Europe met in Brasov, Romania, to plan the first actions of ProPark Foundation. The document from that meeting, our first planning document, started as follows: “Albert Einstein’s view on a new type of thinking should apply not only to the social and economic aspects of our life, but also to our action for protecting Nature and the resources and services it provides for us. We can efficiently protect Nature only if we cooperate, only if our social and economic systems will work in harmony, regardless of small group interests or administrative boundaries. A new type of thinking for conservation, one that will promote protected areas as the model areas for the future of human kind, will spread only if a group of leaders, people who work today for protected areas and nature conservation, will be able to

convey the message though the results of their day by day activity.”

This document, our first Strategy, takes us on the same direction, encourages us to think and act boldly, whilst helping to prioritize our work. It is the product of long internal discussions and a very good cooperation with the members of ProPark Board.

The rapid and numerous changes in the Romanian economy and society are taking a toll on nature conservation. Although the numbers and coverage of protected areas increased significantly in the last seven years, financial support is very poor and pressures and threats are continuously increasing. In this context professionalizing protected area management is critical and, at the same time, more than challenging. With no strategic plans and approaches and no resources allocated from the state budget, with little or almost no understanding of how important it is to offer oppor-

tunities for professional development to protected area people operating in complex situations, it is very difficult to build a comprehensive, long term capacity building programme. And that’s what we are planning to do, or at least to contribute to, continuing the work started a few years ago by our organization.

Through this Strategy our team is committing for complex and difficult tasks which should lead, by 2020, to a well structured capacity building framework at the national level, as well as a comprehensive capacity building programme and quality products and services to help practitioners and stakeholders improve their professional performance in the management of protected areas and of natural resources critical for conservation.

We hope that this Strategy will not only help us to maintain the agreed direction and to keep our motivation and determination at high levels and will also serve

to show to those interested why our work is important and why we need to do our best to identify partners and resources for fulfilling our mission.



II. Contex

2.1. The protected area system in Romania and existing capacity building initiatives

The protected area management system in Romania is still very young, with the first park management teams established only 15 years ago. Since then the protected area system has grown significantly both in terms of coverage of protected areas and numbers and diversity of people engaged in or impacted by their management.. Consequentially, the challenges for the Romania protected area system have also grown:

Lack of administration capacity:

- Joining the European Union resulted in a significant increase in the total area designated as protected areas from 8% to 23.38% of the national territory. This area now includes 27 national and nature parks, more than 900 nature reserves and 531 Natura 2000 sites. The latter includes 520 terrestrial and 11 marine sites.
- In 2004 there were just four protect-

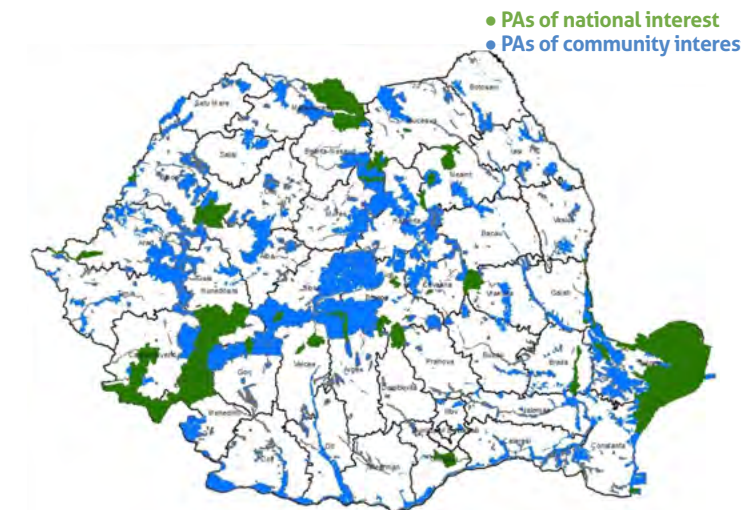


Fig.1 PAs of national and community interest

including the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, managed by the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration, the Retezat and Piatra Craiului National Parks and Vanatori Neamt Nature Park, managed by the National Forest Administration. Today there are over 188 Administrations with responsibilities for managing protected areas in Romania. These still include the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and

the National Forest Administrations but also 'new' protected area staff working for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), State Environmental Protection Authorities, Private Companies, Forest Research Institutes, Universities and County Councils. The number of peo-

ple with protected area administration responsibilities now totals more than 1000¹ people.

- The majority of protected area administration teams have limited capacity. Staff are often overloaded with work;

1 The figure is based on a rough calculation, considering that the PA administrative teams have an average of 15 staff and one staff per custodian (many of them have more staff members, but not all part time or might not have any dedicated staff member)

many are balancing the management of a protected area with the delivery of the other business of the administrating organisation, such as forest management or meeting local authority responsibilities.

- Despite this growth some 200 protected areas still do not have designated administrators.

Lack of effective engagement with and involvement of stakeholders:

- In accordance with legislation, protected area administrations engage and involve key stakeholders through Scientific and Consultative Councils. These are bodies onto which experts mainly related to biology / ecology and natural resource management and representatives of various institutions and organizations are co-opted. These people need to have a basic understanding of the function and importance of pro-

tected areas and their role and responsibility in advising the protected area administration.

- Generally there is still a low acceptance of protected areas amongst the broader stakeholder community. Diverse land ownership, management and access rights mean that a great many local people and other actors are affected directly or indirectly by protected areas. Their support for and engagement with protected area administrations is critical, but their awareness of the importance and benefits of protected areas, and how they can engage, is limited.

