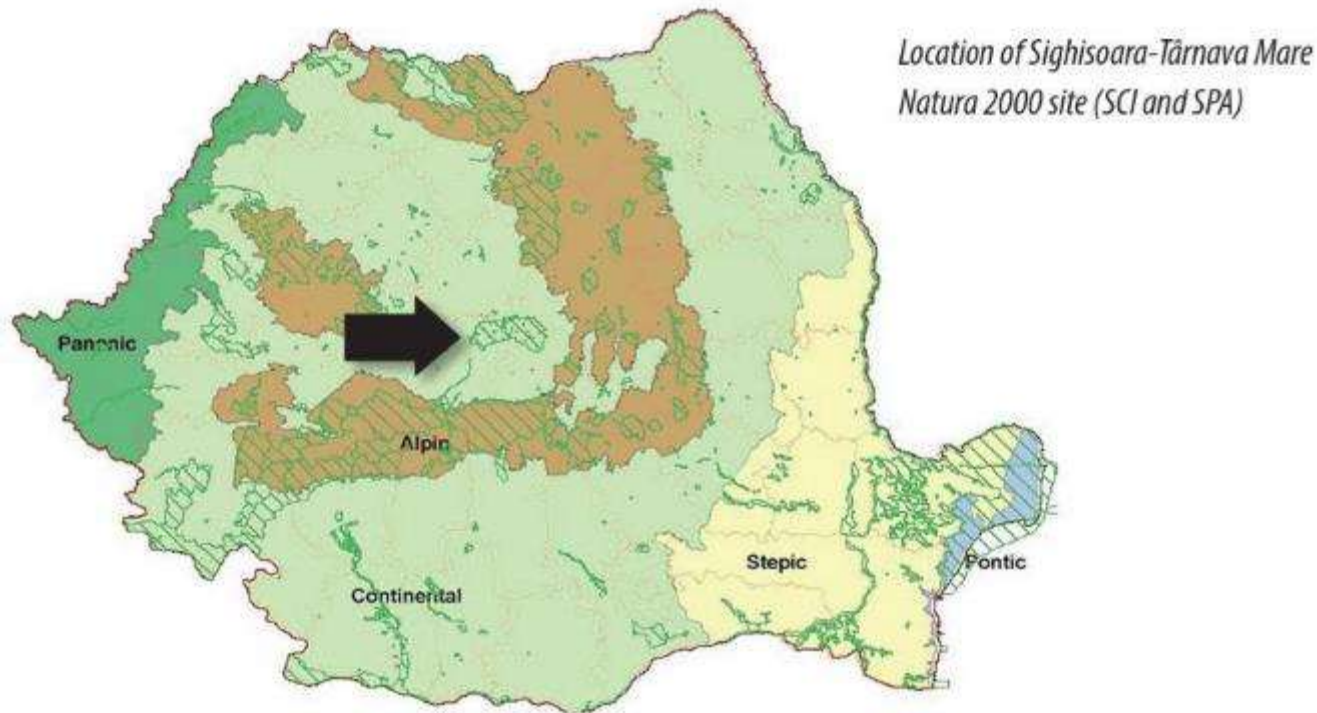


## Designing conservation measures with local small-scale HNV farming communities in SE Transylvania

Răzvan Popa  
Sighisoara, 11 July 2022



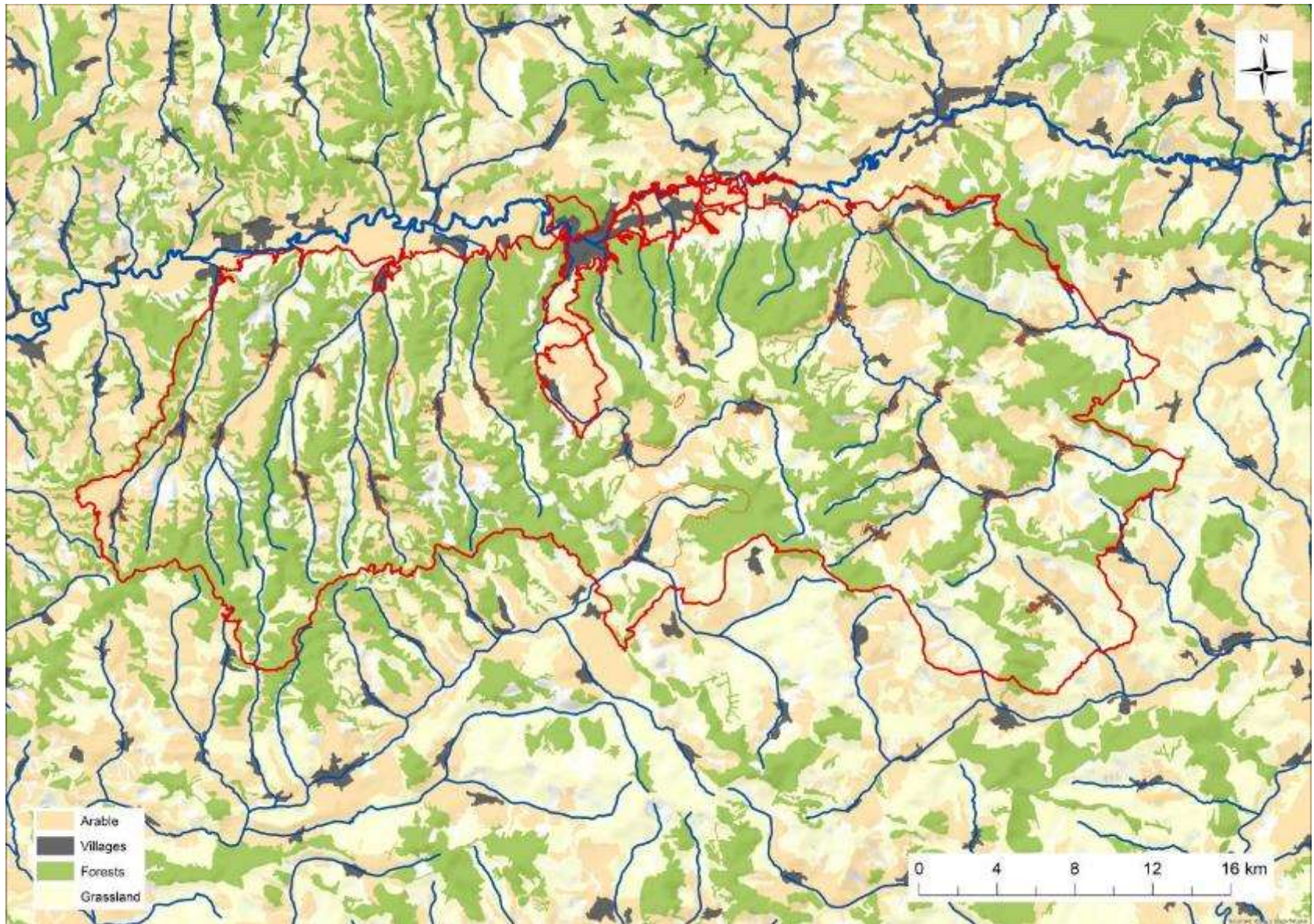
# Târnava Mare area



- Sighișoara-Târnava Mare NATURA 2000 site, 89,265 ha (350 sq. miles)
- High Nature Value (HNV) farmed landscape.
- 30 villages organised in 8 communes (each commune is an administrative area under a single Town hall)
- Area is still in a state of flux, moving from communist rural economy to Western European market economy. Big changes to deal with.



# Geography influenced village and farming evolution







## Importance of maintaining mosaic management

Micro-parcels for hay-making  
and arable, frequently changing  
in timing of cultivation and  
cropping



