

ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY FOR STUDY AND PROTECTION
WILD FLORA AND FAUNA

AQUATERRA

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REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP

The Aquaterra Ecological Society is a professional association for biodiversity conservation established in 1993, accredited by the Ministry of Education and Research as a scientific research unit and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change for the execution of environmental consultancy works. In this sense, we have carried out several projects to save species of fish, plants, and other animals threatened with extinction, research of invasive species, production of feed for fish from fish farms, research, and conservation of biodiversity in protected areas and natural habitats of Romania.

Our headquarters is within the Faculty of Biology of the University of Bucharest with which we have a common partnership of mutual support and where we change every year the mentalities of the students, for their future involvement in the economy and the open democratic society.

We are a complementary alternative for a better formation of them for the future.

Within the research and development projects of our organization, students from different faculties, Biology, Biochemistry, Ecology, Geology, Geography, Agronomy currently participate.

AQUATERRA is an active and very realistic team of scientists of all ages, from young to old. We have focused on a noble goal: developing a unique scientific research base in Romania for rare species on the verge of extinction. Romania's waters have become increasingly desolate; 26 species of freshwater fish, 85 species in total, came to threaten you with extinction. Unfortunately, ten of the species have disappeared forever. To save the remaining species, we are building this national research, reproduction, and repopulation base.

We have been ringing the alarm for over 20 years that rivers, streams, and ponds are increasingly desolate in fishery resources and that all species of fish are important. We also make lists of the rarest species of Romanian fauna in the order of vulnerability and always warn that there is a need for stations for the multiplication and repopulation of aquatic habitats.

Our activity also includes adequate assessment studies, organo-mineral polluted water treatment systems, ecological plans, ecological monitoring plans of pollution sources, establishing the impact and plan of ecological measures, restoration of polluted areas (waters, forests, soil).

We have multiple international collaborations. We have just completed an EU-funded ERA-NET research project, the Waterworks Commission with five partner universities from five EU member states (see www.abaware.ro).

Since August 2019, our organization has become a member and representative in Romania of the international organization **World Fish Migration**, which presents as promoters and image directors the famous Jeremy Wade (from BBC and Discovery, who has

been fishing for 39 years) and Zeb Hogan (from National Geographic), who are also fighting to save the planet's increasingly polluted rivers and streams .

Starting with 2020, we started the construction of a special, modern laboratory for scientific research of very rare species of fish at the Faculty of Biology - the University of Bucharest, unique in Romania.

It will have special experimental and modeling facilities to be able to achieve:

1. Ecotoxicological assays with various known pollutants which are present in our waters by the discharge (ponds, lakes, the Danube, Black Sea);
2. The researches on captive breeding and development of techniques for breeding and captive feeding of the rarest fishes in our ichthyofauna, which are also on the Priority List of the Ministry of Environment in the EU;
3. Tests for their better feeding with different species of live food characteristic of invertebrates (microvorms, insects, productive zooplankton microcrustaceans with high protein value);
4. The juvenile obtained will be destined for the repopulation of natural habitats, we being the only association that proposes serious and true projects of ecological reconstruction of natural habitats - exactly what the new European Union as a country demands of us.

We are involved in implementing the National Action Plan to save **Romanian darter** (*Romanichthys valsanicola*), the most threatened species of the fish fauna of European species to the books is the rescue work continuously for 30 years. Here we work to increase the reserve created by us in 1996-1997 on the Vâlsan valley from its surface of 10,000 ha to a much larger area for the reconstruction of the species area before its regression (before the construction of dams and large hydrotechnical / hydropower facilities in the years 1966-1972).

This year we intend to carry out scientific field studies, ecotoxicological analyzes on the mountain route of the rivers Vâlsan, Râul Doamnei, and Argeş - the sector located downstream of the Vidraru dam for the realization of the UNESCO scientific reservation of the Romanian darter. **The national action plan to save the Romanian darter** is being approved and signed at the Ministry of Environment, Waters, and Forests.

