

FOR NATURE,
FOR COMMUNITIES

Făgăraș National Park Infrastructure Plan

2025-2028

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CARPATHIA Buildings Infrastructure Plan

Version January 2026



Yellowstone National Park

Rationale

In 1872, Yellowstone was founded as the first National Park on the planet. Europe's first National Park was created 1914 in Switzerland and ever since, nearly 100 countries around the world have lands classified as national parks. A National Park is defined as a natural area in use for conservation purposes, created and protected by national governments, all with a common idea to protect 'wild nature' for posterity, as a symbol of national pride, and, as Roosevelt's Arch, the gate to Yellowstone National Park, quotes, 'For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People'.

The main objective and aspect of any National Park is the protection of nature, regulated via management plans and implemented by a team of park employees. But a National Park has importance beyond pure conservation:

- For research and monitoring – to learn how natural processes develop and function in areas which are not used and impacted by humans.
- For education – all National Parks with a significant number of visitors run nature education programmes.
- For visitors – National Parks typically have a high recreational value and represent a major tourism attraction.

And without infrastructure, no National Park can fulfil these objectives.



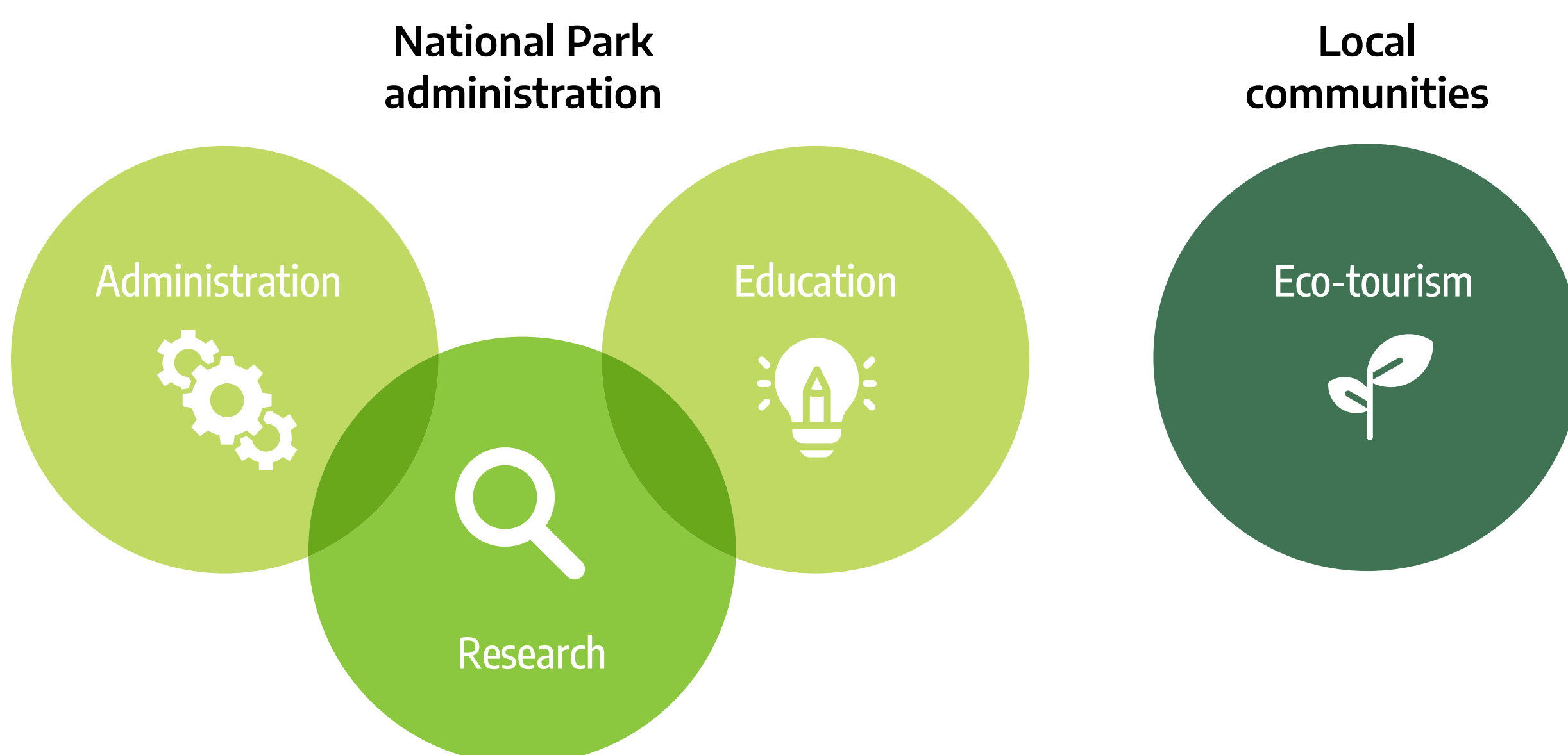
National Park Infrastructure as a Precondition for Local Acceptance

Acceptance of local people is crucial for any National Park and is based on the availability of economic alternatives (traditionally ecotourism) compared to extractive use such as mining, logging, or hunting.

In consequence, a National Park requires a specific park infrastructure for its functioning, which needs elements for administration and research, education, and ecotourism offers.

In Romania, none of the existing National Parks have an adequate infrastructure due to lack of funding and a lack of experience. In order to have National Parks unleash their full potential for conservation-based development of rural areas, we believe we must demonstrate through a new National Park in the Făgăraș Mountains, how park infrastructure can create the conditions for such rural development. For this reason, creating an adequate infrastructure for the Făgăraș region is not just a requirement to create a National Park, but also an opportunity to set an example.

In general, park infrastructure should be developed by the state/National Park administration in cooperation with local communities.



In our case, there is no park administration yet and local communities have very restricted capacity to develop ecotourism infrastructure or infrastructure related to protected areas. This leaves the task but also the opportunity to develop an adequate infrastructure with our Foundation and create the elements of a National Park before it is officially designated as such.



If we look at National Parks in other countries throughout their development, infrastructure building is a dynamic process, which usually develops over decades. We also have to take into consideration that the Făgăraș Mountains stretch over 200,000 ha and consequently need a comprehensive infrastructure to provide benefits and thus create acceptance for all 28 communes in their vicinity.

This infrastructure plan is designed for an initial phase to create the base elements for a National Park, and to give a kick-start to the development of ecotourism and other conservation enterprises. The plan will be reviewed and adapted periodically in parallel to the overall development of the National Park initiative.



Făgăraș Mountains

First Steps

Although the Făgăraș National Park is still a vision, we started to think about the necessary infrastructure several years ago. In 2015, we developed a plan for a CARPATHIA Centre, which was thought to be a network of various infrastructure elements for research/education, tourism, and administration of the overall initiative. Over the following years, we continued to develop some first elements and have elaborated an infrastructure plan for the period until the designation of the National Park. The Richita Nature Exploration and Activity Centre, opened in 2021, has sparked the development of a distinctive National Park infrastructure.

FCC's trustee Toby Aykroyd got to the point:

**“With the inauguration of Richita Centre
you can almost feel the heart of the future
National Park starting to beat”**



Building Principles

When building the infrastructure for the future Făgăraș National Park, our process is guided by the following 3 principles:



Where?

Selection of a location impacts the environment beyond the pure construction, as a specific building will cause human activity at this site, might attract visitors, will require access roads, parking etc. For this, a good plan is required to minimise any negative impacts of construction on the local ecosystem.



How?

Our buildings are planned and built in a way that ensures they have the least environmental impact, that they are attractive, and have local aspects:

- **Environmental impact:** All infrastructure needs to have the highest environmental standards using natural materials and with low ecological impact. This standard is the rule, no matter whether it is seen or not.
- **Beauty:** Infrastructure must fulfil its purpose but also must be attractive. As Doug Tompkins said: “You can’t criticise something which is beautiful.” Where people work or stay, they must feel good.
- **Local:** Architecture must have links to local elements, builders must be local to create pride, and building materials must be as much as possible from the region.



How many and how big?

