Project Brief for the Creation of an Ecomuseum

September 2004

Description: Project Brief for a fully fledged project document on the Creation of an Ecomuseum

Beneficiaries: The Region of the Saxon Villages in Transylvania

Project Implementation: MET/UNDP/GAIA/CREATIME and the concerned municipal council

Timespan: Fully fledged project study from project start: 11 months

Estimated costs: 108,000 Euro

Partner: The concerned communes and the regional tourism actors

Origin: This project originated through the partnership of the MET and Gaia-Heritage and the specialist museographic agency Créatim
Introduction
Why an Eco-museum?

After the Second World War, the entire landscape and the economy of European countries had been turned upside down: factories closed, unemployment reached new levels, trades disappeared, traditions, customs and modes of life were wiped out.

It is during this period of rapid transformation that the concept of the “Ecomuseum” came to life; partly to protect some of this complex heritage and also as a tool to help the concerned populations that gave a meaning to this heritage.

Examples abound in Europe and notably in France around the industrial parks of Eastern and Northern France that had been abandoned during the early 20th century. The most reputed one being that of the “Creusot”. See in Annex II photographs and preliminary plans of an Ecomuseum in development in the French region of Ardèche.

With the increased importance given to sustainable development, the Ecomuseum is becoming again a centre of interest since it aims at contributing to the sustainability of a territorial identity in the territory itself. Fundamental ideas within the concept of an Ecomuseum are that:

- The heritage protected and presented is not only constituted of architecture and objects. It is a territory with all its components: from the landscape to its inhabitants, with its architecture, its historical heritage, its agricultural processes, its crafts and customs;
- This heritage is not protected outside of its context as in museums of traditions and of rural life; protection and presentation take place ‘in-situ’;
- Because it is the result of life, this heritage can be protected and presented only with the contribution of the local population.

It is worth noting here the very strong relationship that exists between Ecomuseums and protected areas. The territory of the Ecomuseum will not be defined by geographically identified borders, but through a cultural and physical identity.
Context of the Ecomuseum

The Fundatia Mihai Eminescu Trust is conducting exemplary actions in the restoration of traditional houses in some Saxon villages as well as training inhabitants in skills for their future employment and developing handicrafts to create other sustainable income sources. It also implements pilot projects of natural organic agricultural production (apple orchard, apple natural juice...).

Despite their quality and number, these actions remain limited when compared with the volume of the issues they address.

Romas settlements close to the Villages

To make these actions sustainable and increase their impact, they must be brought within a project that would reinforce their impact and act as a catalyst to further sustainable development as well as strengthening nascent partnerships with the private sector, local NGOs and international institutions. This is what the Ecomuseum would achieve.

Concurrently, the trend of today in Sighisoara and the Villages tourism and tourist attractions is of the “in and out” kind: short in time and superficial. An Ecomuseum – coupled with other projects submitted together with this one on tourism - would provide a deep exploration of Transylvania’s history and culture.

In such a situation and vast territory as the Saxon Transylvania, the objective of the Ecomuseum is:

To express the area’s historical and contemporary cultural identity, thereby cultivating the strength of such an identity?

Without a structure of information and of representation, the territory remains ill-defined and difficult to be understood and its specificity recognized. The first objective of the Ecomuseum is to give this territory an existence. In the same manner as a town hall gives existence to a village or a town or a place of worship to a religious community.

Landscapes of terraces

In a village
What are its characteristics?

- A management tool: it is there that are programmed the activities in the territory of the Ecomuseum;

- Being a meeting place between the technical team of the Ecomuseum, the local actors and also the tourists and other visitors and the Saxon region.

- Creating an exemplary site in terms of conservation, presentation and enhancement and finally in terms of development:
  - It should be the ambassador of the heritage and therefore be a showcase of the best practices of conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage of the region concerned undertaken with the direct participation of the local population.
  - In doing so, the Ecomuseum will also present on-going conservation and presentation activities and organize training sessions. It contains an important pedagogical component in its functioning.

- Defining a project that would pull a conservation programme for the entire region:
  - This is a methodological principle: confronted with a very large area to protect and develop, concentration of resources on a smaller scale pilot project will provide a solid example to test and demonstrate. The Ecomuseum is a living space.
  - It goes even further: it hosts the structure that will accompany the development of the whole territory. It is more than an example, since it is expected to manage and serve as a development guide and tool. Its long-term presence serves as a guarantee of the sustainable development of the whole region.

