How can a voluntary initiative and policy incentives turn a common grassland area into a species rich and locally popular site?

**IN BRIEF**

The aim of the Josefov Meadows project is to create the conditions for the return of wetland birds and amphibians in the floodplain of the Metuje river and promote “a park for birds and people”, while improving the management of the meadows and recreating lost habitats.

**ACTORS**

Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO), Czech Union for Nature Conservation Jaro Jaroměř (CSOP), local environment department, donors and volunteers, farmers, hunters, fishermen, a small water-powered plant, local population, and tourists.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS**

- Achieving (or maintaining) the presence of diverse and sufficiently plentiful species and habitats
- Achieving (or maintaining) a good level of educational and demonstration activities in relation to farming and forestry
- Maintaining or restoring a high level of landscape character and cultural heritage
- Achieving good ecological status of surface water and good chemical status of groundwater
The purchase of land in this case limits the transferability, but the lessons from the project in terms of trust and engagement are highly transferable.

The project manager is a well-known and trusted individual for all the key local stakeholders, because he has lived in the region for a long time.

**Barriers to Overcome**

Without the CAP (Pillar 2) funding, the farmers’ motivation to manage grasslands would go down. Moreover, there is an unequal sharing of costs and benefits between stakeholders. There are also low levels of trust and engagement from farmers in the initiative. Lack of human capacity in the NGOs behind the nature reserve and difficulties to get core funding for the work required complicate matters even further. That goes together with the site not benefitting from any special protection regime or support. As in similar initiatives, any radical personnel change could cause difficulties. For the project, it remains challenging to strike the right balance between the number of visitors and the maximum capacity.

**Transferability / Key Success Factors**

1. The purchase of land in this case limits the transferability, but the lessons from the project in terms of trust and engagement are highly transferable.
2. The presence of agri-environment-climate support under the CAP provided a strong incentive for farmers resulting in a rapid improvement of the site.
3. Traditional values and educational benefits provided alongside environmental benefits.
4. Enthusiasm of the local ornithologists, relevant NGOs and volunteers, who put a lot of effort to the Bird Park creation and convinced donors to support the project.
5. The project manager is a well-known and trusted individual for all the key local stakeholders, because he has lived in the region for a long time.
6. Clear communication of the project results to the local population, as well as to donors, created a sense of trust and appreciation amongst regional biodiversity enthusiasts and the local population alike.

**What Support is Received?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Type</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>CZ</th>
<th>Payments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional framework</td>
<td></td>
<td>Support from municipality/regional institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAP and regulatory framework</td>
<td>EU rules on cross-compliance, especially the requirements linked to the Habitats and Birds Directives</td>
<td>Law on Nature and landscape protection 114/1992 Coll. National implementation and guidance on cross-compliance</td>
<td>30% of direct payments</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAP greening rules</td>
<td></td>
<td>National implementation and guidance on greening</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CAP direct payments (indirect influence)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>€ 201/ha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar 2 rural Development, measures providing investment support</td>
<td>Rural Development Programme framework</td>
<td>Rural Development Programme for the Czech Republic, notably agri-environment-climatic measure supporting extensive grassland management</td>
<td>€ 100-111/ha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar 2 rural Development, measures providing investment support</td>
<td>Rules for Operational Programmes</td>
<td>Operational Programme for the Environment</td>
<td>Dependent on the project (e.g. creation of pools and of a visitors centre)</td>
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</tbody>
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* Selected AEMs eligible for organic farming; LSU: Livestock Units

http://pegasus.ieep.eu/case-studies/list-of-case-studies