When planning our building infrastructure, we have to find the right balance to not overdo the constructions, but at the same time to already plan for an increased visitor number in 10 years. If the infrastructure is too small, we have to rebuild things after 10 years and waste a lot of materials, money, and energy.



Our Infrastructure Team

In building our infrastructure, we have developed a small, specialised team consisting of a team leader with extensive experience in infrastructure development, an assistant for permits, material selection etc., and a skilled craftsman for smaller work and maintenance. For all the actual building, we work with external teams.

Most of the planning work has been done by German architect Jan Hulsemann, who is one of the top specialists in traditional Transylvanian architecture and who has a strong emphasis on building with natural materials. His ideas, drafts, and sketches are being translated by a Braşov-based architect office into plans which comply with the Romanian legislation. In the future, we will start to gradually work more with the Order of Romanian Architects.

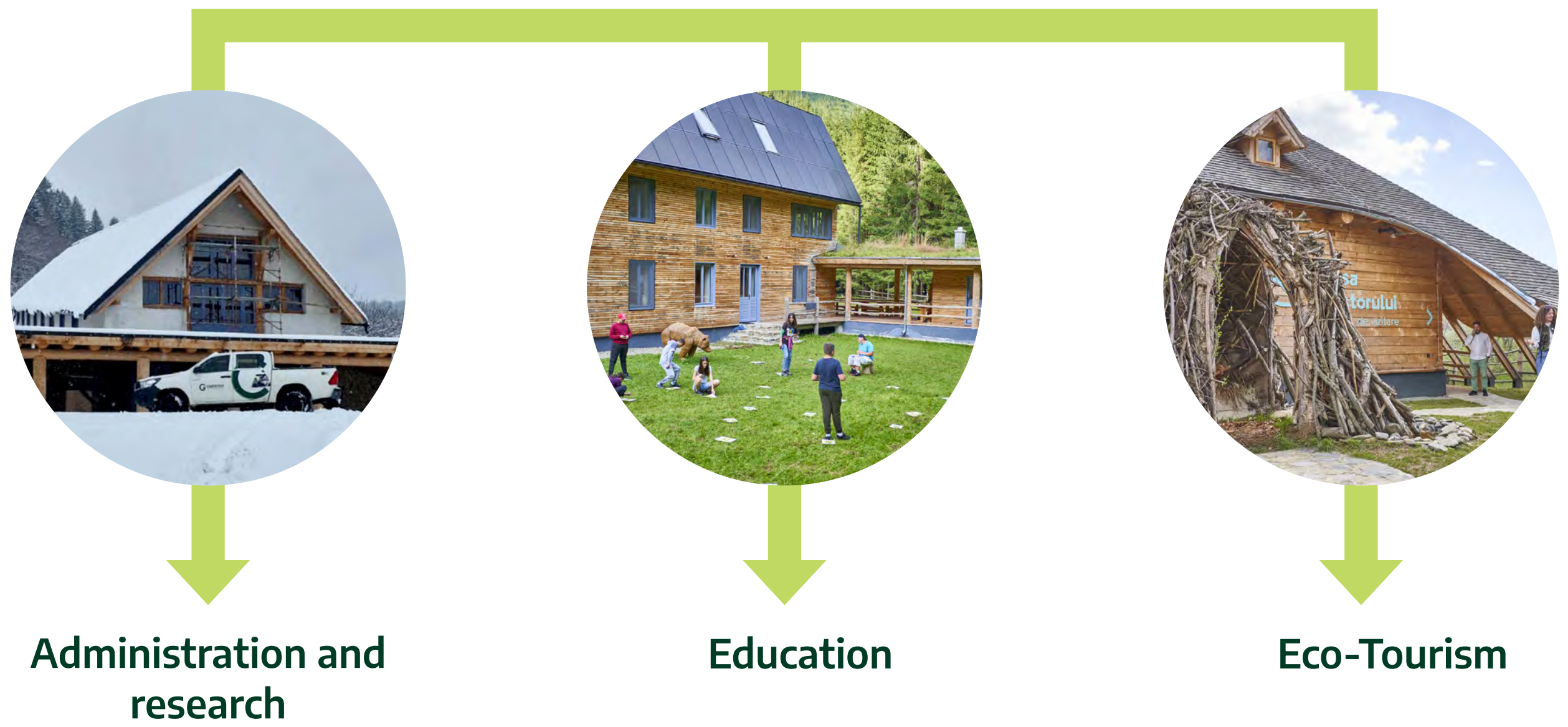


Our team

The Infrastructure Plan

Our infrastructure plan is divided into three different directions and its current version is envisaged for a first phase up until 2028. Cost estimations are based on past experience and current general building costs.

Phase 2022 - 2028



Education Infrastructure



1

Centrul de Activități
și Explorarea Naturii
Richita



Education Infrastructure

Education opportunities play an important and crucial role in getting local communities on board. Most of all, they are a tool to create links with children, youths, and young adults, which can become a gateway to families in the surrounding villages, but young people also represent the future decision makers and can become a strong local voice for the establishment of a National Park. In addition, education activities can become an economic factor for the region, as education programmes can attract visitors and are linked with jobs and income opportunities for teachers, guides, or local food producers.

A

Existing Education Infrastructure (2021-2025):

A.1

Richita Nature Exploration and Activity Centre

The centre lies deep in the forest of the Dâmbovița Valley and has developed into a highly sought-after destination for school classes for weekend trips, during specific ‘green weeks’ or during school holidays. The centre has a capacity for 25 children plus accompanying teachers, and we now serve most schools from the communes of the southern Făgăraș Mountains. After some initial visits by schools from the north side, we have received increasing requests from the northern schools, but also from groups further away (international schools in Bucharest, NGOs which work with disadvantaged children, international travel agencies for student travel), which by far exceeds the capacity of the Richita Centre.



The Richita Nature Exploration and Activity Centre

We are also running an increasing amount of other internal education programmes (our Junior Ranger programme, grants and fellowships for local groups, NGO's, and students for particular conservation projects), for which we often need accommodation for meetings or courses.

The Richita Centre was built in 2019 - 2021 with funding from Temperatio and Pancivis Foundations and inaugurated in July 2021.



Output:

With the exception of 2023 (when we had a problem with a parasite infestation), the number of groups and pupils at Richita continuously grew since its inception, but we are now getting close to full capacity.

	# groups	# pupils
2021	15	244
2022	21	415
2023	13	217
2024	45	730
2025	45	720

The centre provides five full-time local jobs (such as cooks and cleaning staff) and income opportunities for teachers from the region, who cover a large part of the education of the courses. Running and maintenance costs are covered by funds raised for the education programmes.

Besides the impact upon education of local school children, the centre has a major value as a demonstration object for our philosophy. No matter how much people were against a National Park, everybody who has visited Richita has been amazed and fascinated and showed respect for the Foundation’s work.



Lessons learned:

- technology for an off-grid system is still expensive and not always functioning effectively (high maintenance – should be avoided in future projects)



A.2 Poiana Tămaș Wilderness Camp

The Poiana Tămaș Wilderness Camp is a tented camp with a capacity of up to 40 guests alongside an old, renovated sheep hut on a subalpine meadow in the Dâmbovița Valley, way above the Richita Field Centre. The Camp has a commercial role as an experience within the Travel Carpathia Ecotourism programme but is now increasingly used also for team building events, nature learning programmes, and as a base for school, university, or volunteer groups.

The camp was built in 2020/21 with funding from the ALV Foundation, and was inaugurated in August 2021.



Poiana Tămaș Wilderness Camp

Output:

Between 2022 and 2025, we experienced a strong increase in visitors at Poiana Tămaș with a total of almost 500 bed nights by the end of this period. In 2025, we opened Poiana Tămaș for international youth groups, combining nature education and wilderness experience with commercial aspects, which was a huge success and more than doubled our bed-nights.

The breath-taking setting and the atmosphere of Poiana Tămaș makes it also a perfect place to host VIP visitors (donors, key opinion leaders, politicians) and enchant them with our visions of a National Park.

Lessons learned:

Abandoned sheep camps can be transformed into amazing visitor places. Tented camps are a good, adaptable, and cheap solution for such locations, but they need to be the right tents, resistant to UV radiation, wind, and precipitation.