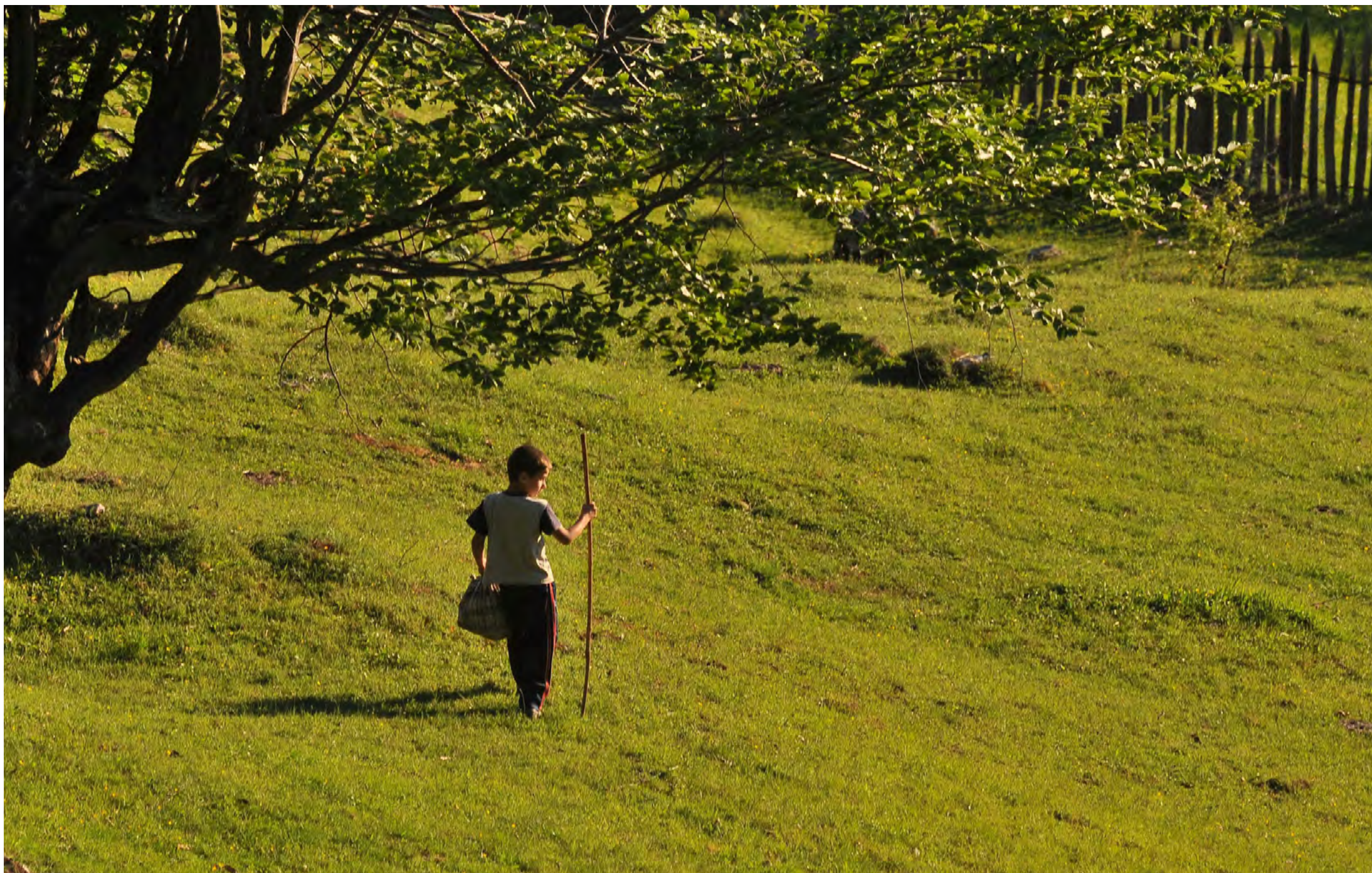
Lack of management capacity:

- In most cases there are still no management plans or the plans are not yet approved and/or have been developed without the involvement of key stakeholders.
- Enforcement of nature protection laws is very poor.
- Staff on management teams often have insufficient knowledge and lack the expertise required to effectively manage complex protected areas.
- A lack of strategic direction and coordination at the national level is a major issue for securing an efficient protected area management system.
- Despite improvements in protected

area legislation and designation, primarily driven by the EC's Natura 2000 system, the pressures and threats on Romania's protected areas are continuously increasing while tools to address threats, including Environmental Impact and Strategic Environmental Assessments, adequate assessments, as well as territorial and sectoral planning approaches, fail to take the importance and value of protected areas into account.

Lack of high quality learning opportunities for professional development:

- Protected areas, management and conservation is not widely taught in Romania with only brief mention given to these themes in a few Masters and other taught programmes at the Universities of Cluj, Suceava, Sibiu, and Timisoara. Good quality training opportunities are available internationally but require scholarships for Romanian's to be able to attend.
- The number of project driven seminars and workshops dedicated to Protected Area practitioners has decreased in the last years. The training offer is very limited at the national level, whilst the language barrier makes it difficult for staff to access rich international literature



and participate at international training events.

- Guidance and support from the central Government Authority remains weak. Despite their best efforts, low capacity, finance and resources inhibits their effective management and direction of the entire protected area system.
- Some protected area administration staff have built their experience and developed professional competences over the last 15 years, thus increasing the pool of experts who can share their experience.
- EU funding for management planning and some management activities in Natura 2000 sites, as well as other funding sources including the Environmental Partnership Programme and Norwegian and Swiss Cohesion funds, provide opportunities for improved protected area management.
- But caution is required as, unless project are properly used to implement the strategic priorities of the protected area, the need for staff to develop project management skills and to manage and report on projects, places a burden on their already limited capacities and

reduces the time dedicated to actual protected area management.

The ProPark Foundation (ProPark) was established in 2008 to address these very challenges. Our purpose is to support the protected area system of Romania, and increasingly other Eastern European countries, to build capacity by developing professional standards for protected area managers and associated roles and providing a wide range of tailored training and capacity building opportunities for current and future protected area staff. We are the leading protected area and conservation training provider in Romania and play an active role in European and Global networks, which also seek to build protected area and conservation capacities. For example, we work closely with IUCN, whose Protected Area Capacity Development Programme initiated the Global Partnership for Professionalizing Protected Area Management (GPPAM), working on competence standards for protected area professionals at site, system and sector levels and a pilot certification program for site level protected area professionals.

2.2. ProPark – A growing initiative

From 2008 to 2011, the first three years of ProPark's work was based on the voluntary contributions of enthusiastic people and supported by WWF's Danube Carpathian Programme and Fauna & Flora International. Since 2001 the ProPark team has grown and now has 10 enthusiastic and dedicated professional staff members. We are focused on developing and implementing capacity building programmes and projects that train protected area staff demonstrate best practices and / or support the work of PAs. In 2011

we also established a commercial arm of the Foundation, ProPark Ltd, through which we combine services for protected area administrators and stakeholders with capacity building efforts. There are now more than 50 experts co-opted by ProPark to deliver training and/or to professional services. Annex 1 presents an overview of the training events, consultancy services and projects implemented by ProPark over the last 7 years.

One of our main recent achievements has been the official registration of the

"Protected Area Specialist" as an occupation, with occupational standards approved in 2014. This is an important contribution to setting up a framework for capacity building efforts aimed at achieving efficient PA management. ProPark is now authorized to provide certificates for 4 occupations: protected area specialist, ranger, communication specialist and community facilitator, the last two occupations being adapted to the protected area requirements.

Through our project work in various

Eastern European countries, ProPark is building an international reputation. Our work in Eastern Europe and other Central European countries on communication, governance and capacity building has given us the opportunity to work with the Europarc Federation and other organizations and with experts from the Republic of Moldova, Croatia and Georgia amongst others.

2.3. ProPark – Preparing for the future

OUR VALUES

We have a strong belief in the important role of highly qualified people in building the future around the core values represented by Nature and Culture

We are a team of motivated and enthusiastic people who strongly believe that protected areas are key for demonstrating that Nature offers answers to many – if not most - of the critical problems of our modern societies. These include pro-

viding resources, services and models for a balanced development. We believe that well managed PAs can demonstrate and prove "the case" of sustainable development; the promotion of viable local economies support a healthy society within a rich and balanced environment / nature. We also believe that this is only possible if a continuous learning culture is nurtured within the young protected area teams of our country. Therefore, we aim to make a key contribution to the development of a comprehensive ca-

capacity building framework that provides the proper conditions for building individual professional capacities. A critical mass of highly qualified individuals will be able to raise awareness, change the minds and attitudes of decision makers and demonstrate the benefits of protected areas beyond their boundaries. The Romanian saying "A person is the blessing for a place" ("Omul sfinteste locul") truly reflects our belief in the need to build knowledge, skills and attitudes in and around protected areas.