# Broad unfenced grazing lands



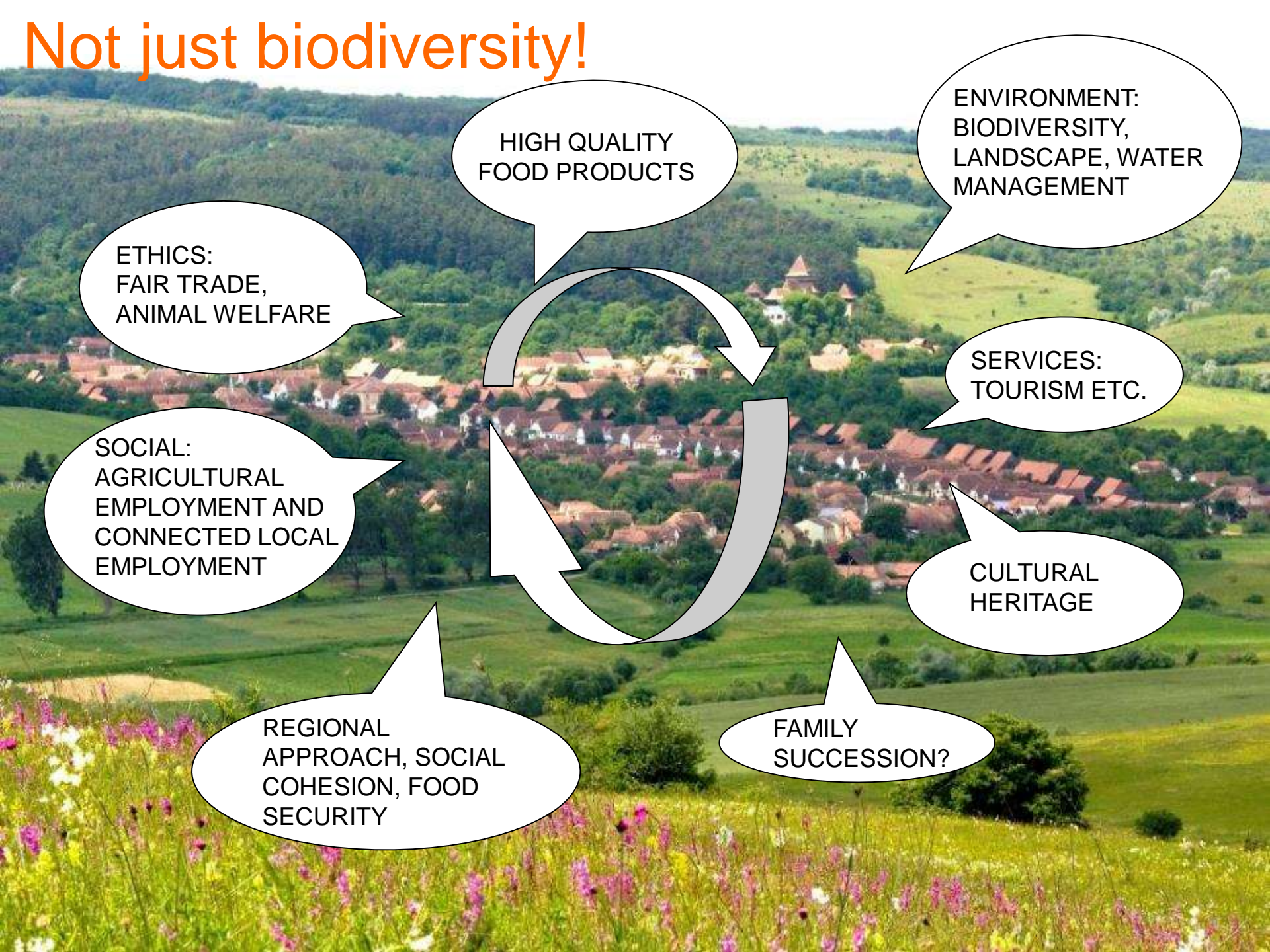


# Biodiversity



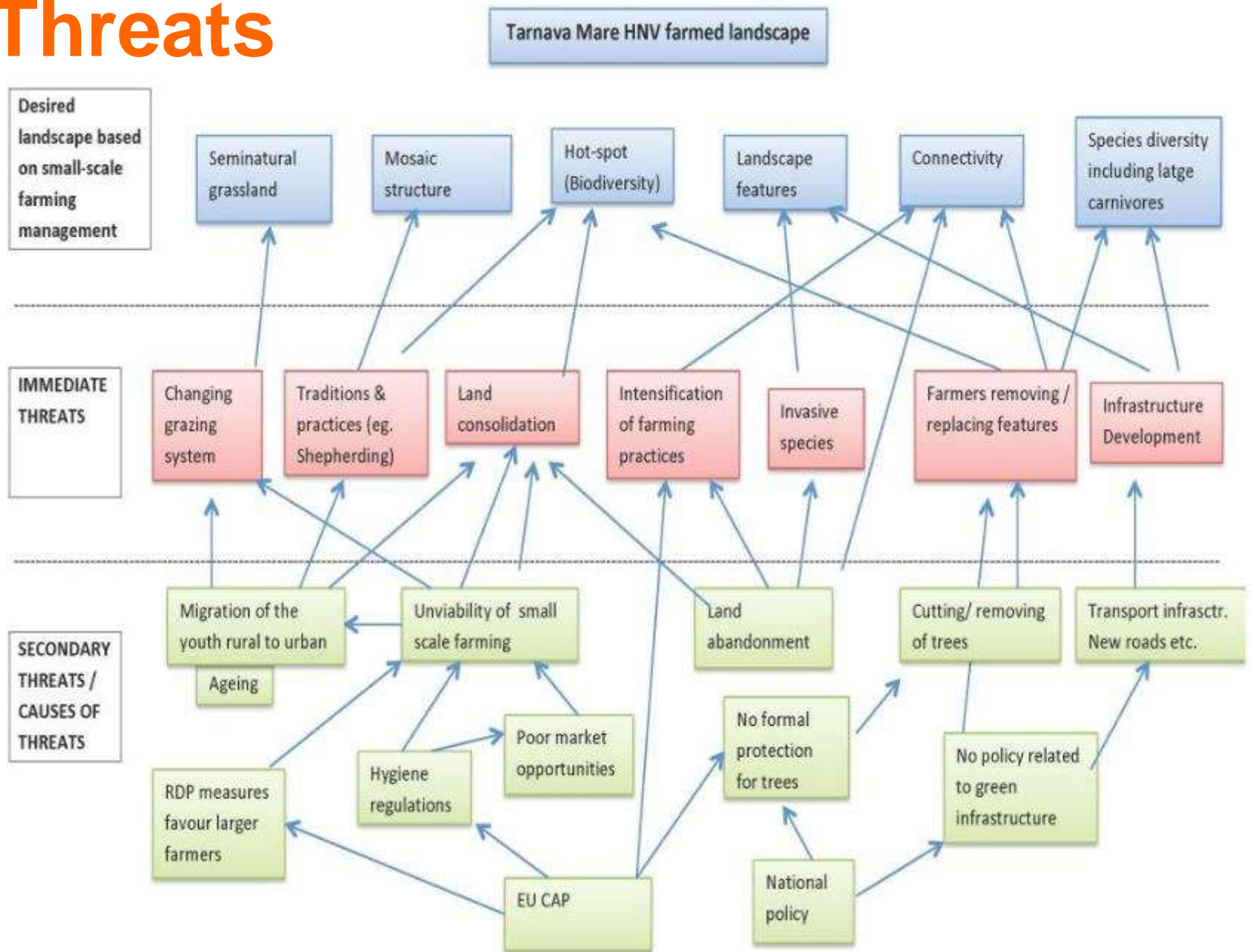


# Not just biodiversity!





# Threats



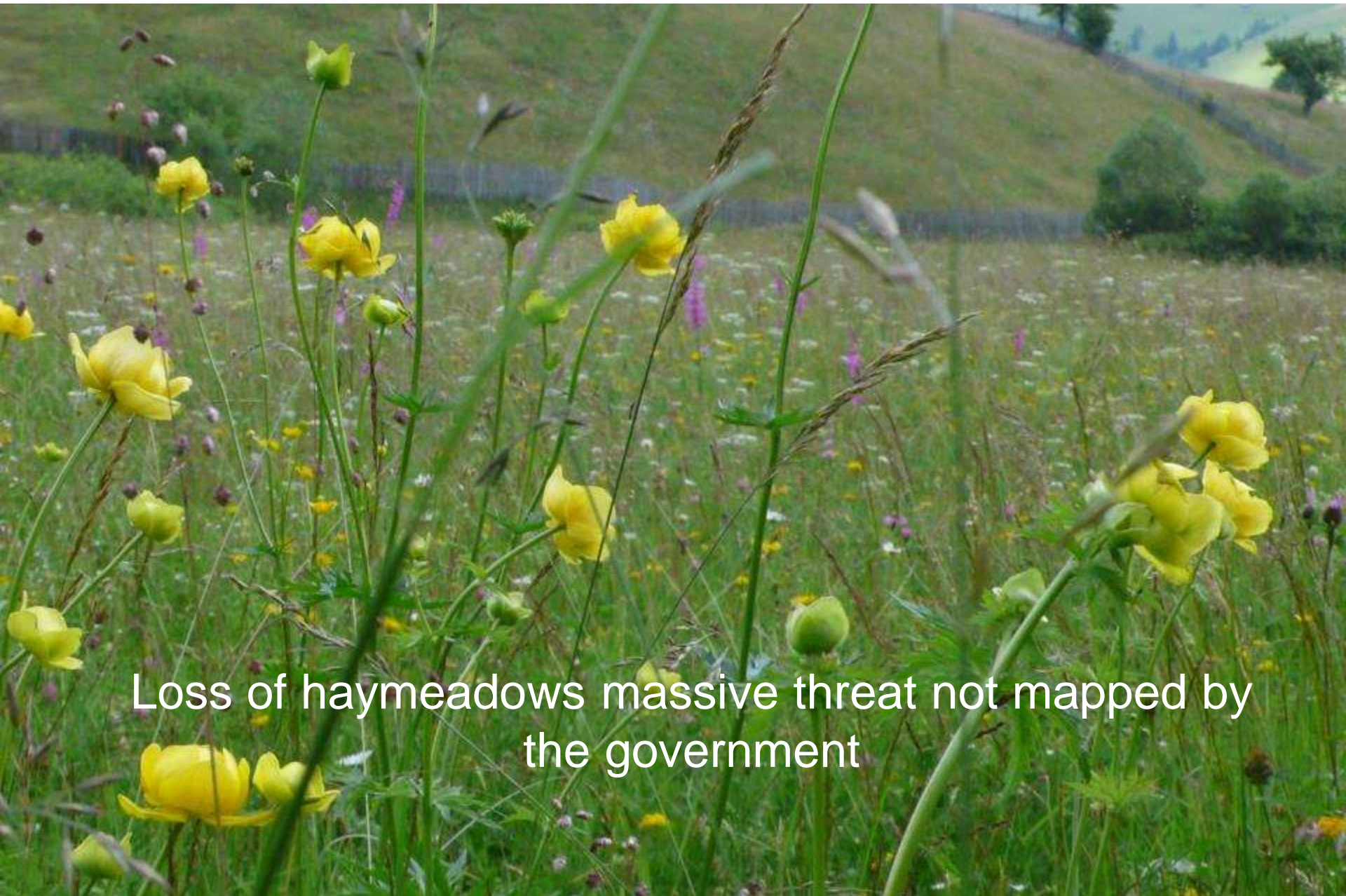
interdisciplinary approach



Threat of sheep: e.g. Rascruci, only site in Europe with all 4 *Maculinea* species, now has sheepfold on it







Loss of haymeadows massive threat not mapped by  
the government



# Social challenges

Lack of economic viability of smaller farms.

Small size of holdings - good for biodiversity  
- bad for business.

- Farmer ages increasing.
- Number of farmers decreasing: down 32%.
- Farm sizes increasing: up 62%