A.3 Visitor Information Centres/Thematic Trails

We will build a network of specific visitor attractions related to the Făgăraş Mountains in every one of the 28 communes around the future park who are interested in participating. We have no doubt that most communes are keen to get such an attraction: at the opening of the Bison Visitor Centre in Lereşti (see below), 14 mayors were present and each of them invited us to build a visitor centre in their own commune. These attractions can be various size visitor information centres, small museums, or special thematic trails, and have both an educational and a 'visitor attraction' purpose. Topics can be ecology, reintroduction, and human relations with various wildlife species, history of mountaineering, traditional livestock grazing in the alpine areas, historic forest exploitation, and other topics of local human cultural and natural heritage.

The number of facilities themselves will ensure additional attraction – visitors who have been to one of them will want to visit others once they are convinced of their quality and beauty. These centres are also an attractive point for selling products from local food producers through our food hub and have become a communication outlet with visitors on general information about the Făgăraş Mountains National Park, its infrastructure, and local nature-positive services and products.

We have built and inaugurated the first **two visitor centres**, one on beavers in Rucăr, one on bison in Lereşti and have established **three thematic trails** as outdoor information centres on species reintroductions and forests in Nucşoara.



Beaver Visitor Centre, Rucăr

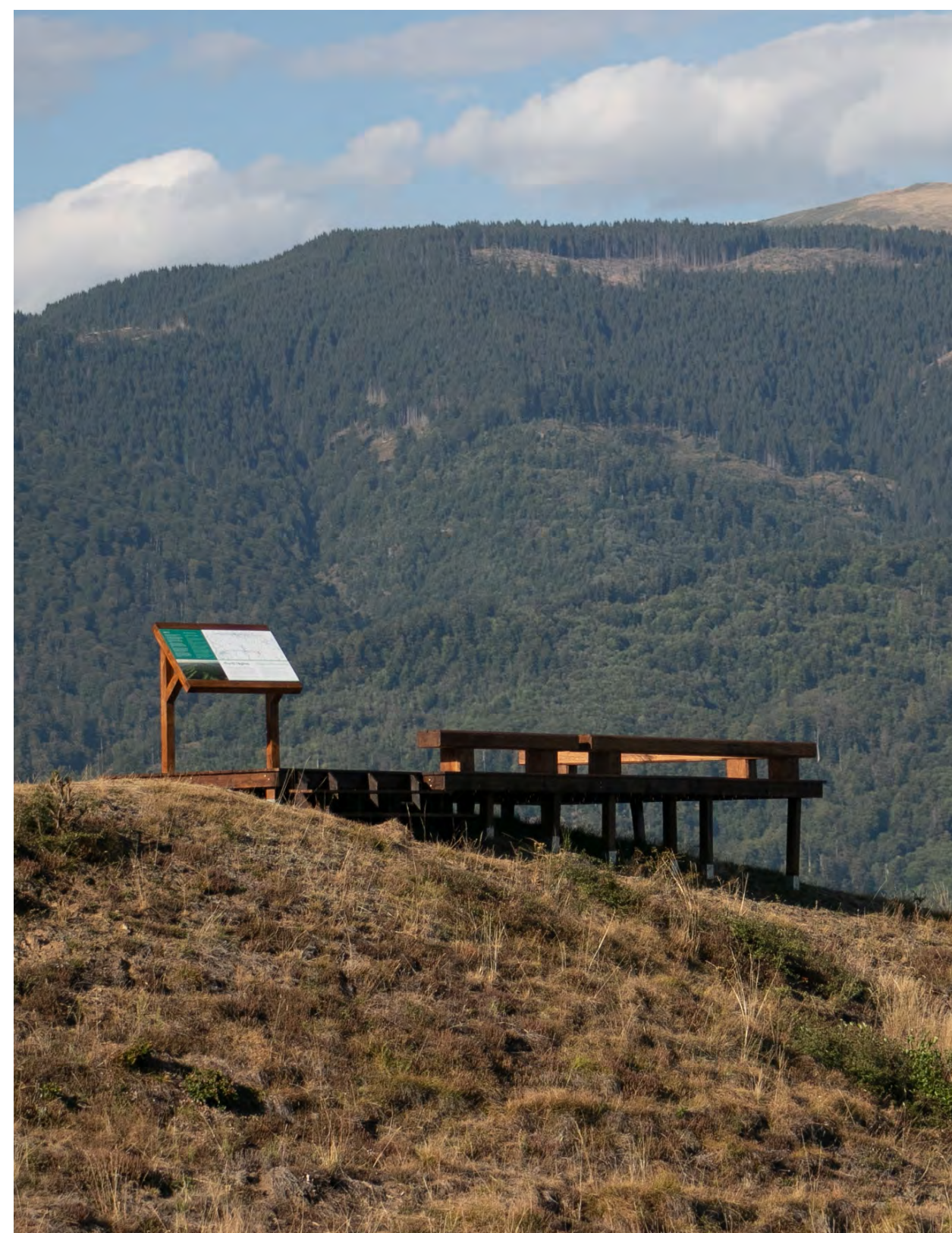


The visitor centres and the thematic trails have been funded as part of the LIFE Carpathia project and were built between 2023 and 2025.

All information centres and trails are well visited and have been widely featured in the regional media.



Bison Visitor Centre, Lerești



Thematic trails in Nucsoara

Output:

Each visitor centre can be managed by one person and thus provides an additional job in the community. The centres are also an attractive sales point for the *Food Hub Roadele Munților*. A system with entrance fees helps to reduce running costs and can actually cover these expenses once visitor numbers exceed 10,000 people per year.

**B****B.1**

Planned Education Infrastructure (2026-2028):

Second Field Education Centre, Northern Făgăraş

In order to keep up with the demand and opportunities for education services via the younger generation, we will build a second activity and education centre with a capacity of 30 beds on the northern side of the Făgăraş Mountains. In autumn 2025, we purchased a 1.6 ha property in the Cârţişoara commune and started the planning process. Unlike Richita, the new centre will have access to the electricity grid which will significantly reduce costs.



Location of the Richita and the planned Cârţişoara education centres

We expect to have the building permit before late summer 2026 and can start construction thereafter. The second education centre should be fully operational by early 2028. Costs are estimated at € 900,000 and 85% of the funding has been secured from the Pancivis, Temperatio, and Murrma Foundations.

Similar to the Richita Centre, the centre in Cârţişoară in will provide three to five local jobs and can be run self-sufficiently with education grants and corporate sponsorship.