Integrating and networking

We believe that PA staff need the understanding, recognition and support of people working in the many other economic and social sectors. We therefore aim to bring people from very different backgrounds and sectors together through our training events, projects and other activities. We anticipate that the rich learning environment and the promotion of a shared goal will reach beyond purely the professional performance of the participants to change

their attitudes and relationships and build links to people who share similar values. In this way, we help to build networks of professionals who can advance the cause of nature conservation.

Building on best practice and experience

Our work is built on the practical experience of our experts and utilises examples of best practice to inspire and motivate protected area staff and others participating in our programmes. We recognize the value of international experience and initiatives and actively track and monitor what is happening at the European and global level, learning from these and translating good practices and materials to the national level in Romania and other Eastern European countries.

Contributing to the "bigger picture"

We anticipate that our dedicated team and experts are contributing to the development of both institutional and individual capacities by working directly with PA management teams and through our involvement in lobbying and advocacy activities on behalf of PAs in Romania. Our capacity building efforts will only

be efficient if the overall protected area management system improves and the institutions that are responsible and / or involved in the management process are efficient.

Providing support and having the role of facilitators

We see ourselves as a support organization for those who have the mandate to "make protected areas work". In everything we do we will act as facilitators to help protected area teams and stakeholders to look for solutions and alternatives for development that are benefitting both nature and society.



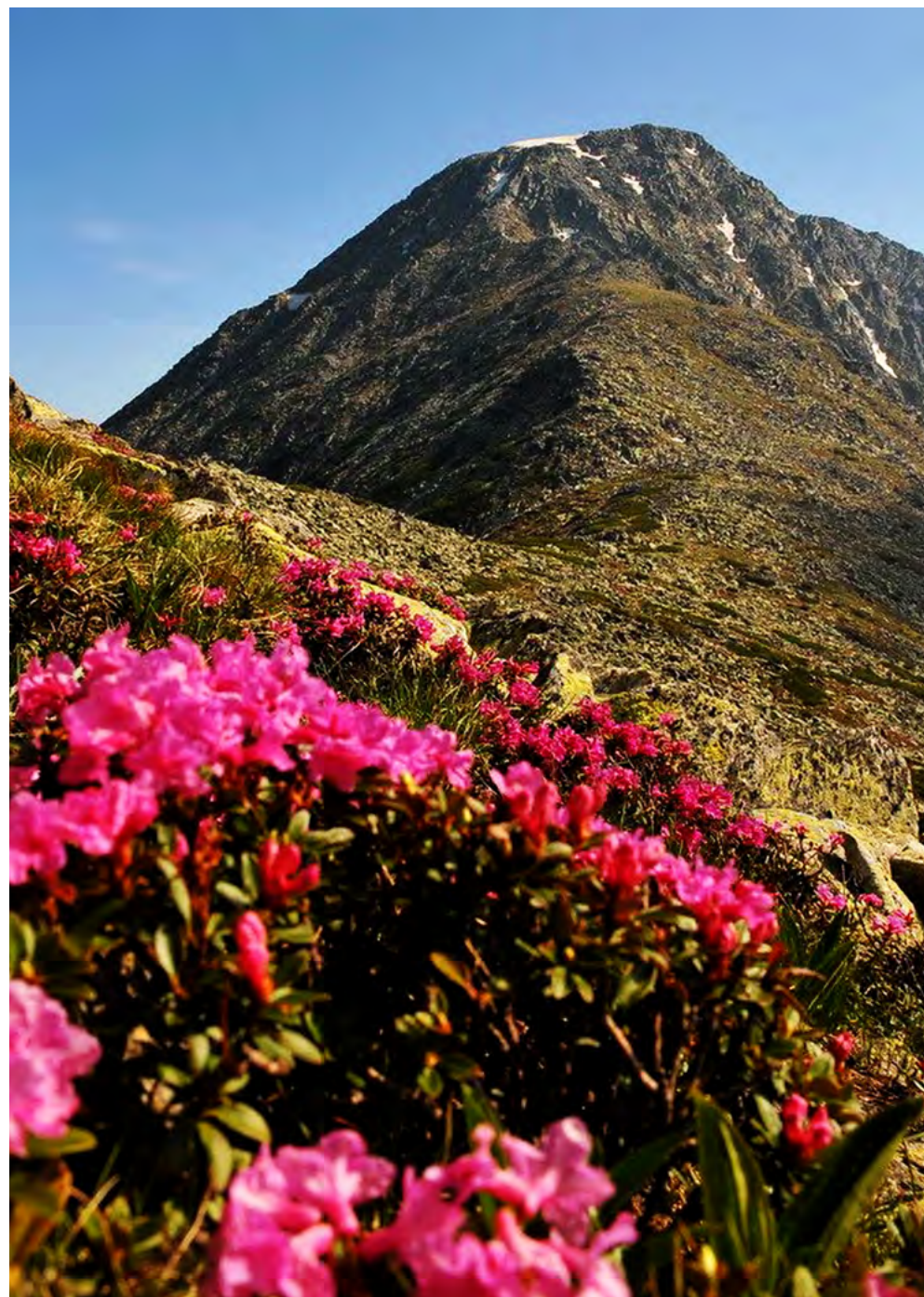
OUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

The SWOT analysis below was conducted by the ProPark team and emphasizes the key aspects that we will have to take into account to ensure that we are efficient in achieving the objectives of the Foundation and building a successful organization. Our internal strength and weaknesses are clearly summarized in the SWOT table below:

SWOT analysis – ProPark Foundation	
INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	
STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The team has relevant expertise, is dynamic, flexible and has the support of many qualified trainers, with practical experience• In the last 5 years we have built a range of unique products of vocational training for protected area professionals and key PA stakeholders.• Open minded and ready to learn continuously, the team is committed to securing high quality standards for its programmes in the long term.• Maintaining a mobile programme, by taking the training events to various locations, gives flexibility to our capacity building efforts and allows us to provide opportunities for trainees to learn from site-based case studies whenever possible.• We have started to develop our capacity to provide online training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Securing long term financing for the organisation and for capacity building programmes is a continuous challenge.• Working with trainers who have demanding jobs and activities to deliver for their own organizations, makes it difficult sometimes to secure the trainers required or their constant commitment. This is especially difficult for customer tailored training events and impacts on the preparation of materials for events (especially when it comes to manuals).• Our limited finances challenge our ability to reach out to more trainers.• Our small team must deliver a very diverse range of activities and has a very significant workload. Most staff have to perform very different tasks, from providing expert services via consultancy contracts; project development, management and administration; securing the logistics for the training events and for the meetings / working groups, etc.• We are working in a very specific technical niche, with limited possibilities to identify experts for some of the work needed to support Pas.
EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	
OPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is an obvious need for capacity building for PA management staff and key stakeholders in Romania and other countries in Eastern Europe (e.g. Republic of Moldova); as proven by Training Needs Assessments (TNA) carried out by ProPark in 2012 – 2013.• Priority topics for training are identified (TNA 2012 – 2013).• There is an improving legal framework for vocational training in the country and in EU.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of awareness / understanding of PAs and the need for professionalizing occupations.• The growing number of PA management teams increases the need for professional staff, but the low salaries in this field of activity generate high staff turn-over.• The inadequate resources and capacity for the proper coordination of the PA system at the national level generates an obvious conflict between legal requirements and the actual quality of protected area management, thus the system is not encouraging PA managers to increase their management capacity.