We continue to make special investments in captive breeding of huchen also known as Danube salmon, and other very rare species of fish at the pilot station, the infrastructure of the breeding station Frasin, Suceava. This station is intended for the reproduction of the huchen (*Hucho hucho*), the largest salmonid in the trout and salmon family in the world, a species on the verge of extinction in Romania. Likewise, we are developing a major program for the ecological reconstruction of the mountain rivers in the Carpathians and their repopulation with stocks of huchen juvenile fish every year in the near future, after the station is completed. Investments are necessary both for the realization of scientific research and the feasibility study required in writing European projects applied scientific research or the specific environmental and biodiversity conservation.

Aquaterra has expert zoologists, ichthyologists, aquaculturists, physicists, engineers, botanists, algologists, ecologists (aquatic and terrestrial ecology), ecotoxicologists, chemical engineers, forestry engineers, university professors in these fields (students, masters, doctoral students), capable of performing very many research studies in the water sector:

1. Environmental impact studies (RIM) and adequate environmental assessment (SEA), **SCIENTIFIC FISHING STUDIES**, in all river basins of Romania on Natura 2000 sites, national parks and natural parks, scientific reserves;
2. Studies of ecological reconstruction of Romania's rivers and applied research to find the best ecological and ecotechnical solutions for solving environmental problems, when Hidroelectrica needs specialized environmental consultancy;

3. Carrying out studies to evaluate fish stocks in the large lakes of hydropower plants in the river basins of the Carpathian rivers;
4. Studies on water bodies on rivers, river basins, Aquaterra team having specialists in the study of phytoplankton, zooplankton, zoobenthos, phytobenthos, research on the impact of pollutants resulting from microscopic degradation of pollutants, including PET microparticles, their study on the impact produced in research laboratory tests on tissues, organs, cellular metabolic enzyme complex to clearly discover their impact on people's health (according to European health rules and requirements);
5. Achieving the reproduction of very rare fish species threatened with extinction at the European level and included in the European Biodiversity Conservation Strategy - Romania being part of it since it is a member of the EU. Aquaterra is building a special breeding base for these very rare species of fish (huchen, European grayling, Romanian darter, European bullhead) and another 25 very rare species of freshwater fish in decline in all river basins of the country, this being a „Little Ark of Noah” necessary in modern times (within the Special Laboratory at the Faculty of Biology - the University of Bucharest and within the Station for the reproduction of huchen and rare fish species in Frasin - Suceava);
6. Applied research and obtaining patents of technologies for biological treatment of water from ponds, lakes, urban waters, aquaculture farms - in this sense we conduct extensive applied research with five universities in five EU member states in partnership (Abaware project on the website of the Ministry of Research - <http://www.abaware.ro>).

The special breeding base for very rare fish species is the first station of its kind in our country and could be used to support projects for the ecological reconstruction of rivers, annual restocking with fish stocks in the near future of rivers, upstream and downstream of the large lakes with hydropower facilities in the Carpathians, as do the states of Western Europe and the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, where annual repopulations are carried out on rivers with hydropower facilities and dams, hydropower storage lakes.

The sponsorships requested from your company are necessary for the realization of the experimental arrangements within the special laboratory being in arrangement status at the Faculty of Biology-University of Bucharest, the necessary scientific studies, as well as for the realization of the technical projects of feasibility studies necessary to save the two species. from extinction (Romanian darter - *Romanichthys valsanicola* and huchen - *Hucho hucho*), the first species on the **List of the National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy of Romania - part of the European Biodiversity Conservation Strategy of the EU.**

The minimum budget required for 2023 is 700,000 lei.

Objective 1 - investments in the research laboratory under construction -**400,000 lei.**

Objective 2 - acquisition of laboratory equipment, reagents for specific research, laboratory analysis reagents , field equipment and field research equipment in the refuge habitats of Romanian darter and huchen - **100,000 lei.**

Objective 3 - achieving the scientific studies and the necessary feasibility studies, necessary studies for the extension of the Romanian Darter RESERVATION on the three valleys (Vâlsan, Râul Doamnei and Argeş downstream of Vidraru dam) and initiating zonal studies in the four large rivers in the Carpathians, being the last refuges of the huchen - the king of the mountain waters: Mureş River of the Mureş Gorge, the Vişeu-Tisa river basin in the historical Maramureş, the Moldova River and the Moldovian Bistriţa River on its entire mountain sector **200,000 lei.**

1. There is an urgent need for both projects to carry out field monitoring of the populations of these very rare fish species.