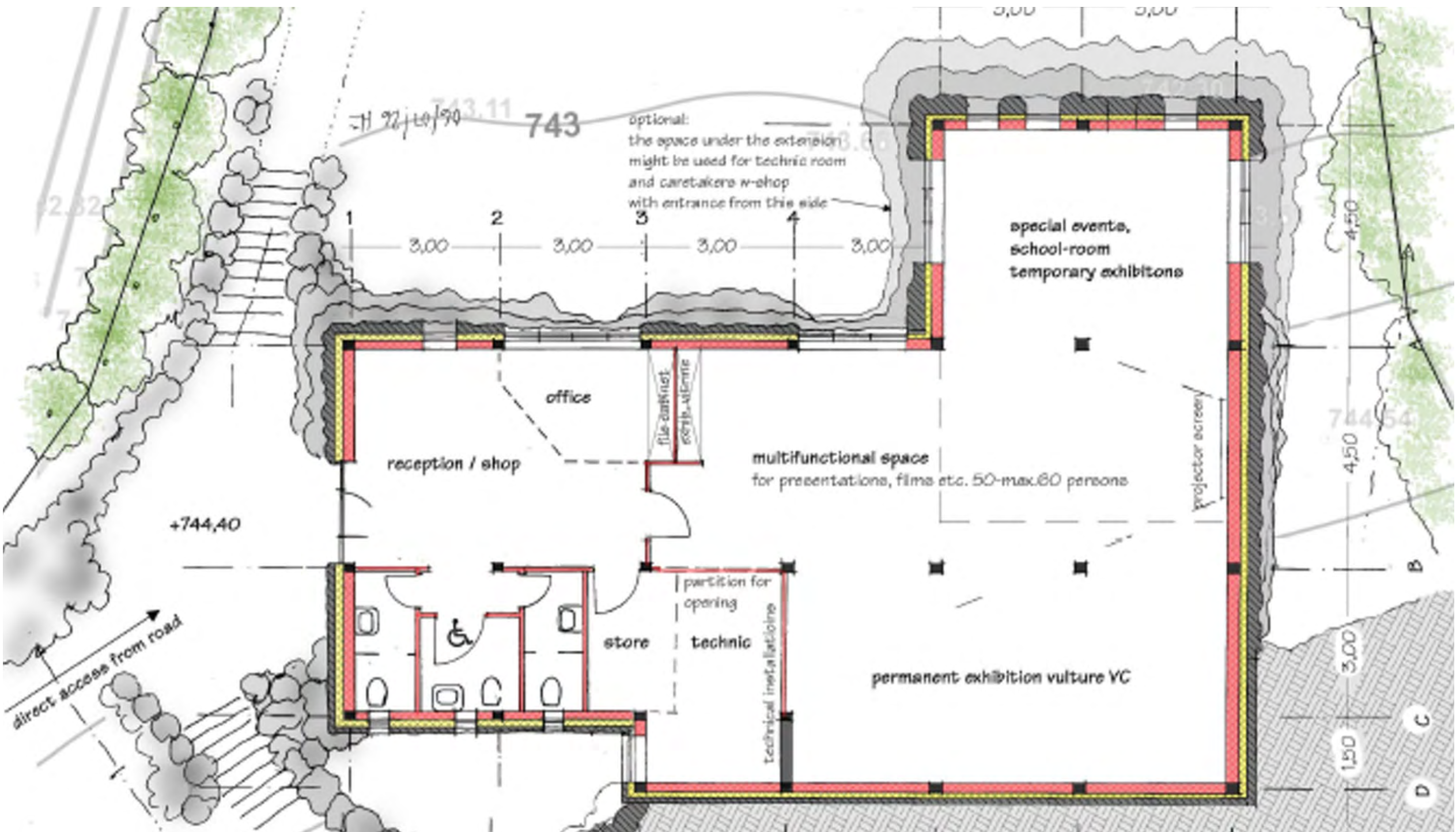
B.2

Additional Visitor Centres and Thematic Trails

We have purchased land for a **culture visitor centre** in Valea Mare Pravăț in early 2025 and started planning the centre by late 2025. Construction is planned to start in the second half of 2026 with the centre set to open in late 2027. Costs are estimated at around € 400,000 (including the exhibition), funding is partially secured by ING Bank and partially requested through the LIFE Refag project proposal.



Furthermore, the Foundation owns a property along the Transfăgărășan Highway, which we have in mind for a much-needed bear information centre. We will start the planning process in 2026, and intend to start building in early 2027.



Sketches for the new culture visitor centre



A thematic trail about bears, funded by URSUS brewery, will be finished in 2025 along the northern part of the Transfăgărășan Highway. We hope that the trail will be inaugurated in time for the 2026 hiking season and thereafter replicated in other communes. We are also planning to develop an additional two thematic trails throughout each of the years 2026, 2027, and 2028.

The subsequent visitor centre projects will be implemented in the communes of Racoviț and Arpașu on the northwest side of the Făgăraș Mountains. Topics and community interests have already been identified. Thereafter, we will initiate two visitor centres per year.

B.3 Regional Visitor Centres

National Parks with a significant amount of visitors need to have one or several larger, well-designed visitor information centres as central points of contact and to inform people about the conservation objectives of the park. These centres serve both as an education tool as well as a major tourist attraction, especially if they are linked to other attractions like tree-top walks or animal enclosures. In our case, with the large areal extent of the Făgăraș Mountains, we need to have at least two such large, regional centres. They also need to be placed in areas with road access for large groups of people.



We intend to start the process of identifying locations for the first regional centre (southeastern Făgăraș Mountains) in 2026, possibly buy necessary land and start with the planning process. As these visitor centres are much larger projects, they require much longer planning periods, including the elaboration of a business plan, which is why we do not expect to start with construction prior to 2028 with an envisaged launch in 2030.

Thereafter, we want to continue with a second regional centre on the north side once the project on the south side is well underway.

Infrastructure for Ecotourism and Related Businesses



2



Infrastructure for Ecotourism and Related Businesses

Ecotourism is defined by activities and thus needs an infrastructure on which it can rely. We define two distinct infrastructure requirements, a public one for general use, and a specific one for guests booking such activities within the frame of our ecotourism programme.

In times of subsequent crises through pandemics, wars, or terrorist attacks, an area can become economically vulnerable if it depends exclusively on tourism. For this reason, we promote a diversified economy which is additionally based on regionally traditional activities such as food production, craftsmanship and construction

A

Existing Public Tourism Infrastructure (2021-2025):

A.1

Visitor Centres and Thematic Trails

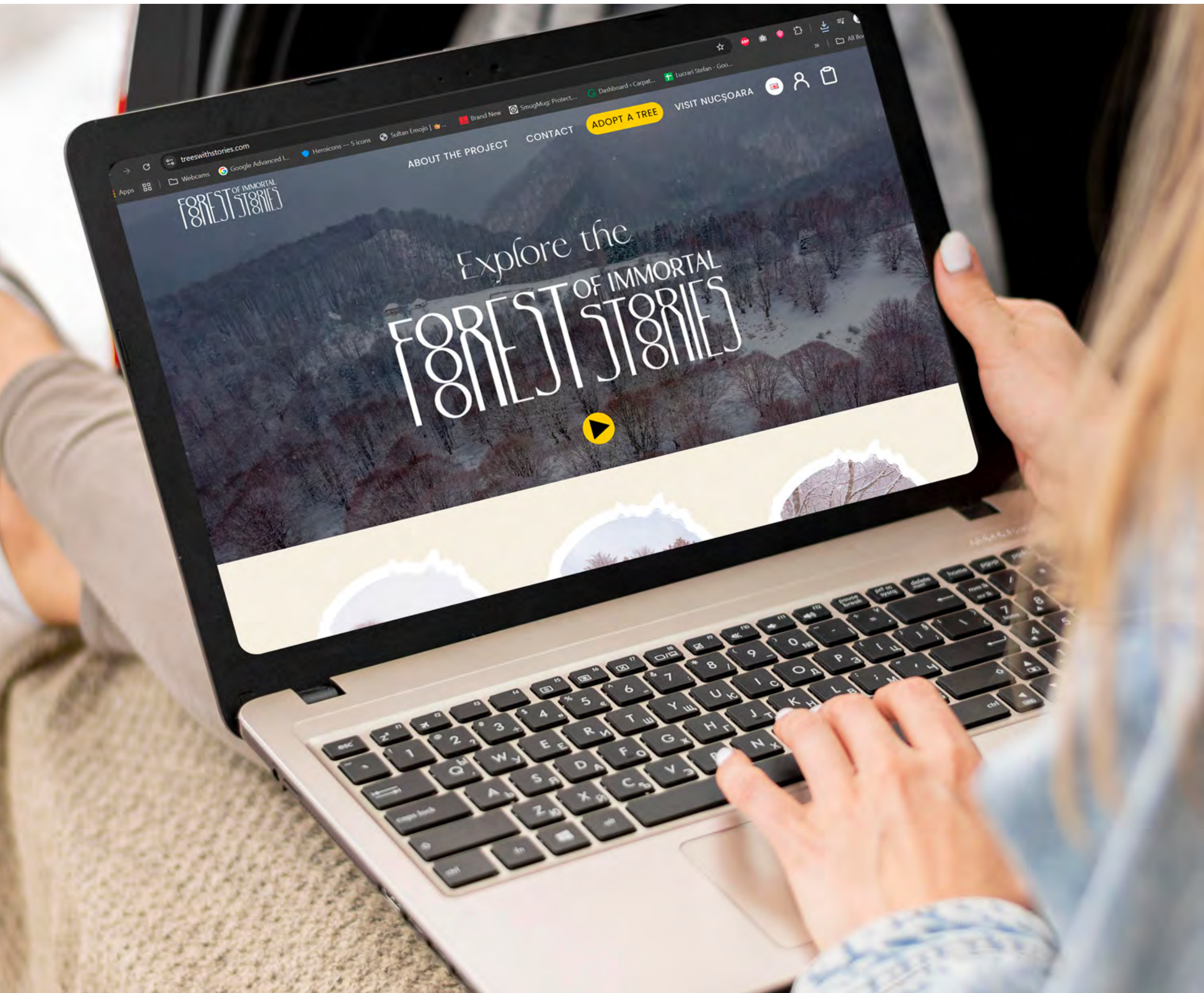


A part of the public tourism infrastructure (visitor centres, thematic trails) was already listed in the education infrastructure, as those have a dual role and serve also the promotion of local tourism.