- The existing registered occupations in Romania, i.e. protected area specialist, ranger, custodian, as well as the opportunity to have them recognized at the European level, and the alignment of the Romanian occupational system to the EU system, will help building the framework for professionalizing PA management.
- There is a growing interest within the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to support professional development of protected area staff, but the importance of occupational standards is not yet recognized at this level.
- There is a growing recognition within other sectors (e.g. forestry, tourism, education) for the need to understand the role of protected areas and how sectoral management could be harmonized with the management of protected areas. This is coupled with a growing interest in the responsible use of natural resources (e.g. extensive agriculture, organic farming, responsible forest management).
- Funding streams exists within the EU’s funding programmes for the development of human resources and for addressing environmental issues.
- The interest in the natural wealth of Romania at the European level may generate more support for nature conservation from donors and add to the financial resources provide through EU and other funding sources.
- The partnership established with WWF, FFI, the Romanian Ranger Association and the Ecotourism Association for Romania is providing opportunities to work together to improve the PA management system.
- Rich international literature on PA management and biodiversity conservation.
- Existing training materials and relevant on-line courses on biodiversity conservation and PA management can be used as a source of inspiration for developing ProPark training materials (including for e-learning); partnerships can be formed with training material developers.
- Opportunities for international partnerships on capacity building and PA related consultancy work.

- PA related occupations are not yet legally required.
- Political support for PAs is almost non-existent.
- With very limited financial allocations from the state budget, competition for funds is very high.
- Potential trainees and interested institutions are lacking the financial sources to support their staff to build their capacity through participation on structured programmes or do not include funding for capacity building in their priorities at all.
- There is a growing number of quick, poor quality and cheap training events being offered, which undermines the quality of the training product and market.
- Difficult to secure copy-right for training materials.
- Our society does not yet have a culture of professional performance and quality, which leads to a lack of motivation (professional and financial) to participate in training events.
- Lack of effective staff performance assessment systems and of a professional performance based system in PA management.
- No clear job descriptions in the PA system, hence competence requirements are not clearly defined.
- PA staff are usually overloaded, performing multiple and sometimes very different tasks.
- PA staff are demotivated by : low salaries, lack of professional advancement, resources to perform their job, recognition of their occupations/jobs performed in Pas.
- The needs for training resources (costs, numbers of days, quality trainers) are usually underestimated by potential beneficiaries mainly because of a lack of understanding of what quality training means.
- There is no clear capacity building requirement in guidelines developed for the use of EU funds for environment.
- Relatively low number of experts available for PA consultancy work in Romania.
- Most Romanian experts do not have the expertise to perform training events and consultancy in English.



An analysis of the current situation and a careful consideration given to our internal and external environment indicate that:

- There is no coherent and comprehensive framework in place for professionalizing PA management in Romania and the wider region. Significant efforts have to be made both to build the components of the framework (registered occupations and standards, training events, etc.) and to obtain acceptance and recognition for professional PA managers / management.
- The relatively low interest and lack of resources for capacity building within PA teams and relevant stakeholder groups, encouraged by the fact that there is no clear requirement for certified professionals in the PA system, leads to the need to find the resources and solutions to bring people to the training events and to motivate them to actively participate in other capacity building events/ activities.
- The complexity of PA management issues leads to an obvious need to build the experience of experts from other sectors to provide capacity building for PA staff and other stakeholders. Trainers / experts with practical experience are needed to help overcome the many challenges faced by protected area

teams. Case studies and best practice models should be developed and used to motivate our target groups in the challenging tasks they have to fulfil.

- It is very important to increase the viability, as well as the visibility and attractiveness of ProPark as a provider of quality vocational trainings and consultancy services, to secure a stable work environment and to counterbalance low quality certified training activities being offered by some of the companies active in this domain.

III. Our Strategy (2015 - 2020)

Our VISION

Romania has a network of effective Protected Areas, that are managed by competent and committed professional people who are supported by ProPark, the leading protected area training organization in Eastern Europe.

In order to achieve this vision we commit ourselves to accomplish the following

MISSION

To the benefit of society, our mission is to improve the competencies of people involved directly or indirectly in the management of protected areas to enable them to better conserve natural and cultural heritage. This will be achieved through the delivery of high quality capacity building activities, professional advice and support to protected area teams.

Developing a capacity building programme in our view includes: designing and implementing a programme that respond to the needs of the beginner through to advanced practitioners, including also consultancy and advisory services of high quality that incorporate intensive learning processes, as well as the efforts to support PAs through projects.

In order to help us plan and organise the work of ProPark, we have designed the strategy using four main THEMES of work and 11 sub-themes:

1. Capacity building

- a. Capacity building for PA management
- b. Capacity building for stakeholders (PAs as models for sustainable development)

2. Model approaches for efficient PAs

- a. Model approaches in PA management
- b. Model approaches for sustainable development (Model PA)
- c. Research, development and innovation (best practice transfers, network development, innovative approaches, new ideas)

3. Education and awareness raising

- a. Working with the Young People
- b. Raise awareness on the importance of PAs (including decision makers through advocacy)

4. Organizational development and management:

- a. Human resources
- b. Financial resources
- c. Infrastructure and equipment
- d. Communication

These themes closely align with the founding objectives of the ProPark Foundation and reflect the identified needs of protected area administrations.

Each **THEME** has a number of **SUB THEMES** to help us consider more specific topics, where we would concentrate our work and resources. For each **THEME** strategic objectives and for each **SUB THEMES** specific objectives are defined. **ACTIVITIES** are planned to achieve the **OBJECTIVES** and indicators defined to measure the **OUTPUTS**.

The Outcomes describe the difference we are going to make through the successful implementation of the objectives of the activities and by achieving the objectives.

A prioritisation system has been used, indicating the levels of priority for activities.

Priority of the action

Priority 1
this work **MUST** be done

Priority 2
this work **SHOULD** be done
(if resources are sought available)

Priority 3
this work **COULD** be done
(if resources are identified)



Fig. 2 The structure of the Action Plan

A rough estimate was made on the level of “difficulty” for activities, based on estimated need for resources for that area of work, actually based on a comparison of the levels of resources (human, financial, time) that have to be allocated for the planned activities.

Annual work plan

will be developed and then reported back to monitor progress. The strategy will be reviewed after 3 years to ensure it remains both relevant and achievable.

Based on the estimated levels for resource allocation actions can be:

- HD - Highly demanding
- VD - Very demanding
- D - Demanding
- R - Reasonable

IV. Action Plan

4.1. Capacity Building

This theme represents the core “business” for the Foundation. Under the Capacity Building Theme only those activities are described that qualify as “pure” individual capacity building activities. Other activities, which, in most cases still have a capacity building component, such as the services we are providing to PA managers, the projects we are developing and implementing with and for PAs, most of the educational and awareness raising activities, are covered under other themes.