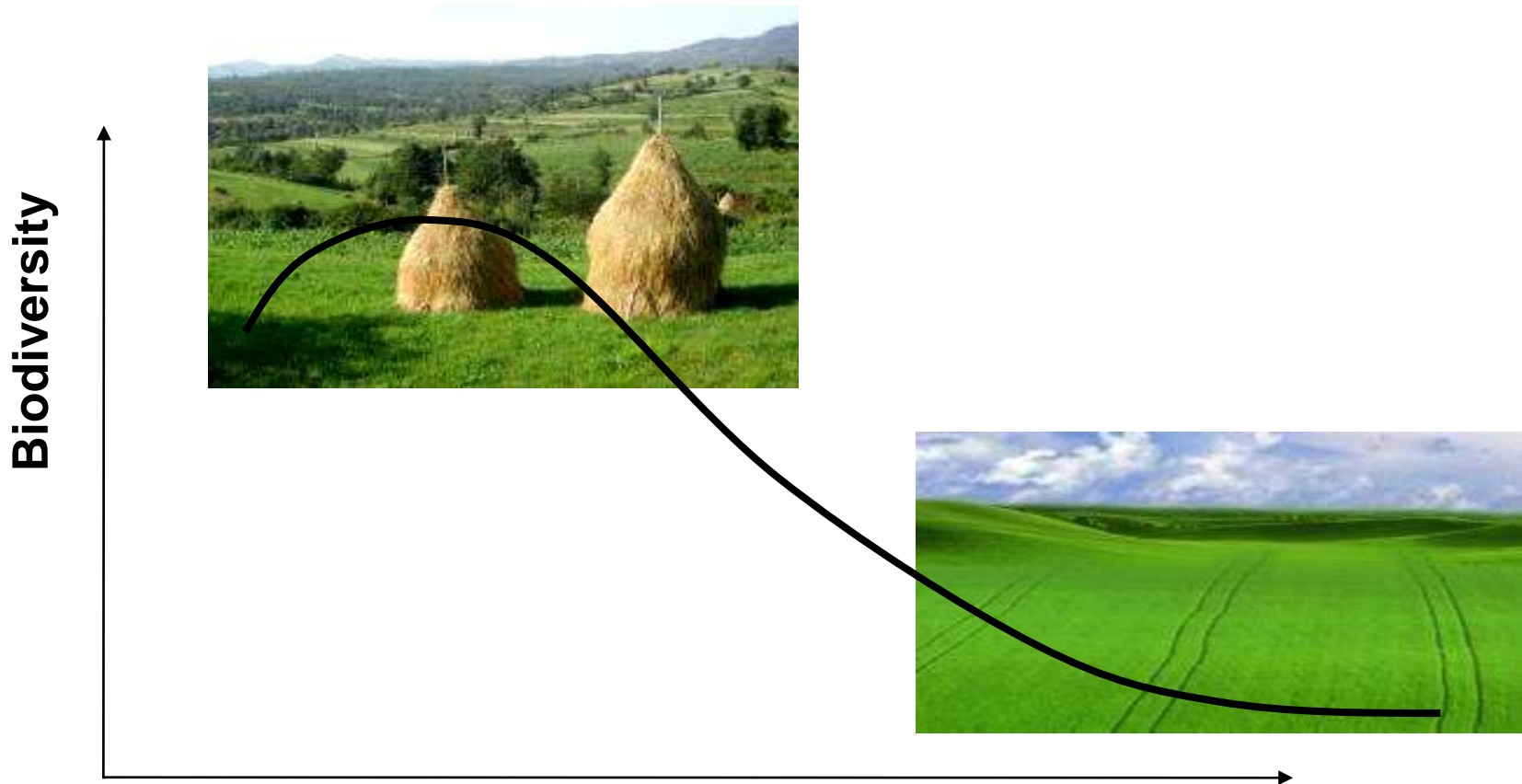


# Consolidation: does it matter?

Mixed agricultural = higher biodiversity

As farms increase in size, mosaic management