A.2 Ancient Trees of Nucșoara

Nucșoara is the largest commune in the Făgăraș Mountains consisting of 45,000 ha (450 sq km), and a place of stunning beauty. Along the communal pasture there are some 2,500 ancient beech trees with diameters of up to two metres. We have supported the local town hall in developing a programme, where each of these trees is georeferenced on an online map with a photo gallery for each of these trees and a detailed description. Now, each tree can be adopted individually. Income is used to create and maintain paths on which visitors can hike or go by local horse and cart, with picnic tables, and further information about this unique habitat. The project was finalised in 2024, has its own website www.treeswithstories.com and has been widely featured, including articles in the New York Times.



www.treeswithstories.com

Output:

Until now, 332 beech trees have been adopted for an amount of ca. € 140 each, adding ca. € 50,000 to the local budget. Apart from creating a highly appealing visitor attraction for Nucșoara, creating pride by putting Nucșoara on the map, it also showed to the local community that conservation can generate income.



A.3 Shelters in the Alpine Areas and a Network of Hiking Trails

The ridge trail along the Făgăraș Mountains is becoming an increasingly popular hiking trail. However, due to the unpredictable weather in the alpine zones, people can easily be surprised by sudden storms, and even in summer one cannot exclude snowstorms. Quite a few people have lost their lives due to hypothermia. Many years ago, regional mountain rescue clubs have built a number of shelters for such situations, but many of these shelters have been destroyed in the meantime. A local initiative has rebuilt one of these shelters but given the 80 km length along the ridge, several more need to be built and some decayed shelters need to be repaired.



Salvamont shelter at Brusturet

In partnership with the Romanian Mountain Rescue Association Salvamont and regional mountaineer associations, we have helped to restore a second shelter in 2023 and a third one in Piatra Craiului in 2025. We also help Salvamont to rebuild and mark the vast network of hiking trails in the Făgăraș Mountains and, up until 2028, all necessary shelters in the Făgăraș Mountains and on the ridge of Piatra Craiului should be restored and functional. We have agreed with the Romanian Order of Architects to create three architectural plans of various sizes of shelters/refuges, which can then also become part of a common design for infrastructure construction in the Făgăraș Mountains – a first step towards a common identity for the promotion of the entire mountain range.



Trailhead of hiking trail ‘Stâna lui Burnei’ (Burnei’s Sheepfold) in the Făgăraș Mountains



A.4

Other tourism infrastructure in local communities

Upon request and where it fits into our ecotourism strategy, we assist local communities in the development of an adequate infrastructure for tourism. We assisted Albești commune in the refurbishment of a local picnic place, which is used by up to 500 people during weekends and are in advanced discussions with the Rucăr commune for the re-construction of the local food market.



Picnic area in Albești

B

Planned Public Tourism Infrastructure (2026-2028):

B.1

Nature Campgrounds

In Romania, hardly any campgrounds can be found and even less are of an acceptable standard. Most people go for wild camping with the consequent problems of garbage, wild toilets, fireplaces and the cutting down of trees for firewood. All of which contributes to the destruction of nice sites and the habituation of bears in the area.

We intend to create before the end of 2027 three state-of-the-art nature campgrounds at important entry points into the Făgăraș Mountains: one in Valea Dâmbovița at the end of Sătic village, one in Nucșoara commune, where thousands of people annually leave for a hike to Moldoveanu Peak, and one in a community in Sibiu county. The campgrounds will have compartmentalised places for tents with small tables, surrounded by green fences, and a common building with sinks, tables for use during bad weather, and toilets. The campgrounds also need a regulated firewood supply and information boards about general camping behaviour in bear country.

Once these three campgrounds are in place, we want to explore additional entry points and throughout the second phase of the infrastructure development build another four campgrounds in popular entry points.



B.2 Animal enclosure zones

The Bavarian Forest National Park, Germany and the Šumava National Park, Czech Republic have wildlife enclosure zones, which are visited by huge amounts of visitors per year, in fact these enclosure zones represent one of the most visited sites in either National Park. Over a surface of less than 200 ha, visitors can experience native species and learn about them. Despite appearing to be a zoo in a wider sense, for most people this is a unique and often the only opportunity to physically see and experience these species in a semi-natural environment.

We are currently exploring the possibilities, long-term costs and impact of building a similar enclosure zone in one of the communities of the southeastern Făgăraș Mountains both as a tourist attraction and as an educational tool about wildlife. Actual viewing and short but clear information on info-boards plus direct information through trained rangers can change the perception of people towards wildlife.

In 2026, we intend to start with the work for a bison visitor enclosure (5-10 ha) in Lerești to support the community in their efforts to market themselves as the 'bison village'. The enclosure could also serve as an emergency backup location for our reintroduction programme, in case certain problem individuals need to be taken from the wild.





B.3 Trail networks

After a zoning of the Făgăraș Mountains, Foundation Conservation Carpathia will work with Salvamont, ecotourism operators, and local community representatives to design, establish, and mark a good network of hiking, MTB, and horse-riding trails to allow tours of a few hours all the way up to combined trails of several days.

Given the experiences of other ecotourism destinations, it is mandatory to have an overall plan for the entire region for various outdoor activities, link trails in-between various communes, but separate possibly conflicting activities such as hiking, horse-riding, and mountain-biking.

Hiking will certainly be the main activity for ecotourism and will need a good trail infrastructure for visitors in attractive areas around the villages and a hiking trail which connects the different villages and possibly surrounds the Făgăraș Mountains in the form of a long-distance trail. We will base ourselves on the experiences and the expertise of Via Transilvanica (viatransilvanica.com) the famous long-distance trail crossing Romania from northeast to southwest. We intend to create a first concept throughout 2026 and to start with the design and establishment of the trail in 2027.



Mountain biking is becoming an increasingly popular sport in Romania and a good alternative to offroad driving, which unfortunately is also becoming more and more widespread. We want to explore options for such a network of MTB trails, possible partnerships, create a first concept in 2026, and have the first trails marked in 2027.

In cooperation with local horse-riding facilities, the Foundation will help designing and establishing a good network of riding trails to promote horse-riding around the foothills of the Făgăraș Mountains.

We will also create a suspended walkway in Nucșoara on a much smaller scale in an area with amazing views. We will try to get the permission in 2026 and build the first part of the trail in 2027.



C

Existing Travel Carpathia Tourism Infrastructure (2019-2025):

Our Foundation has developed its own ecotourism programme for several reasons:

- We believe that we can set an example and a standard for true ecotourism, which is in support of a National Park development.
- Local entrepreneurs do not have the financial background or the legal preconditions to develop ecotourism other than hiking trips or wildlife offers in the mountains.
- Our own ecotourism programme helps to create a holistic approach with use of local workforce, local food, and local services, and thus allows us to channel the majority of the funds to local communities and increase acceptance for a National Park.
- Our own ecotourism opportunities allow first-hand experiences to possible donors and create more linkage with them.

Carpathia's ecotourism programme began with the construction of the Bunea and Comisu wildlife hides and two guesthouses linked to the Cobor Farm. Over the years, several additional components have been added. Since the end of 2022, Travel Carpathia has become a registered company, implementing all tourism activities of the Foundation.