The capacity building framework refers to the individual capacity building activities and is represented by the officially registered occupations and occupational standards that can and should define the complex jobs of protected area management. Some of these occupations are specific to PAs and are or have to be defined as such. These include the Protected Area Specialist, Protected

Area Custodian and Ranger occupations. Others are more general, such as the communication specialist or community facilitator, both of which have to be adapted to the needs of PAs.

The capacity building programmes can be very different, addressing needs for a wide range of staff from PAs and stakeholder institutions / organizations. For each of the target groups we try to focus on key management disciplines. Key disciplines for the PA managers are: PA management planning, conservation management, operational management, community outreach, communication, education, visitor management, monitoring. We’ll also focus more in the coming years on building the capacity of our target groups to develop and implement projects, thus contributing both to increasing individual and institutional capacities.

People / staff successfully participating at the training events will receive at least a ProPark diploma, but we’ll aim to offer official accreditations both for those who specialize in a certain discipline through short term courses and for those that attend a longer programme of study and qualify in a specific occupation.

Careful consideration will be given to further develop the training skills of our trainers and to provide a platform for networking and experience exchange for experts involved in ProPark activities. We shall also initiate and develop strategic partnerships with Universities to promote and develop Master courses on PA management.

Individual learning should be a continuous process, therefore a committed capacity building provider, such as ProPark, should be able not only to provide programmes and events for

learning, but also to periodically evaluate / assess the capacity of individuals who are accumulating knowledge and skills in their work or through individual learning. Therefore, we aim to secure accreditation for ProPark as an Evaluation Centre in the near future.

ProPark’s contribution to broader institutional capacity building is captured within many of our activities, even if this aspect of our work is not strongly emphasized in the Strategy.

Strategic THEME 1	CAPACITY BUILDING	What will be the results and products	Priority of the work
Strategic OBJECTIVE	Increase the capacity of PA and natural resource managers and stakeholders to develop and implement sustainable and sustained management systems in their respective fields of activities and thus contribute to the high quality management of PAs		
SUBTHEME	1.1. Capacity building for PA management		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Establish the capacity building framework for PA management and develop and implement a comprehensive capacity building programme to achieve professionalization.		
Activities	1.1.a Develop, in cooperation with relevant institutions / organizations and promote for approval at the national level a comprehensive capacity building plan for Romania and Moldova	National /regional Capacity Building Plan for 5 years (RO+MD)	1 D
	1.1.b Develop / improve occupational standards and related training programmes to secure the framework for professional development of directors and technical level PA staff in key management disciplines and align these standards and programmes to the recommendations of IUCN.	Accredited Programmes to cover at least 8 management domains / main topics, aligned with the IUCN recommendations	1 VD
	1.1.c Develop occupational standards and a programme for ranger qualification, building on the existing introductory course and align them with the IUCN recommendations.	Accredited Programme for Ranger qualification, aligned with the IUCN recommendations.	1 VD
	1.1.d Establish a strategic partnership with at least one university to fulfil new requirements for delivering vocational training programmes / capacity building programme	Partnership agreement and joint activities with at least one university for delivering training programmes for practitioners	2 D
	1.1.e Organize at least 30 training events in key PA management domains	At least 200 participants specialized in key PA management domains At least 30 qualified staff	1 HD
	1.1.f Organize at least 10 training events based on the introductory course for rangers and qualification programmes (extended programmes)	At least 100 rangers accredited based on the introductory programme (very good basic skills and very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities) At least 30 qualified Rangers (based on the extended programme	1 HD

	1.1.g Support / organize at least 20 capacity building events on various topics or tailored to the needs of PA staff (face to face and online training courses, study tours, mentoring, internal learning systems)	At least 300 participants	2 VD
	1.1.h Secure accreditation for ProPark as evaluation centre for PA professionals	Evaluation Centre	2 D
	1.1.i Develop, in partnership with a university, a post-graduate programme in PA management (master)	One master programme developed	3 D
Outcome	1. Comprehensive capacity building programmes are actively being delivered and updated as required. 2. Staff trained through capacity building programmes have been evaluated post-training and are working to certified occupational standards.		
SUBTHEME	1.2 Capacity building for stakeholders		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Increase the understanding of protected areas and stimulate changes in behaviour related to the management of land and natural resources for at least 4 stakeholder groups through capacity building.		
Activities	1.2.a Identify needs and develop training programmes for the stakeholder groups	At least 4 training packages developed for key stakeholders	3 L
	1.2.b Organize at least 20 training events for key stakeholder institutions / organizations on the role and importance of protected areas, the sustainable use of natural resources and opportunities for sustainable development in PAs	At least 300 participants to various training events	3 M
	1.2.c Identify and work with strategic partners to facilitate capacity building of PA stakeholders	At least 1 strategic partnerships established to coordinate / organize the work with PA stakeholders	3 M
Outcome	3. Training programmes for key stakeholder groups developed and actively delivered and updated as required. 4. At least 20% of Scientific and Consultative Council members (against 2014 baseline) have received training.		

4.2. Model approaches for efficient PAs

Through our activities we aim to develop practical examples on how PA managers should address key management issues. We will build these “models” by developing strategic partnerships with PA management teams and other organizations and work together with them in a targeted and structured way to identify key needs and the resources required to develop and implement models. Lessons from the implementation of the models will be captured and used to adapt the model approach. In this endeavour we aim to coordinate our efforts with other organizations including, for example, the Ecotourism Association of Romania.



Their efforts to establish functional eco-tourism destinations help address many of the management issues around which we plan to build professional capacities and to develop model approaches. There are also other organizations with highly relevant core activities, with whom we will aim to join forces to build examples and models for PA management.

One important aspect for increasing the efficiency of the model approaches is to properly promote the examples / models through our own capacity building programmes, but also using other chan-

nels, such as for example, the NGO platform of the Natura 2000 Coalition.

Under this theme we aim to develop model approaches and activities for PA management, keeping in mind that a key aspect is to demonstrate benefits for local people and to encourage local communities to embark on a sustainable development path using processes facilitated by PA management teams. Demonstrating the importance and benefits of PAs to local communities is critical; they have the potential to act as catalysts for sustainability and life style

changes at a local, regional and even national level.

ProPark seeks to demonstrate that Protected Areas can be models for sustainable development. This can be demonstrated through joint work with stakeholders across relevant sectors to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits.

Based on defined criteria including management complexity, willingness of PA staff to engage, previous cooperation with ProPark or other NGOs, etc.

we have determined the top six PAs that present the best potential for developing model approaches in key management domains. These are: Piatra Craiului National Park, Vânători Neamț Nature Park, Retezat National Park, Leaota Natura 2000 site, Bucegi Nature Park and Podisul Hârtibaciului Natura 2000 sites. Mindful that the development of model approaches/activities requires a significant investment of resources, we will aim to develop longer term support with at least one, if not more, of these PAs.