2. It is very important to do the design work so that we can then write European projects.

3. Then we will apply to European projects, but ineligible costs are: design consultancy, engineers, architects, scientific fishing routes or expeditions, monitoring of pollutants, pollution sources and threats from their refuge habitats before these very rare species become extinct (being in flocks of 20-30 specimens / species for the Romanian darter (Vâlsan river) and of about 50 specimens / country for the huchen (rivers Mureș, Bistrița, Vișeu-Tisa, Nera, Moldova).

4. These activities are urgent to be done in the summer-autumn of this year (assessment of the size of the populations of the two species) and so are the others - in order to be able to write the projects for the realization of the reproduction/repopulation infrastructure with the two species.

5. It is also necessary to advertise sponsors - a film in partnership with James Worby from the BBC, producer of shows about nature, biodiversity, rare and endangered species.

Through this funding/sponsorship application, Aquaterra Ecological Society undertakes, insofar as the request for partnership/sponsorship/financing or co-financing of our project will be approved positively by the decision-making or board of directors of your company, to make advertisement and publicize you as a financing partner of the project through the following media:

1. Making advertising and publicity on the website and on the Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, LinkedIn accounts of the Aquaterra Ecological Association, but also on the personal accounts of the members and volunteers of our association;

2. Organizing and supporting public campaigns supported by the Romanian and international media. The Aquaterra Ecological Association is a member of World Fish Migration, an organization to which we have been affiliated since 2018 and which every year, on May 20, starting with 2020, organizes World Rivers Day, with the help of the UN;

3. Advertising and publicity through the Natura 2000 Coalition, the only environment and biodiversity federation in Romania, where together we fight for the great problems of Romania:

- deforestation and corruption in the field of guarding and managing Romania's forests;
- conservation of protected areas and declaration of new protected areas;
- protection of aquatic habitats and rare species in all river basins of Romania;
- carrying out public studies and campaigns for the construction of fish ladders in the area of the dams of micro-hydropower plants on the rivers of the Carpathians, made non-compliant. These hydrotechnical constructions fragment the area of all fish species, which can no longer migrate on Romanian rivers for reproduction upstream and downstream and which is the major cause of the disappearance of fish species from rivers.

4. Advertisement at the association's objective - Frasin Station, Plutonita, on banners, buildings, other objectives, as can be seen on the map in Google Maps, with the location of the association's objectives where we organize meetings, conferences, professional training courses to diversify mountain economic fields. In the mountainous area of Romania, people do not know at all the economic alternatives to the only activity they carry out - extremely harmful deforestation both locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Activities are regularly organized with the locals and personalities are invited who become instructors for these ecological/technological transfer activities, through new practical training possibilities for the locals and workshops with children from schools in the mountain area.

Industrialists and farmers who are trained to invest in the field of clean organic savings (agrotourism, ecotourism, biotourism), organic medicinal farms, aquaculture / permaculture / mountain aquaponics, organic processing of mountain products, and the establishment of professional associations for the development of the Carpathian mountain area, an alternative to the primitive deforestation of the Carpathian mountains.

5. The international campaign by making a documentary film made in association with the BBC team, led by James Worby, which makes such documentaries with endangered species and habitats worldwide, a collaboration that has already begun in March 2021.

6. We are eager to collaborate and support the production of feature-length scientific documentaries with other TV stations in the world and in Romania.

If you give us a positive opinion on the financing of the project, please be interested in the seriousness and maximum transparency of the board of directors and the board of the association to make the best decisions to meet the sacred objectives of the conservation of fish species. , public campaigns to save rare fish species, stop pollution of aquatic habitats, construction of stairs and fish elevators at all microhydropower plants recently built on the rivers of Romania (meetings of the board of directors and board of the association we organize at the association and at the station in the north of the country called Noah's Ark or online lately since the pandemic began).

Thank you very much for your support .
President of SEAquaterra,
Lect. Dr. Nicolai Crăciun