C.1

Wildlife hides

The Bunea and Comisu hides have become a strong attraction for domestic and international tourism. **Bunea Wildlife Hide** is a 6-bed location with a toilet, running water, and a small cooking facility. In **Comisu**, we built two small hides (four and three beds, respectively) in 2018 and due to the high demand and need for space for bigger groups, rebuilt the old shepherd's hut into an eight-bed cabin with dining room and cooking facilities during 2024.

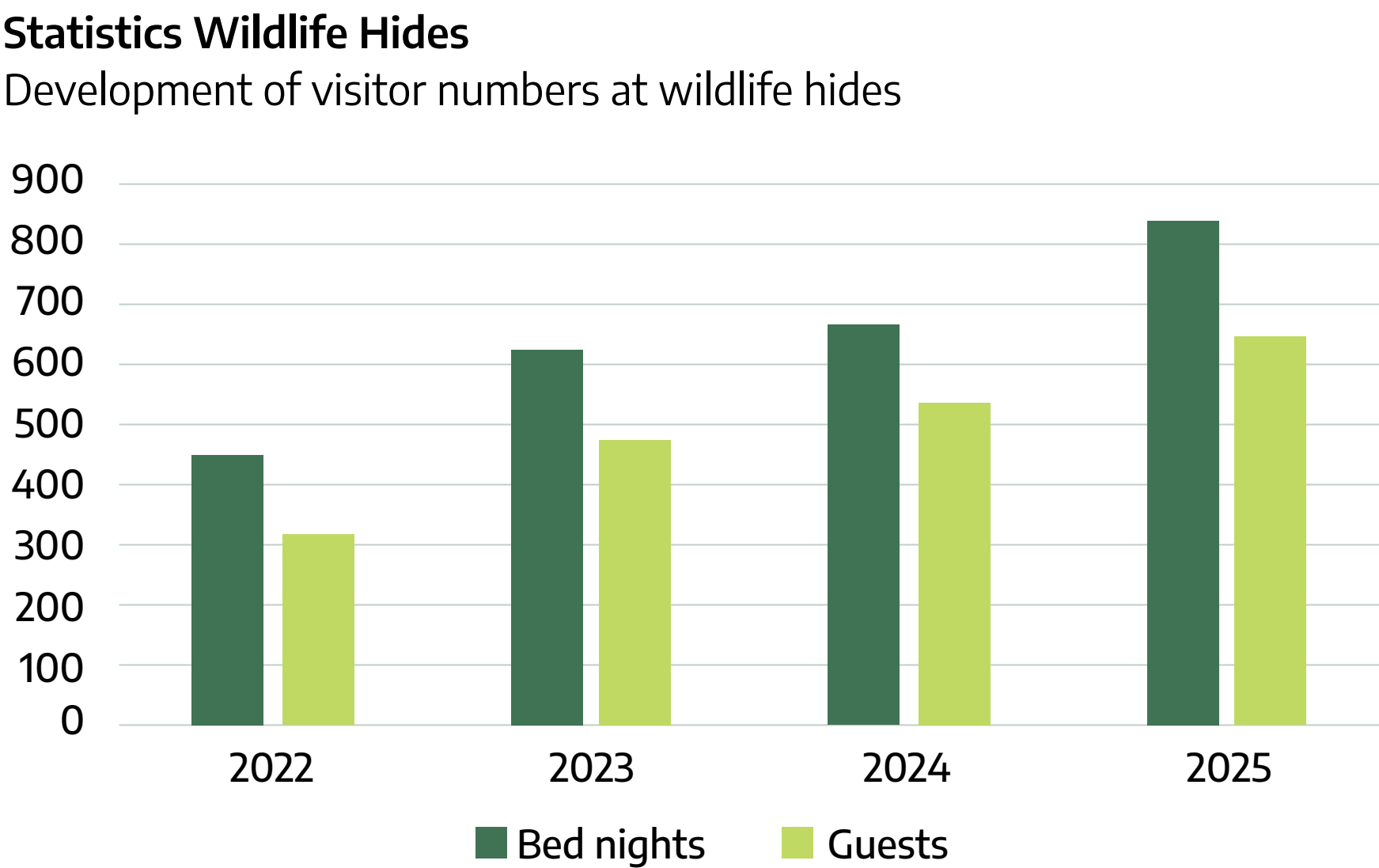


Bunea Wildlife Hide



Output:

There has been a steady increase in visitor numbers from 2022 to 2025, although most people stayed only one night at a specific location. However, since Bunea and Comisu are less than two hours hike apart, most people combine a night at each location, which makes it already more financially sustainable.



Lessons learned:

The wildlife hides work very well for our ecotourism experiences; however, the logistics are difficult as these locations are deep in the mountains. They work only by being relatively high-price, and if people stay more than one night in the area. For this it became important to have several locations in the same area (Dâmbovița Valley) and we will consider this for the extension of further hides.

The hides are also great tools to host possible donors and VIPs. Watching bears on a meadow in the wild, in full seclusion without phone access, leads to intense discussions and creates a common understanding.



Comisu Wildlife Hide and Cabin



C.2 Poiana Tămaș Wilderness Camp

The Poiana Tămaș Wilderness Camp has been described earlier in the section about Education Infrastructure as it had initially an exclusively educational character. In the meantime, however, Poiana Tămaș has become a valuable addition to our commercial opportunities with international youth camps and as part of multi-day tours.



Poiana Tămaș Wilderness Camp

Lessons learned:

Poiana Tămaș becomes economically sustainable and creates profit, if we can use it for larger groups (up to 40 students).



C.3 Cobor Biodiversity Farm

Cobor is a different element of our ecotourism programme, as it is not located in the mountains, but in the hills of Transylvania. The Foundation received the Cobor Farm as a gift and has renovated two of the houses that came with the land and converted them into guesthouses. For the previous seven years, Cobor has been a part of the ecotourism programme with 12 rooms and 24 beds. Until 2025, we have used it as an individual family holiday location and for groups on multi-day trips but didn't manage to create sufficient turnover and will change its destination now more towards a low-maintenance bed & breakfast tourism opportunity with focus on educational tourism (student, farmer, biologist and youth groups), in order to use the biodiversity aspect of the farm as a unique selling point. This will allow us to cut running costs considerably and keep the guesthouses closed during the off season. In general, the location needs renovation and uplifting, but since we are focussing on educational tourism, we don't need to have a very high standard in order to compete with commercial tourism offers.



Cobor Biodiversity Farm



C.4 Valea Vladului Cabin

Valea Vladului Cabin is located deep in the Dâmbovița Valley, more than 40 km from the main road and was initially envisaged as an overnight location for rangers. However, as this doesn't require intensive use, we decided to include Valea Vladului within the tourism programme.



Valea Vladului Cabin

The cabin has seven rooms and can serve both as a retreat and as a location for guided multi-day hikes. In the same valley, we also restored the Dracsin Cabin as an overnight point for small hiking groups. Both cabins have received a low level of visitors so far and are not yet operating profitably.

Lessons learned:

Valea Vladului Cabin is the furthest away from the main road (ca. 40 km on fairly rough forest roads) and consequently, access is very difficult and time-consuming. This makes it almost impossible to use the cabin for one night only. It will become sustainable only if we can develop a market for larger groups (>10) and multi-day stays.



C.5 Equus Sylvania Horse Riding and Activity Centre

Equus Sylvania, located in the village of Șinca Nouă in the northeastern foothills of the Făgăraș Mountains was taken over by the Foundation in 2023 and, subsequently, fully renovated. The location is now the flagship of Travel Carpathia with a capacity of 11 rooms/apartments and 30 beds. Equus Sylvania still has a strong focus on horse-riding holidays, but at the same time we are increasing the opportunities for visitors with an interest in exploring nature, forests, and wildlife.



Apartment at Equus Sylvania



D

Planned Travel Carpathia Tourism Infrastructure (2026-2028):

D.1

Wildlife hides

As the Foundation has leased five wildlife concessions (with the goal to lease more), we have the possibility to build additional hides in other areas, where we control wildlife management and protection. It is necessary to aim to build at least two hides in each area, which are several hours apart on foot, leading to longer stays and thus lower logistical costs per visitor.

We now have the legal permits to build a small hide in Otic, which could be used from Valea Vladului, a larger hide at Drăganu in the lower Dâmbovița Valley and hides in the Nucșoara/Dobroneagu area.