Strategic THEME 2	MODEL APPROACHES IN PA MANAGEMENT	What will be the results and products	Priority of the work
Strategic OBJECTIVE	ProPark is recognized for the model approaches developed to demonstrate efficient PA management and the important role PAs have in sustainable development	ProPark “products” (work results) are accepted and promoted at the national level	
SUBTHEME	2.1 Model approaches in PA management		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Develop and promote model management approaches for individual PAs by providing high quality technical support through projects, mentoring and other means.		
Activities	2.1.a Provide technical support to PAs through high quality consultancy services, mentoring, jointly developed and implemented projects and contribute to developing model approaches in key PA management disciplines	At least 15 PAs benefit from technical support At least 3 model approaches developed and implemented in key management domains	1 HD
	2.1.b Identify experts and establish expert teams for consultancy services	Teams of experts for consultancy, with at least 2 specialists for at least 4 domains	1 VD

	2.1.c Establish strategic partnerships to coordinate the support provided to PA management teams for developing and implementing model approaches	At least one partnership established, plan developed and at least 3 actions initiated for coordinated PA support work	3 HD
Outcome	At least three model protected areas have produced results clearly demonstrating enhanced management in three protected area domains (at least one each)		
SUBTHEME	2.2 Model areas for sustainable development		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Demonstrate the benefits of protected areas for promoting sustainable development by supporting at least one model approach through a capacity building programme provided to a local community.		
Activities	2.2.a Provide support to PA managers and / or local communities in PAs or dependent on the resources within a PA to develop mechanisms / activities that identify and prove benefits deriving from PAs	Technical and/or financial support provided for at least 2 projects of PAs and/or communities (preferably in the priority areas)	3 VD
	2.2.b Select at least one community “attached” to a PA and provide technical support to demonstrate sustainable development based on the values of the PA, develop and implement Integrated projects and demonstrate impact	At least 1 joint PA / community activity implemented At least one viable green business developed in a community	3 VD
Outcome	At least one model project area has been delivered and produced results clearly demonstrating the protected area’s role in the promotion of Sustainable Development and benefiting local people.		
SUBTHEME	2.3 Research, development and innovation		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Research development opportunities relevant to PAs and facilitate learning and innovation in this field		
Activities	2.3.a Develop strategic partnership with universities, practitioners and local authorities. – knowledge triangle – to access funding for PA topics that need long term and in-depth research, for applied research and for increasing the capacity of the ProPark team for innovation	At least one research / innovation project developed Become members of one cluster	3 VD
	2.3.b Develop and promote guidelines, standards, recommendations for efficient PA management and for a functional PA system at the national level	At least 3 of the ProPark products promoted for use at the national level	3 VD
	2.3.c Collate and promote best practice examples on responsible natural resource management, sustainable development strategies and green infrastructure for resource managers and authorities.	At least 20 case studies collected and presented in cooperation with the strategic partners	2 D

Outcome	1.ProPark is active partner in a knowledge triange
	2.Case studies on responsible resource management are promoting improved approaches – based on research – and innovation

4.3. Education and awareness raising

Actions planned under this theme aim to raise awareness on the importance of PAs with two key target groups: young people and decision makers. For young people we plan to work mainly on educational activities, providing models for PA managers or supporting them to develop educational activities / programmes. For decision makers we are planning to focus on advocacy and lobbying activities run, if needed, by the ProPark team, in cooperation with other organizations, such as the Natura 2000 Coalition. We also envisage other approaches including thematic workshops and seminars for decision makers, involvement of staff from key institutions in working groups for developing standards and guidelines, etc.

Through this set of actions we aim to contribute also to the development of institutional capacity for PA management. During the next 5 years we will advocate for clear job descriptions and efficient staff selection procedures.

Strategic THEME 3	EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING		What the work will produce	Priority of the work
Strategic OBJECTIVE	Build awareness on the importance of PAs with two key target groups: young people and decision makers		Education programmes used at the national level and improved framework for PA management	
SUBTHEME	3.1 Working with Young People			
Specific OBJECTIVE	To provide children and young people with opportunities to better understand and engage with PAs through the provision of events and activities.			
Activities	3.1.a Working with protected area administrations, initiate and/or support education and awareness raising programmes at the PA, regional or national level	At least one national level education programme initiated At least 3 long term educational programmes implemented in PAs with support from ProPark At least 5 “Junior Ranger” camps	1 L	
	3.1.b Develop and implement awareness raising activities for young people in cooperation with PA management teams and other NGOs	ProPark actively contributes to at least 3 awareness raising events	2 M/L	

Outcome	1.100 young people and decision-makers have received education and awareness ‘training’ and post activity evaluations indicate they are more aware of protected areas and their roles and benefits.		
	2.XX young people and decision-makers who participated in education and awareness activities are now actively participating / engaging with their local protected area for the first time.		
SUBTHEME	3.2 Raise awareness on the importance of PAs		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Use ProPark experience and products to further enhance the protected area system of Romania (region)		
Activities	3.2.a Lobby the national authority responsible for PAs to include into relevant normative documents specific requirements for the professionalization of PA management.	Ministry of Environment develops a step by step approach to make professionalization compulsory for at least part of any PA staff	1 VD
	3.2.b Contribute to the improvement of the PA management system at the national level through active participation in the PA lobbying / advocacy work of the NGO Coalition Natura 2000	Number of actions of the Coalition in which ProPark is an active participant	1 D/VD
	3.2.c Raise awareness of specific target groups and/or the general public on the importance of PAs through specific ProPark awareness raising activities or in cooperation with PAs and other organizations	At least one event per year developed in partnership with PA managers and/or other organizations (ProPark Adventure, Ranger Maraton, etc.) At least 3 events for decision makers at the local, regional or national level	3 M/L
	3.2.d Promote, in partnership with other organizations / institutions – educational programmes on nature to become part of school curricula	At least one programme promoted	3 M/L
Outcome	Improved legislative framework for PAs and improved support from stakeholders		

4.4. Organizational development and management

Organizational capacity, infrastructure and resources

The number of ProPark staff may need to grow to accommodate the increased work load resulting from this plan. However, we will strive to limit growth to achieve a core team of 12 people. We shall do this by looking for alternative solutions to increase our professional capacity without increasing staff numbers. Special attention will be given to developing the professional competences of the ProPark team. External consultants will have a significant role in increasing our capacity; therefore we aim to develop a policy that will help maintain a pool of reliable experts with very high expertise. Annex 2 presents the organigram of the organization as envisaged by 2020.

With regards to training infrastructure, we favour developing a network of locations for our events, ideally in or nearby PAs and using facilities that are managed by local community members. In this way we will make a direct contribution to the local economy. If an opportunity arises to establish a training centre, which allows for high quality equipment and conditions for capacity building activities, we

shall explore it. A dedicated centre could reduce logistic costs and provide better conditions for some activities. The use of such a centre would be balanced with the use of other locations to maintain a geographical spread across the country and to enable our programmes to facilitate greater experience exchange and use of field based case studies.

Fundraising

Funding needs will significantly increase for the implementation of this strategy (see the table and figure presented below for priority 1 actions.)