and biodiversity is lost.

And rural poverty increases (Otiman)



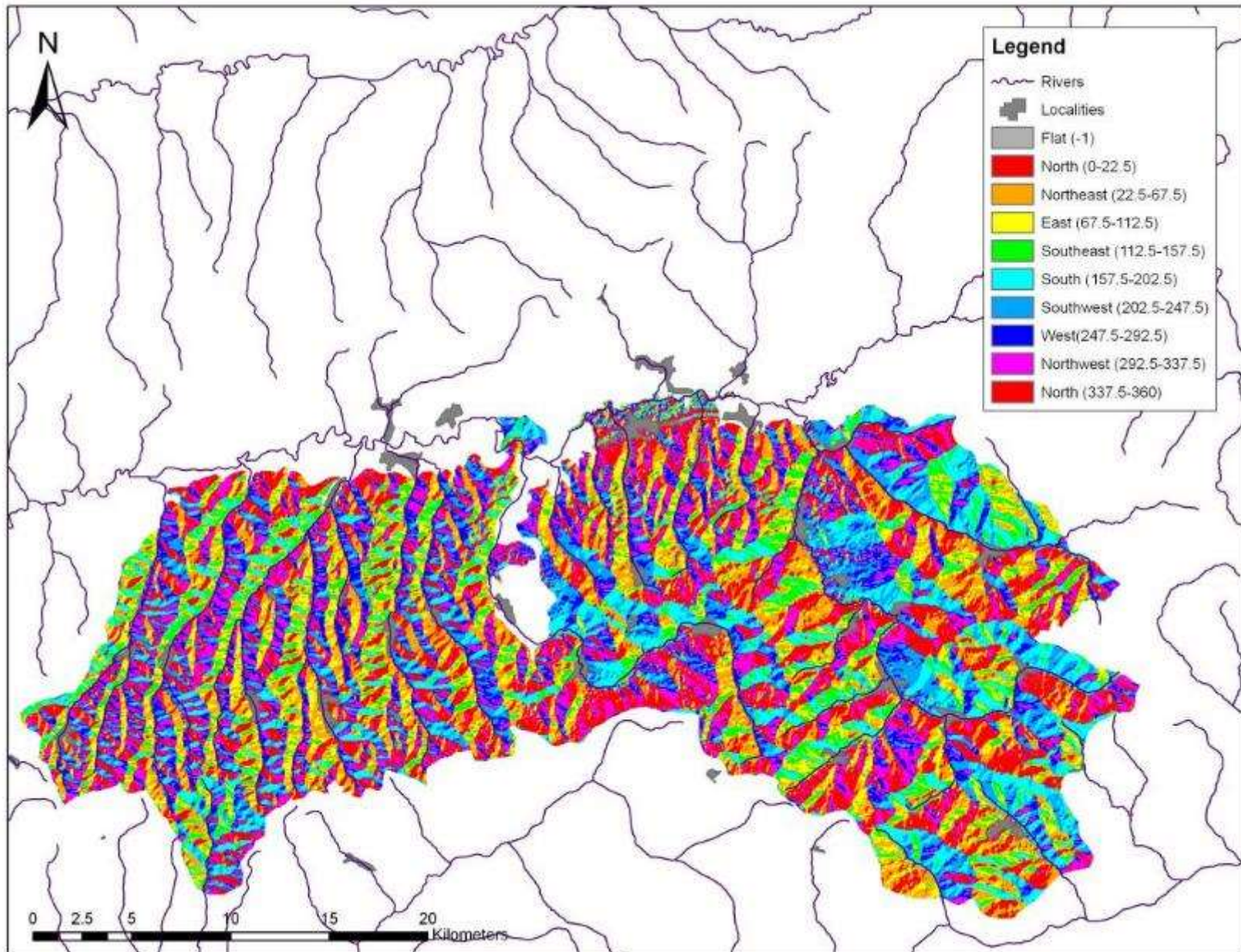
**Wilderness → Mixed agriculture → Intensive agriculture**