We want to wait until the end of the 2026 season to evaluate the further needs of wildlife hides.



D.2

Additional cabins

As the Foundation will buy further land in the mountains, some of that comes with cabins or shepherd's huts on them. As we purchase these buildings, we will develop plans about how to possibly use them as additional locations for multi-day hiking programmes.



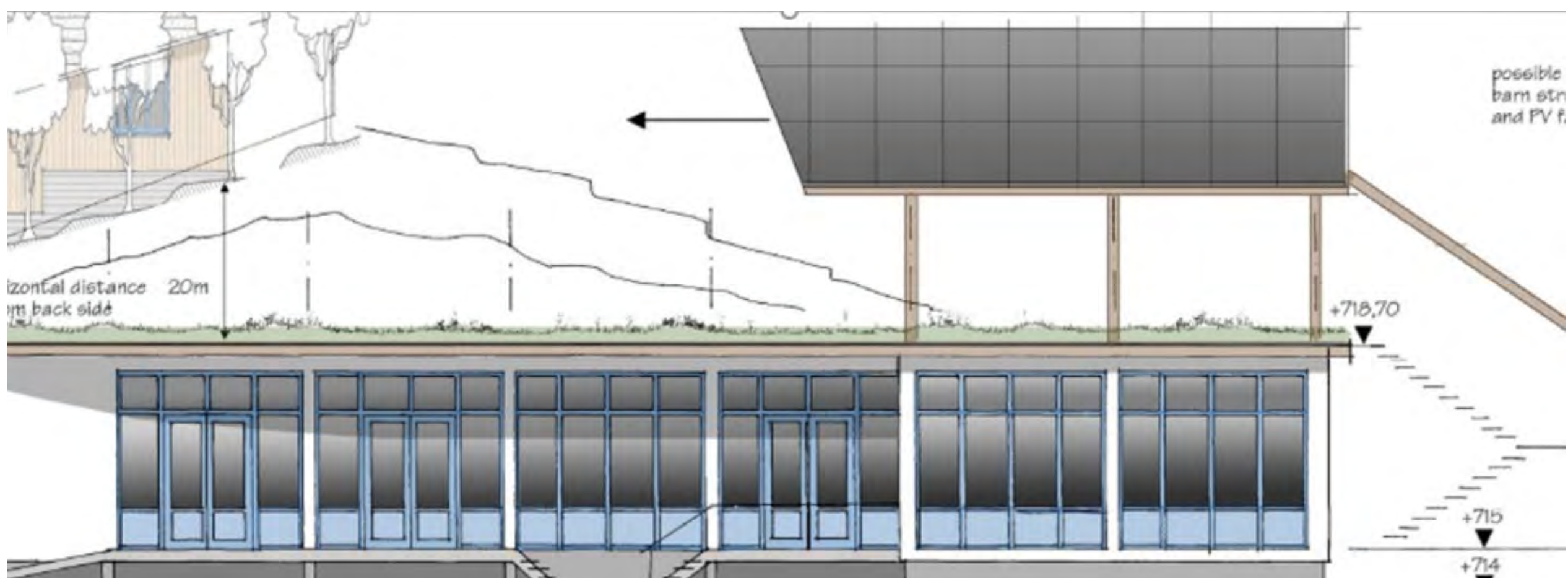
E

Infrastructure for other conservation enterprise development

E.1

Warehouse for the CARPATHIA Foodhub

The Foundation has established the food hub *Roadele Munților Carpathia (RMC)* to support local small-scale farmers to get better access to markets. Currently, RMC markets products from almost 40 local producers, but we want to extend this to more producers on the west and on the northern side. For this, we need to create the necessary infrastructure with a warehouse, in which we can store products from the local farmers under the correct conditions. We have made plans for a warehouse in Rucăr as part of the Logistics Hub (see 3.1) and could begin construction during 2026 with an inauguration planned for the first half of 2027, pending funding. If the food hub continues to grow considerably, we will decide during the next phase of the infrastructure plan whether an extension into other areas is necessary.



Infrastructure for general administration

3



Infrastructure for general administration

Until now, our Foundation has not had its own infrastructure for administration. Our HQ in Braşov consists of two rented office buildings with a total of 1,200 m² and our field team works from a three-room rented house in Rucăr, which serves as a regional admin centre for the south-eastern part of the project area. Space is clearly insufficient and with our expanding activities, more space is needed. Accordingly, many field team members need to drive the long distance to Braşov (e.g., over three hours from Nucşoara) for administrative reasons, tourist meeting points are in pubs or visitor centres, and we lack space for depositing material. Now, as the project has reached a critical size, we need to start developing our own administrative infrastructure, which at a later stage can serve as the basis for the new National Park.

A.1

Logistics Hub and Field Administration Centre

The southeastern part of the Făgăraş Mountains with the communes Dâmbovicioara, Rucăr, Lereşti, and Nucşoara are still the core region of our project area, and almost all field activities happen in this area. To fulfil these conservation objectives, > 50 rangers are present, a car and machinery fleet with over 30 vehicles is available in the area, and research, management, and tourism equipment needs to be stored if not in use. This requires space and buildings, we have consequently developed a plan for the south-eastern Făgăraş Mountains, which also allows us space for the administration of our regional activities. In 2022 and 2023, we purchased several properties with a total of 8 ha of land in Rucăr for a logistics hub and regional administrative centre, which will include an office building, significant storage space for field work and research material, parking space for machinery and vehicles (including charging stations for electric vehicles), the warehouse for the food-hub, a carpentry workshop, and a guesthouse for volunteers and guest researchers.

Work for the **logistics hub** started in 2023 and has made good progress up to now.

➡ The first two barns for storage were finished in late 2024.



One of the two 70m² barns for storage of materials



➡ The administrative building is 80% complete and will be inaugurated in 2026.



Administrative building Logistics Hub, Rucăr

➡ The work on the carpentry workshop began in 2025 and is expected to be completed by mid-2027.





Carpentry workshop

- ➔ We will start construction of a 200 m² barn for storage of materials in the second half of 2026 and will finish about one year later.
- ➔ Construction of the warehouse will also start in the middle of 2026 and will be opened before the end of 2027.

The guesthouse for volunteers and guest researchers could be started in 2027 and finished before the end of 2028, given sufficient funds can be raised.



Sketch of the accommodation for volunteers and guest researchers

The Logistics Hub has had incurred costs of € 2.3m until now with an estimated € 1.9m needed for finalisation.

Potentially we will need additional logistic centres in other parts of the Făgăraș Mountains in the next phase after 2028.



A.2

Overall Project Administration Centre (future National Park HQ)

Foundation Conservation Carpathia and its subordinate entities currently rent a 1,200 m² office building in Brasov, from which the National Park development is coordinated, which creates monthly rental costs of roughly € 10,000. Plans are to build our own administration centre, which would eventually also host the National Park administration. We plan to create a conservation hub in the form of a campus with several office buildings, storage depots, a common building with larger meeting rooms for seminars and workshops, apartments for guests, and a cafeteria. In the first years, the space will be used by Foundation Conservation Carpathia and offered to other conservation NGOs. Once the National Park is established, it could become the HQ of the new park administration.

Up until 2028, we intend to purchase the land (estimated costs € 500,000) and create plans for the new administrative centre and will start the building in the next phase of the infrastructure development.

A.2

Accommodation for Students/ Researchers/Volunteers

Student volunteers and guest researchers are becoming increasingly important for our work. Consequently we need accommodation in the villages in order to run the research and volunteer programme. In Nucșoara and in villages in the west and the north of the Făgăraș Mountains, possibilities for renting houses are very limited, the quality of empty houses is usually extremely poor and would require substantial investments to make these houses suitable as volunteer accommodation. Investing in a rental place is always risky (the landlord might decide to use the house for their own purposes once it is renovated), therefore we think we need to purchase and renovate necessary houses ourselves. Each building should have several independent rooms plus general common rooms such as kitchen, dining, and living rooms.

We intend to purchase a house in Nucșoara and possible additional accommodation as needed until the end of 2028 and renovate them in the second infrastructure development phase.