Years	Funding needs - Euro
2015	385.640
2016	336.281
2017	342.946
2018	359.546
2019	426.046

Our projections indicate that current funding sources and income from consultancy services will not be sufficient to fund the core activities articulated in this plan over the coming 5 years. We will therefore need to be creative to find ways to enhance the value of our existing products and to develop new products and services and increase efforts to reach out to new

supporters. In developing new avenues of funding support we will not deviate from our core values and the stated intentions within this plan. We see it as a sensible strategy to focus efforts on increasing our ability to co-and pre-finance projects and to build up financial reserves.

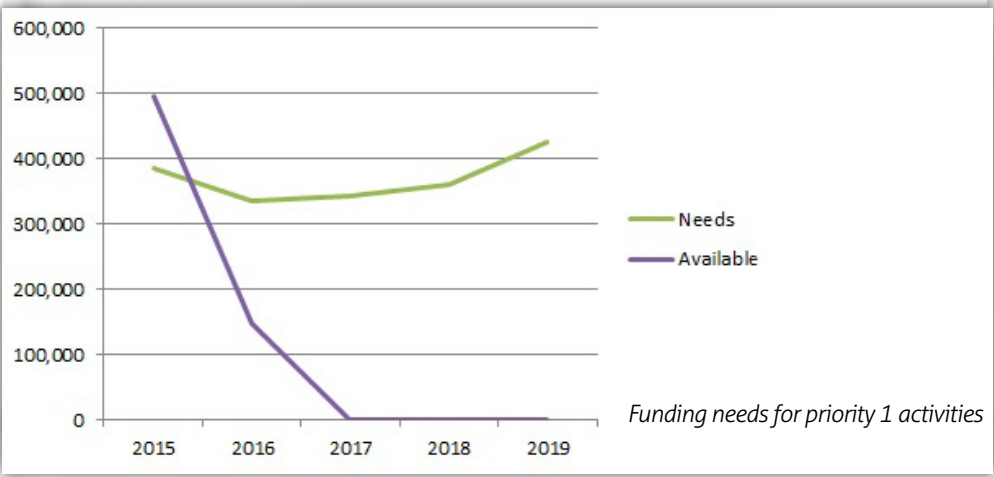
ProPark Ltd, the commercial arm of the Foundation is a very important asset, with a critical role in providing funds for organizational development and for our core activities. We'll increase efforts for its further development, aiming to increase the financial contribution of the commercial arm to the activities of the Foundation.

Delivery of this plan and the viability of the organisation are founded on there

being a strong ProPark team. Our staff are our most important resource and we will invest in building the capacity of each team member. We will strive to build on their existing skills to enable them to be better contributing to the delivery of this plan and to the future of ProPark, while also helping each staff member to fulfil their potential.

Communication

Efforts to improve communication will increase to help achieve the objectives of the organization. Serious efforts will have to be made to promote ProPark, to “tell our story”, i.e. to raise interest in our work with potential donors and to increase the attractiveness of our products and activities to the various target groups.



Strategic THEME 4	ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT	What the work will produce	Priority of the work
Strategic OBJECTIVE	Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization		
SUBTHEME	4.1 Functional organization with highly qualified staff		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Secure the human and financial resources for a functional, efficient organization operating in Romania and Moldova, as well as a proper framework to keep staff motivation at a high level and to maintain a friendly work environment.		
Actions	4.1.a Increase the human capacity of the organization with a careful consideration for a long-term sustainability	12 qualified staff with practical experience in areas relevant for the activities of the organization	1 D
	4.1.b Maintain high quality ProPark delivery of products and services through the implementation of a performance appraisal system	At least annual appraisals for each staff member	1 R
	4.1.c Develop and implement an internal policy to maintain a pool of experts for vocational training and consultancy services	Secure collaboration with at least one external trainer team for each topic in the capacity building programme	1 R
	4.1.d Develop and implement an internal capacity building plan	Priority themes defined and agreed, responding to the needs of the organization and building on the skills and interest of team members At least 6 days/year/staff allocated for building capacity within the organization through various learning modes	1 VD
	4.1.e Identify opportunities for cooperation with PA management teams on topics of interest for professional development of ProPark staff members	At least one opportunity per staff member to apply knowledge and gain practical experience	2 R
	4.1.f Implement the operational procedures agreed / adopted for high quality operations	Efficient internal procedures for operations / processes	1 D
	4.1.g Identify funding sources and consultancy opportunities that support the implementation of this strategy and provides security for the organization / staff	Funding secured for at least priority activities every year Reserves built up for at least 1 years	1 HD
	4.1.h Extend activities on a systematic, organized manner to the Republic of Moldova if opportunities allow it		2 VD

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>ProPark remains a well-functioning organization, with enhanced financial viability and provides a creative and vibrant professional working environment for staff that are well-motivated.</i>		
SUBTHEME	4.2 Infrastructure and equipment		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Secure conditions for high quality training events		
Activities	4.2.a Develop / improve the network of locations for training events, seeking to work mainly with those that are linked to a PA and are embedded in a local community, thus allowing for contributions to local economy	At least 60% of the locations for ProPark activities are located in a PA and/or one of their communities	1 R
	4.2.b Maintain a functional headquarters with appropriate working conditions for staff and at least minimum conditions for delivering quality training events, as required in the legislation for certified capacity building organizations	Functional headquarter	1 VD
	4.2.c Seek opportunities and funding to establish a dedicated self-sustaining training centre	One training centre with well-equipped facilities and advanced equipment	3 VD/HD
	4.2.d Secure the resources and equipment required for delivery of capacity building programmes	Sufficient equipment available for the training events	1 D
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Secure locations and equipments for quality capacity building events and resources available for the activities assumed in this plan</i>		
SUBTHEME	4.3. Securing financial resources		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Funding for activities secured from a diversity of sources		
Activities	4.3.a Explore funding opportunities and develop a fundraising plan to secure funding sources and access funds for at least the actions of priority 1 and 2 in the strategy and seek solutions to implement priority 3 actions	Funding secured from at least 4 different types of funding sources / donors	1 HD
	4.3.b Revise the business plan of the commercial arm based on the experience of the last 3 years and on an analysis of likely business / funding opportunities in the coming years	Revised business plan	1 VD
	4.3.c Increase the contribution of the commercial arm to the finances of the Foundation	Amount available for project co-funding and for other activities of the Foundation increases with at least 30%	1 HD

	4.3.d Develop / maintain strategic partnership with at least 2 commercial companies with relevant expertise and high professional ethics	Partnership agreements and at least 10 joint tenders	1 R
	4.3.e Identify and develop business opportunities in line with the ProPark objectives to increase funding security on the long term	At least 1 business plan developed and investment sources identified to start the business	2 HD
	4.3.f Develop the fundraising capacity of the ProPark team	At least 2 staff members have good fundraising competences	1 D
	4.3.g. Form alliances and partnership with other organizations to increase core support for PA capacity building, building on the critical need for professional capacity in this area	At least 1 partnership	2 VD
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Funding secured for core activities assumed in the Strategy</i>		
SUBTHEME	4.4 Communications		
Specific OBJECTIVE	Increase the visibility of ProPark and its core activities to contribute to the effectiveness of our activities.		
Activities	4.4.a Improve the communication standards and efficiency of the organization to provide high quality, relevant information to stakeholders	Communication plan Revised visibility guidelines	1 D
	4.4.b Continuously improve the external communication platforms of the organization	Functional and highly attractive webpage and social media, with at least 200 views/day	1 D
	4.4.c Coordinate communication actions with strategic partners and with the PAs involved in ProPark activities	At least 2 events or activities/year	1 D
	4.4.d Implement internal communication mechanisms to ensure an efficient and effective flow and use of information and coordinated / coherent messages to stakeholders	Monthly meeting/internal media	1 R
	4.4.e Increase organizational capacity and communications opportunities by actively participating in relevant national and international events and by developing partnerships for joint communications and promotional work	Active members in at least one international and one national initiative / organization At least 3 functional / active partnerships	3 D
	4.4.f Increase the capacity of ProPark to do efficient lobbying and advocacy work.	At least 2 staff members attend training in this domains. Lobby and advocacy plan developed and used.	2 VD
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Increased visibility of ProPark proved by increased requests for training events, consultancy services and number of project partnerships, as well as by the increased activities on social media</i>		