Source: after Hoogeveen *et al.*, 2001



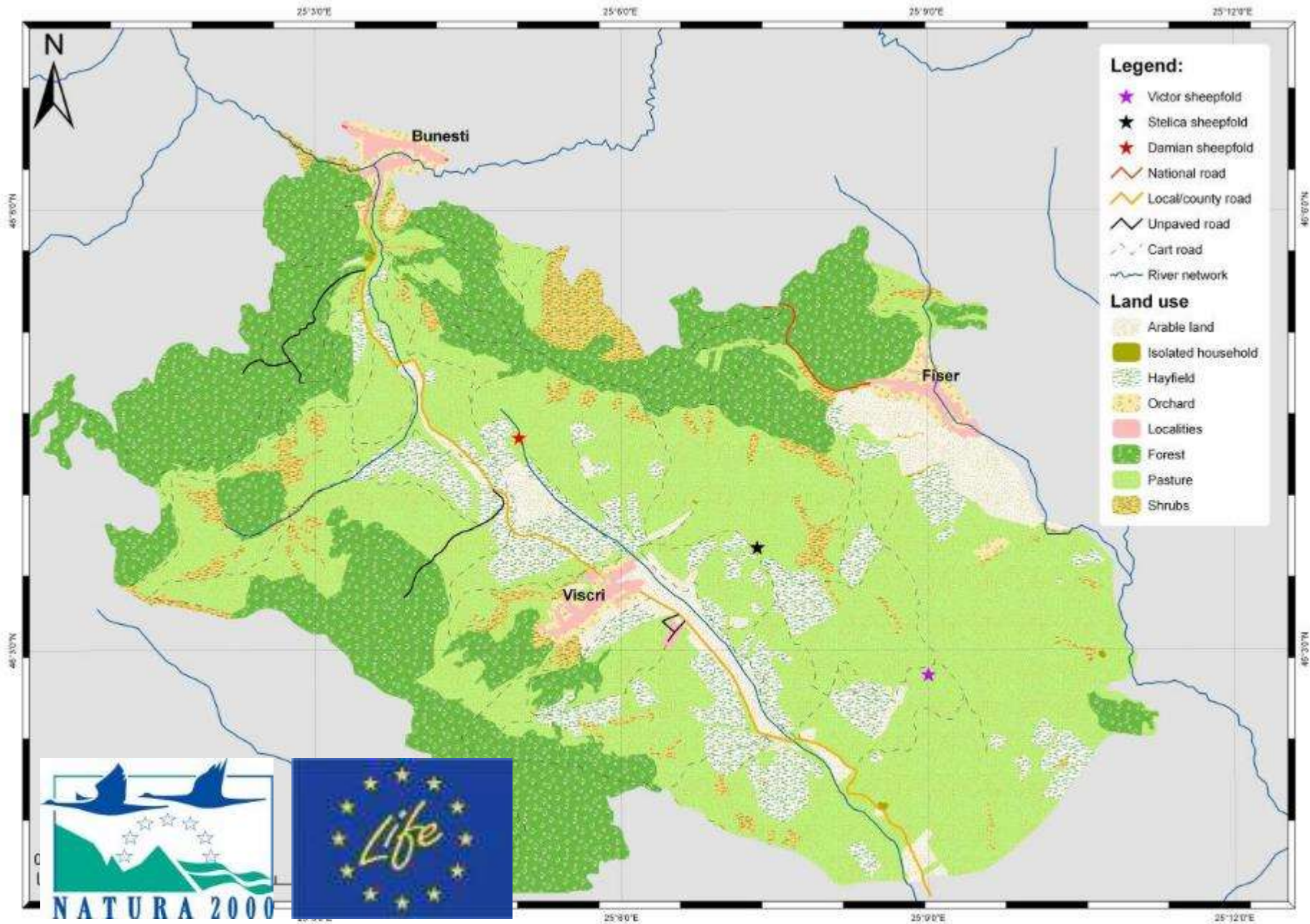
# 1. Landscape approach

## Species and habitat inventories





# Developing catchment-level management plans





## 2. Conservation and restoration of high priority areas



Hundreds of ha restored  
scrub → grassland and  
pasture → meadow



EU LIFE funding



## New technology old ecology

- Initially supported by Martin Brielmaier (manufacturer), LIFE and Norway funds.
- But now, associations are able to buy the equipment using RDP funding.
- This equipment makes management more practical and cheaper, increases production and profits.





### 3. Economy and Farming communities



Making biodiversity pay

# Getting to market: Associations bring profits which lead to stronger associations

- Viscri: helping joint funding applications (e.g. common grazing) strengthened trust
- Milk prices. 50 farmers working together in Viscri -> organic certification has nearly doubled milk price (€0.25 -> €0.40). Depended on trust between association members



**Grass milk  
idea is being  
considered by  
RO Ministry**



# Developing farmer associations and box schemes in two small areas

Cooperation and association in Dealurile Târnavelor Local Action Group and Podișul Mediașului Local Action Group

Funded by: Agenția p. Finanțarea Investițiilor 2018-2020. €80,000



MINISTERUL AGRICULTURII  
ȘI DEZVOLTĂRII RURALE

Promoting associations in two Local Action Groups in order to cooperate in marketing of products

- 80 small producers in 8 villages in Mureș: Vânători, Albești, Apold, Nadeș, Daneș, Laslea and Biertan.
- 15 producers in 5 villages in Mediaș
- >€150,000/year increase of local income
- Cooperation increased at community level.



# Adding value to high quality food linked to high-biodiversity landscapes

Viscri cheese production centre

Funded by: Carrefour Foundation

Supported by Rurality

2020-2022. €250,000.



Design and build a local cheese value chain  
Viscri, including a cheese processing plant.

This will give added value to the milk produced  
by cows fed on wildflower-rich pastures managed  
by family farmers in the region.

- 55 farmers supported
- Higher income for dairy farming
- Distinctive local product developed with added value linked to high biodiversity grasslands.





# Branding

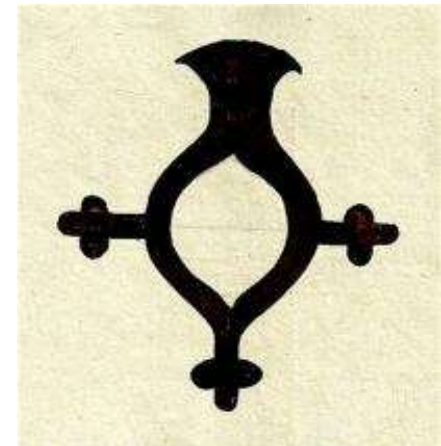
Country level: Romania



Area level:  
Târnava Mare



Village level:  
Viscri



## 4. Policy

### HNV scheme 2007-13

- 2m ha 500,000 farmers eligible
- 50% uptake
- higher uptake in Târnava Mare
- Result Based Payment Scheme
- 5 AE packages for pollinators proposed for 2023 + review of the previous AE measure (*Paracossulus thrips*, *Pilemia tigrina*, *Colias myrmidone*, *Euphydryas aurinia*; review *Maculinea*)

BUT .....

Romanian government policy is now against agri-environment Schemes, most may be cancelled from 2023