Making Infrastructure Economically Self-sustainable

4





Making Infrastructure Economically Self-sustainable

Finding the funding for the creation of a building construction is probably easier than funding the administration and maintenance of the structure thereafter. This implies that we need to create sustainable financing mechanisms for administration and maintenance. Here some ideas and activities which we have explored:



Education centres:

Education is an activity which is attractive for corporate donors and we have a partnership with a Romanian bank for education programmes. Furthermore, we apply for specific education funds and all larger projects usually contain educational components. Funding programmes are designed to cover the administrative component of running the education centres, additional overheads can cover maintenance costs. Major reparations or refurbishing of education infrastructure will always need specific grants. **If we have funding for the education programmes, the infrastructure will not add any additional costs.**



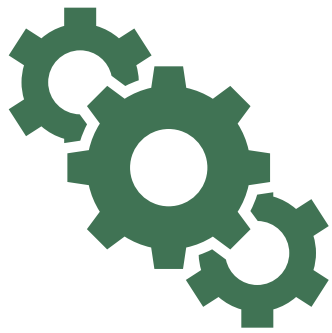
Visitor centres:

In Romania, there is not yet an overabundance of public visitor infrastructure and even small and less exciting destinations are usually well visited and appreciated. People are also willing to pay a moderate entrance fee. Running and administration costs of the centres are very low (ca. € 20,000/year) and a part of these costs are already now covered by entrance fees. If visitor numbers increase further (which we strongly assume they will), we can soon cover administration costs including maintenance costs once they appear. An important further income opportunity from visitor centres is the sales of products from the food-hub. Although this doesn't represent direct revenues for the visitor centres, it contributes to the overall success of Carpathia businesses. In some communities, we will also be able to run the visitor centres jointly with the town hall. Once the communes have the status of an official tourism destination, they also have the obligation of a visitor information centre. **With 10,000 visitors per year we can fully cover the administrative costs of the visitor centres.**



Wildlife hides, cabins, and camps:

These are commercial outlets and their administration and maintenance is being priced into the ecotourism programme, although some campgrounds are being administered by a local town hall.



Administrative infrastructure:

Every conservation NGO and every National Park administration has costs for an administrative infrastructure, which are part of the organisation's general budget. This is the same in our case and if we assume creation of the Făgăraș National Park, we must assume these costs as part of the Foundation's administrative budget.

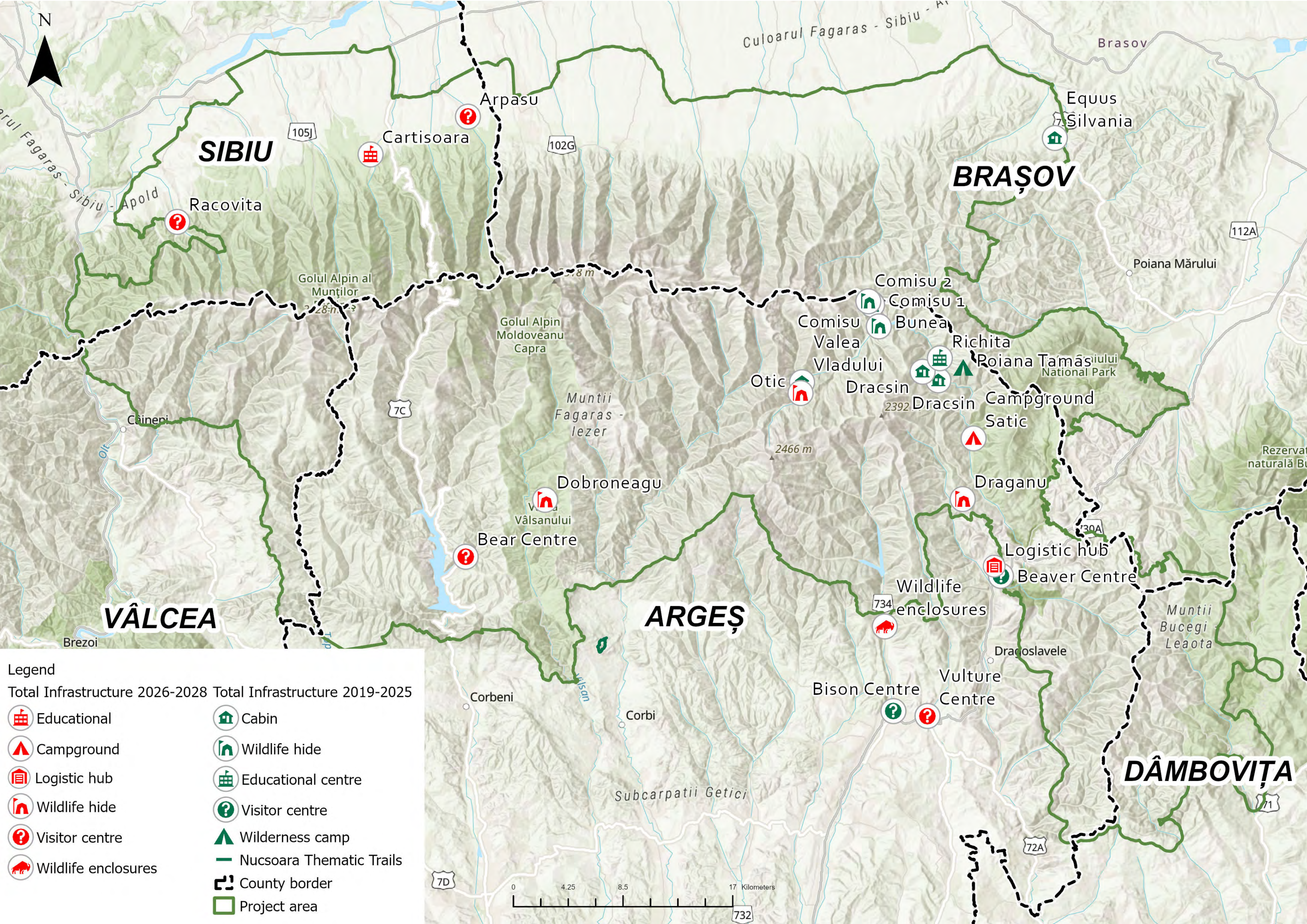
Administration infrastructure is a normal cost for every conservation NGO and needs to be covered by the overall administrative budget.



Hiking trails and other public infrastructure:

Here, maintenance costs clearly fall into the responsibility of the local communities and no further costs after the initial investments are due to our Foundation.

Maintenance of public infrastructure will be covered by the communes.





Infrastructure Costs

Component	Construction	until 2019	2019-2021	2022-2023	2024	2025	2026 (plan)	2027	2028	costs
Education	Richita Education Centre									€ 900,000
Education/Tourism	Poiana Tamas Wilderness Camp									€ 120,000
Education/Tourism	Beaver Visitor Centre									€ 350,000
Education/Tourism	Bison Visitor Centre									€ 400,000
Education/Tourism	Nucsoara Thematic Trails									€ 200,000
Tourism	Bunea Wildlife Hide									€ 80,000
Tourism	Comisu Wildlife Hide									€ 40,000
Tourism	Valea Vladului Cabin									€ 250,000
Tourism	Draxin Cabin									€ 50,000
Tourism	Comisu Cabin									€ 70,000
Administration	Logistics Hub Rucar									€ 2,260,000
Total Infrastructure 2019-2025										€ 4,720,000

Education	Cartisoara Education Centre									€ 900,000
Education/Tourism	Vulture Visitor Centre ¹									€ 400,000
Education	Bear Visitor Centre ¹									€ 700,000
Education/Tourism	Racovita Visitor Centre ¹									€ 450,000
Education/Tourism	Arpasu Visitor Centre ¹									€ 450,000
Education/Tourism	Wildlife enclosures									€ 150,000
Administration	Logistics Hub Rucar									€ 1,900,000
Tourism	Additional hides									€ 250,000
Tourism	Thematic trails									€ 150,000
Tourism	Various community projects									€ 300,000
Administration	Land for HQ									€ 500,000
Total Infrastructure 2026-2028										€ 6,150,000

FOR NATURE,
FOR COMMUNITIES