Annex 1

1.1 Training events organized from 2008 to 2014

THEMES	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		TOTAL	
	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses
1. Protected Area - introduction			21	1	55	4	16	1	52	3	37	3	15	1	196	13
2. Operational Management of Protected Areas											12	1			12	1
3. PA Management planning and developing PA Regulations (including for Natura 2000 sites)			12	1	25	1	25	2							62	4
4. Responsible Forest Management							196	9	20	1			15	1	231	11
5. Visitor management	33	2							16	1	12	1	6	2	34	6
6. Conservation management					16	1	9	1	10	1	10	1	21	3	66	7
7. Thematic trails and elements of interpretation							8	1							8	1
8. Communication - basics			12	1			12	1			12	1			36	3
9. Communication for PAs											103	6	15	1	118	7
10. Educational activities for children (including animation for nature)			12	1	12	1	10	1							34	3
11. PA management – mentoring programme			14	1											14	1
12. Ranger Programme											15	1	32	2	47	3
13. Community outreach									15	1	12	1	2	1	29	3
14. GIS for PA's											4	1			4	1
15. Training of Trainers – general skills					33	2			14	1			10	1	57	4
16. ToT for online sessions													24	2	24	2
17. ToT on Communication for PAs							12	1							12	1
18. Management of brown bear habitat and migration corridors													167	8	167	8
19. Custodians for Protected Areas													24	2	24	2

THEMES	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		TOTAL	
	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses	Trainees	Courses
20. Environmental protection – basics													21	6	21	6
21. Diving (for conservation monitoring)													3	1	3	1
22. Community development facilitators													12	6	12	6
23. Natural resource management													60	2	60	2
24. Project management													20	1	20	1
TOTAL	33	2	71	5	141	9	288	17	127	8	217	10	447	40	1291	97

Training events were funded through our projects, consultancy contracts and/or by the participants (very few cases).

1.2 Projects implemented by ProPark from 2009 to 2014

No/year of start	Project title	Financed by
1/2009	Junior Ranger Camps - An essential tool for promoting protected areas	Partnership Foundation Mol Romania
2/2010	Building conservation capacity for protected area management in Romania	Flora and Fauna International
3/2010	A New Generation of Conservationists in Romania 2010	MAVA Foundation
4/2010	Climate Changes and Biordiversity in Tara Lapusului	GEF SGP Romania
5/2012	“Junior Ranger in Balta Mică Brăila”	Partnership Foundation and MOL Romania
6/2012	Efficient Managers for an Efficient Natura 2000 Network (EME – Natura 2000)	European Union - Life+ Information & Communication Programme
7/2013	Increasing education opportunities on sustainable development for protected area managers in Romania	DBU
8/2013	Junior Rangers involved from the Danube all the way to the Carpathians”	Partnership Foundation and Mol Romania
9/2013	Rural Development and High Nature Value Farmland in Romania	Swiss - Romanian Cooperation Programme
10/2013	Natura 2000 and Rural Development in Romania	Swiss - Romanian Cooperation Programme
11/2013	Southwestern Carpathian Wilderness and Sustainable Development Initiatives	Swiss - Romanian Cooperation Programme
12/2014	Nature in schools and schools in protected areas	EEA Grants provided by the Norvegian Government

1.3 Consultancy services conducted by ProPark from 2011 to 2014¹

Name of project	Beneficiary	Activities in the responsibility of ProPark Ltd
1. Capacity Building Plans for Efficient Protected Area Management in Eastern Europe	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation in Germany (BfN)	Training needs assessment, development of national and regional plans for capacity building for PAs in Eastern Europe
2. Governance of protected areas in Eastern Europe	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation in Germany (BfN)	Analysis on governance systems for protected areas in Eastern Europe, collection of best practice examples, development of recommendations
3. Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the Protected area system in Moldova	UNDP Moldova	Consultancy in protected areas management field
4. Preparation of the management plan using participatory planning process for natural protected areas on the Tur river lower course – ECOTUR 2011-2013.	Societatea Carpatina Ardeleana	Preparation of the Management and Monitoring Plan for the Natura 2000 site
5. Management Plan and information, education and awareness raising campaign for the Lower Ciuc Basin ROSCI0007 Natura 2000 site	Geocological Organisation ACCENT	Preparation of the Management and Monitoring Plan for the Natura 2000 site
6. The development of management plan and visitor infrastructure for ROSCI0101 Larion	Forest Owners Association Valea Ilvei	Preparation of the Management and Monitoring Plan for the Natura 2000 site
7. Integrated management actions for understanding and protecting the values of Cozia National Park	NFA Romsilva- National Park Cozia	Social assessment and the development of communication strategies
8. Preparation of the commnication strategy for the Defileul Jiului National Park	NFA Romsilva-Defileul Jiului National Park	Communication activities The development of a communication strategy
9. junior Ranger Camps in Cozia National Park	Cozia National Park Administration	Organizing Junior Ranger Camps
10. Study on the tourism carrying capacity of the Cozia National Park	Cozia National Park Administration	Study on the tourism carrying capacity of the Cozia National Park
11. Developing the monitoring plan and the associated documentation	Comana National Park Administration	Developing the monitoring plan and monitoring protocols and reports formats
12. Study for the consolidation and extension of the protected area system in the Republic of Moldova	UNDP Moldova	Gap analysis for the protected area system
13. Developing the management plan for Valea Nirajului Protected Area, comprising 4 Natura 2000 sites, ROSPA008, ROSCI0186, ROSCI0297, ROSCI0384	Valea Nirajului Protected Area Administration	Development of the integrated management plan for the 4 sites Conducting the stakeholder consultation
14. Supervising the management planning process and preparing the management plan for the Strategic Impact Assessment	Fagaras Mountains Association	Coordinating and supervising the management planning process Preparing the management plan fro SEA
15. Development of integrated management plans for 3 protected areas: ROSCI0074- Făgetul Clujului - Valea Morii, ROSCI0356 - Poienile de la șard și ROSCI0394- Someșul Mic	Greenviro SRL	Development of 3 management plans

Total value: 656.835 Euro

¹ The table does not include consultancy contracts for training events. The training events are presented in Annex 1.

Annex 2

ProPark organigram - plan