- Creating a protection force for the identity of the region:
  - The Ecomuseum is the strongest message of the necessity to protect the identity of the region. Better than isolated conservation activities, it plays a strategic role of protection of a complete and integrated heritage ensemble. Its sheer presence is a proof of the necessity to protect the heritage and the region.

Return from the fields          Storks
- Giving cohesion to and bring together all the energies and, within this framework, give a meaning to the formidable impulsion of the MET's work;
- The Ecomuseum brings together all ideas and initiatives. It gives them coherence within a strategy and development guidelines which it carries and applies in its functioning, giving them visibility, particularly in the fields of support to the local populations.

**Programming and lines of positioning of the Ecomuseum**

The Ecomuseum is a tool to be housed in existing spaces and architecture in an appropriate location to enable it meet the following functions:
- The site of the Ecomuseum must be in the centre of an area representative of the identity of the Saxon region;
- For the population to adhere to this project, the Ecomuseum will fully associate the local inhabitants and actors in its undertakings and development; it will carry the needs and potentialities in terms of development of the villages and inhabitants;
- Welcoming large numbers of visitors without harming the environment surrounding the Ecomuseum;
- Being connected to the road network to enable easy access and visibility;

It will comprise the following:
- information and welcoming unit,
- educational space,
- facilities:
  - museum shop,
  - coffee-bar,
  - a cafeteria-restaurant and lodging facilities could also be considered through the cooperation with local families or existing trades,
- management and meeting facilities,
- natural and built spaces open to visits, including inhabited areas, structured in demonstration and experimentation areas; visits organized in cooperation with the inhabitants.

UNESCO will be required to review and approve the Ecomuseum feasibility and impact assessments.
4. Activities, Calendar and Budget

A fully-fledged project document for the creation of the Ecomuseum needs to be prepared. It will require the following activities, time and budget:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Duration (in months)</th>
<th>Cost (in Euros)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of the area of the Ecomuseum and of its location,</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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<td>(i) a. preparation of TORs for land choice</td>
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<td>(ii) b. identification of the areas on the basis of above</td>
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<td>(iii) c. listing of lands to be used</td>
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<td>(iv) d. selection of 3 privileged sites for the core components</td>
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<td>(v) e. recommendations on site and lands</td>
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<td>Identification of participating local and national partners and of the structure of the project</td>
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<td>Programme development:</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>75,000</td>
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<td>(i) Ecomuseum programme and contents (functions, architecture, landscape integration, contents) of the Ecomuseum,</td>
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<td>(ii) Economic feasibility study, identification of choices and of phases of implementation</td>
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<td>(iii) Conceiving and devising of the Management and Overseeing Council and of the management tools</td>
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<td>(iv) Details plans for restoration and adaptation of the building (architects plans and project schedule)</td>
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<td>(v) Identification of external partnerships for funding, twinning, cooperation, training and visibility</td>
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<td>(vi) Development of the detailed museographic programme</td>
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<td>(vii) Preparation of the terms of reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Building works</td>
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<td>b. Museographic equipment and communication tools</td>
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<td>c. Landscaping, public works, parking spaces, roads and pedestrian walkways</td>
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<td>Preliminary Implementation Steps</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<td>(i) Prototypes of a landscaping,</td>
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<td>(ii) Restoration of the main building,</td>
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<td>(iii) Prototype of a museographic equipment</td>
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<td>Final report and concluding meeting with the concerned bodies</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>11 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>108,000</strong></td>
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Proposed project management structure (subject to the results of the studies to be undertaken)

Once the studies completed, the MET would be the main driver of this project in conjunction with the Sighisoara Town Hall, the Lutheran and Orthodox churches and with Roma groups (by having them on the steering committee. The MET will contract out the project development to an individual or organisation, but will remain monitoring and assisting development.

Upon completion of the studies the UNDP/MET will consult with other stakeholders in the selection and appointment of a manager for the museum: it would then be an autonomous entity with “Trustees” or some other overseeing structure.

The basis of the Ecomuseum will be decided from the outset. If funding for creation of the Ecomuseum is from public or international sources, it would be distributed as development finance at capital level, as that is the objective of the Ecomuseum. Thereafter, the MET recommends that the Ecomuseum becomes self-sufficient as soon as possible through visitor fees and income generated from the array of activities it will install. It could be run by a Limited Liability Company (an SRL) which is established for this purpose, or an existing one is given the contract to run it. Having such an entity would also allow commercial activity with agricultural and handicraft producers, selling produce through the Ecomuseum outlet.