## Tutorial: My farm



# New! training app

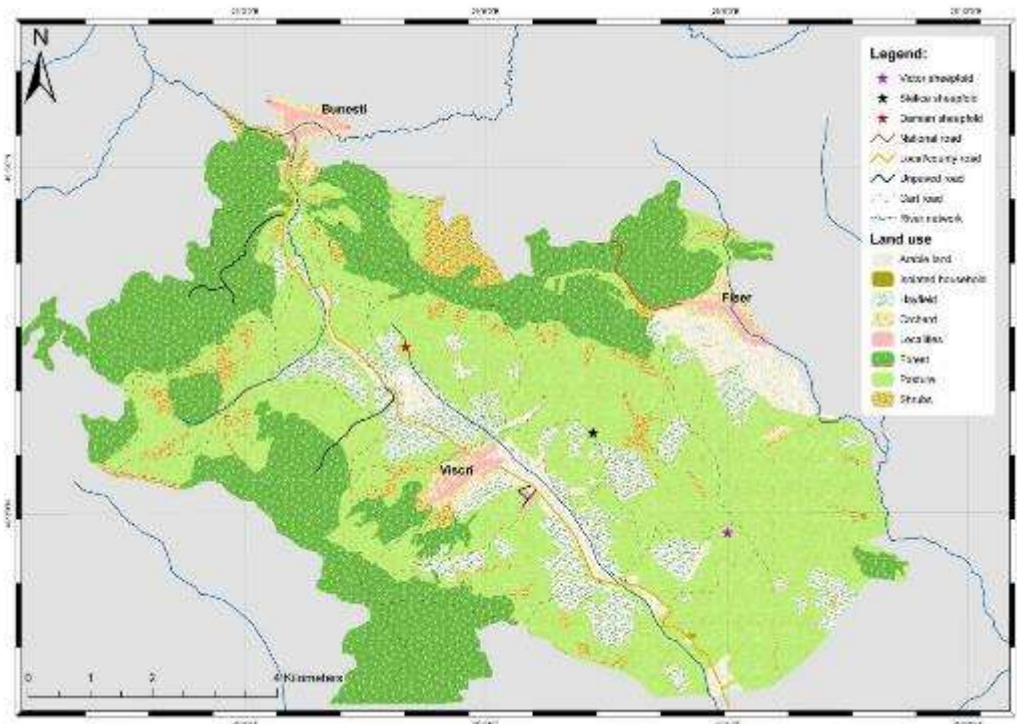


Angofa Farm:  
training, and income  
generating





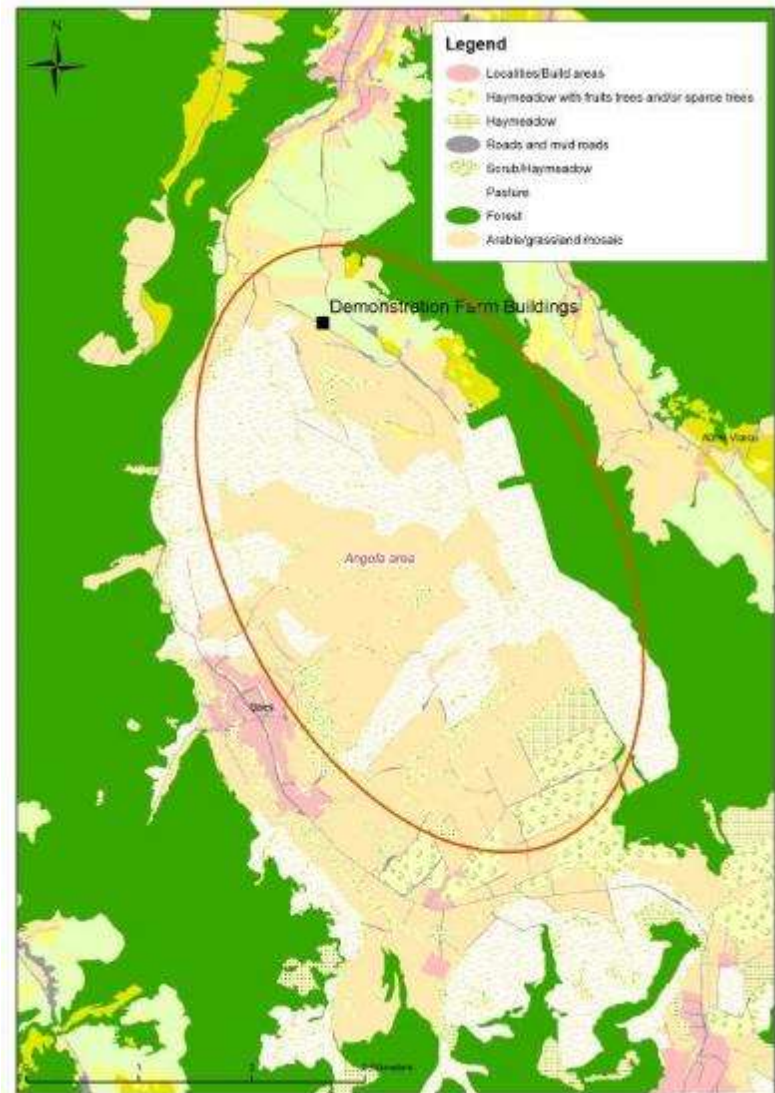
# New! Local schemes



## Scenario engine!

### Local schemes provide:

- Promotes farmer cooperation
- Improved ecological effectiveness
- Better tailored measures, less paperwork, for farmers
- Better connection between farming and civil society
- Allows simpler scheme design, more efficient implementation





# New! Grassland carbon and biodiversity credits

- Basket of indicators like retail price index
- Biodiversity stacked with carbon
- Single most effective way to store carbon in landscape is NOT to plough
- Starting May 2022, ADEPT and **Biodiversity Credit Company** have 16 field researchers creating a baseline of biodiversity and carbon
- €150-200/ha indexed at 3% per year to be paid to farmers for not ploughing their grassland. In addition, conditions can be imposed not to change from meadow to pasture. High species counts = higher payments
- Free of slow-moving government policy design: project managers free to design according to local conditions.

Angofa Wildlife Centre will be the hub for research, regional data collection and analysis including for the credits





# Challenges

- How to slow down land use change (incentives for farmers)?
- Ageing population, not interesting for talented young people to stay
- Lack of policy support: abandonment of agri-environment schemes, Ministries pushing for bigger farms
- How to push economic viability and business without destroying communities and biodiversity ..... associations?
- Alternatives to grant funding – how to develop resilience through links to market (branding/adding value, getting communities involved)
- Improve mapping to show landscape trends especially loss of meadows etc.

# Thank you for your attention



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