

Őrség National Park (HU)

The Region

Őrség is situated in the western borderlands of Hungary. The historical background has left its mark on the landscape: as it was a highly protected area (see “Iron Curtain”) in the last century, industrialization did not affect it strongly. Őrség kept its natural character and has a nationwide reputation for its habitats and picturesque landscape. It includes 44 settlements on 44.000 acres, and most of its territory is national park. Its unique



settlement structure is characterized by small groups of houses or little farms in free pattern surrounded by maintained meadows which extend to the nearest stream or micro valley. Slopes, moorlands and streams are natural borders between different habitats and land-uses. The landscape is characterized by small patches of forests and meadows. Forests represent around 60% of land cover. Due to poor soil quality and diverse topography, the conditions do not favour intensive agriculture. Tourism is flourishing in the region, people visit this place for its natural landscape, to enjoy farm life, and taste high quality farm products.

Objective

The aim of the CIL is to provide a perspective for the farmers and inhabitants of the region to secure a sufficient income and at the same time preserving the unique natural capital of the Őrség. We are trying to develop a concept to combine biodiversity-friendly and income-providing agriculture as well as attractive rural areas to live in and to support a vibrant nature tourism. The immense economic pressure many farmers are under could be alleviated through market-based solutions (like value chain approaches) and a simplified process of documentation (e.g. through results-based payments).

Contact CIL Őrség

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Potential Contract Solution #1 (“Dream Contract”)

Objective

The value chain approach appears to be a valuable option to incentivise producers for a more sustainable production through establishing standards (and affiliated labels) for high quality foods. Short food supply chains (SFSC) allow local producers and (local/regional) consumers to connect via local baskets or local markets to create a “market pull”. The existing “national park product” label can be redesigned incorporating conservation-friendly requirements and thus create trustworthiness and transparency. This value chain approach could promote biodiversity-friendly agriculture in and around the national park in three ways:

1. High-quality dairy products --> good quality pastures
2. High-quality fruit products (jams, syrups, juices) --> reviatalization of meadow orchards with old fruit varieties.
3. Multi-flower honey --> biodiversity-rich grassland

Measures

- No use of pesticides in the primary prodcution
- GMO free products, no added artificial additives and artificial flavour enhancers in the products
- Mainly local/regional ingredients, environmentally friendly packaging.

Contract Type

- Value Chain Approach



Contract Features

- Individual contracts

Targeted Public Goods

Biodiversity

Cultural Heritage

Landscape & Scenery



Szalafő, a town in the centre of Őrség © T. Markovics

Actors & Structure

- Farmers
- ÖNPD (owner of the label system)
- Local municipalities
- Consumers
- Associated public agency in control methods (e.g. Hungarian National Food Chain Safety Office, Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture)
- Distributors: shop owners, guesthouse owners

Consumers (locals, tourists), distributors can purchase ÖNP labelled local products. Some of the consumers willingly choose labelled products, being aware of extra effort and premium quality of the product. Public agencies and municipalities set up and maintain the institutional and professional background of the label system, such as shops for local products, local markets and other points of sale, webpage, marketing, logistics, controlling.

Contract Duration

Ideal contract length: 3 years

Payments

The payments will come from public and private funding. In the case of private funding the farmers will receive a premium price for their labelled, certificated products. Public funding is granted by the state, from a mixture of direct and indirect sources. As all National Park Directorates are financed by the state, their apparatus provides technical, financial and professional support to all national park products, and some specific, individual direct funds as well to producers.

Controls & Checks

Practices & processes and ingredients & packaging will be checked and controlled by a local committee. As the owner of the label system, ÖNPD sets up the committee: invited members from different sectors (local producers, distributors, public administrators). ÖNP (Őrségi National Park) label might have gradual classification (e.g., bronze, silver, gold) according to the ecological level in production.

Expected Benefits

Social/Ecological Advantages

- Biodiversity conservation (mainly grassland species)
- Agro-biodiversity (mainly old fruit varieties)
- Revitalising of abandoned pastures
- Stronger producer-consumer relationship
- Consumers (higher value-added of good quality products, trust in local products)

- Tourism: Tourists and tourist service providers (due to diverse landscape, higher quality in local gastronomy and easy way to find local product and trust in it)
- ÓNPD (biodiversity-rich habitats, increasing highly valuable areas, enhanced willingness to continue farming or start farming in abandoned fields by farmers)

Advantages for Farmers

- Predictable market for farmers' products and stable/reliable contractual agreements
- Legal, technical, institutional support
- joint PR activities
- Collaboration between farmers/extended tourism supply → gastronomic opportunities