

Project Information Sheet
Conference project brief number (PBN):27



Sighisoara – Agnita – Sibiu Railroad

Feasibility study

Description:	Regeneration of a railroad for sustainable economic rural development.
Beneficiaries:	Inhabitants of Romanian villages and cities
Project Implementation:	MET/UNDP
Co-implementer:	KulturLand Srl, GTZ, Local Councils and Romania Government
Timespan:	Immediate 6 months
Estimated Cost:	19,000 euros
Partners:	Local councils, village inhabitants, Romanian Government, many other MET collaborators and donors, in training and skills.
Origin:	This project originated through a partnership of the MET, Horizon Foundation, Packard Humanities Institute, Joachim Cotaru, KulturLand Srl, Sighisoara Durabila and GTZ.

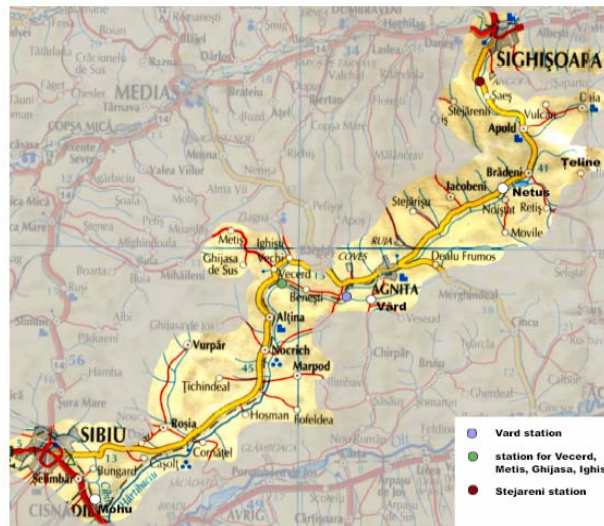
1. Title of the Project

Sighisoara – Agnita – Sibiu Railroad Regeneration

2. Location of the Project and Area of Coverage

The railway will operate between Sibiu (Sibiu county) and Sighisoara (Mures county). Forty villages and small towns will be linked through this railway. Agnita with 12,119 inhabitants is the biggest town of the area, after Sibiu (170,000) and Sighisoara (30,000).

A total of 54,673 inhabitants (without Sibiu) will be served by this railway (more in the MET/GTZ Rail Feasibility Study).



History of the Sibiu-Sighisoara railway

At the end of the 19th century a railway was built to connect Sibiu and Sighisoara, the construction works began in 1896 and ended in 1910. This railway provided transportation for the resources extracted in the area (specially the wood) as well as to the local rural economy

The line remained in operation and was used along the entire distance, Sighisoara-Sibiu (108 km), until 1965, when the section between Sighisoara and Agnita was closed down. Since then the area has suffered pronounced economic decline. The Sibiu – Agnita (58 Km) section remain in use and a new station is being built in Agnita.

3. Justification

A railway operates today between Sibiu and Agnita (58 km), the project aims to reopen the section between Agnita and Sighisoara.

The railway and the stations between Sibiu-Sighisoara (108 km) will need to be modernized.

Today the economic situation in the rural part of the area is based on subsistence agriculture, there is only a few number of enterprises, mostly pubs or shops. Connectivity to the city-based commerce is minimal and expensive.

Since the Sighisoara-Agnita section was closed the area has suffered an economic decline and difficult transport facilities relying today on private enterprises and infrequent buses. After 1990 the economic transition has aggravated this economic decline.

Regeneration of the Sibiu-Sighisoara railway will have several positive consequences for this region. The reopening of the railway will have a positive impact on the economics, tourism potential and public transport. As an infrastructure project it will enable economic growth in the region with a relatively minimal negative environmental impact. Furthermore, it will be a picturesque railroad, with a beautiful landscape, abundant vegetation, along rivers (as Hartibaci.) linking two medieval towns Sibiu and Sighisoara.

4. Objectives of the Project

a. Long-term objective

- Creation of a sense of belonging to a common region through the establishment of a network of cooperating cities and villages in the region, driven by a preserved cultural and natural heritage, sharing similar issues, problems and possibilities by creating an integrated network of protected areas throughout the culturally and throughout a naturally unified area stretching between the cities Sighisoara, Sibiu and Brasov.
- Conception, development and implementation of a mechanism providing capacity building, training and the necessary sets of organisational tools for the betterment of the economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions of the region and its constituent villages;
- Sustainable development through the appropriate use of heritage – cultural and natural – of the region and the effective operation of programmes and projects and of private ventures in the region.

b. Immediate objectives

The priority objectives of this project will be:

- to finalise a quality, comprehensively researched feasibility study and business plan which will be presented to the national government and the private sector leading to possible regeneration.

5. Activities of the Project

- Research potential demand for a rail service through a socio-economic study
- Research technical requirements and cost of reinstating rail and station infrastructure
- Research potential running and operation costs and potential operators and investors
- Presentation to the private sector and national government.

6. Inputs

a. Human

- 1 project coordinator
- 2 technical experts

b. Material

- Access to office and a car (supplied by the MET)
- The use of a laptop and digital projector for presentations (supplied by the MET)
- Publication and dissemination of final study and business plan

7. Requirements from outside the project

- The support of the local councils in the region and county councils.
- The cooperation of the Romanian Railway Company (CFR) – Brasov Regional Agency, Turism Feroviar Company (STF), the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism (MICT)

8. Calendar of Activities and budget

Activity	Cost Euros	Nov 04	Dec 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05
Finalise the socio-economic study For potential demand	2,000						
Finalise the technical study	5,000						
Finalise the operational study	5000						
Present feasibility study and business plan	3000						
Transport and admin costs	4000						
Total Cost	19,000						

Annex I – Sources

“A Programme for the Integrated Development of Sighisoara and the Saxon Villages of Transylvania”, by Gaia Heritage Sal & MET

“The Saxon villages of Transylvania, Romania – A future for the Mediaeval Landscape”, by Kim Wilkie & MET