



# BUSINESS

from / for



# NATURE

*RESULTS* from ONE  
EUROPE, *MORE* NATURE

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES,  
JOB CREATION,  
NATURE FOR THE FUTURE

About this Brochure

This brochure introduces specific examples of business for, and from, nature. These examples are all real, and are all working. On the ground, throughout Europe, with real people, solving real problems.

The business sectors which are actively using, restoring, and conserving nature – as part of their business model – are listed opposite. Energy, clay and gravel mining, supermarket retailing, fruit and vegetable production, meat production, tourism: the range is quite diverse.

The brochure describes each sector in turn – how it works, where it works, and who benefits. It highlights opportunities for expansion. And it provides contacts for those readers interested in developing a business/nature mechanism in their community, their country, or their company.

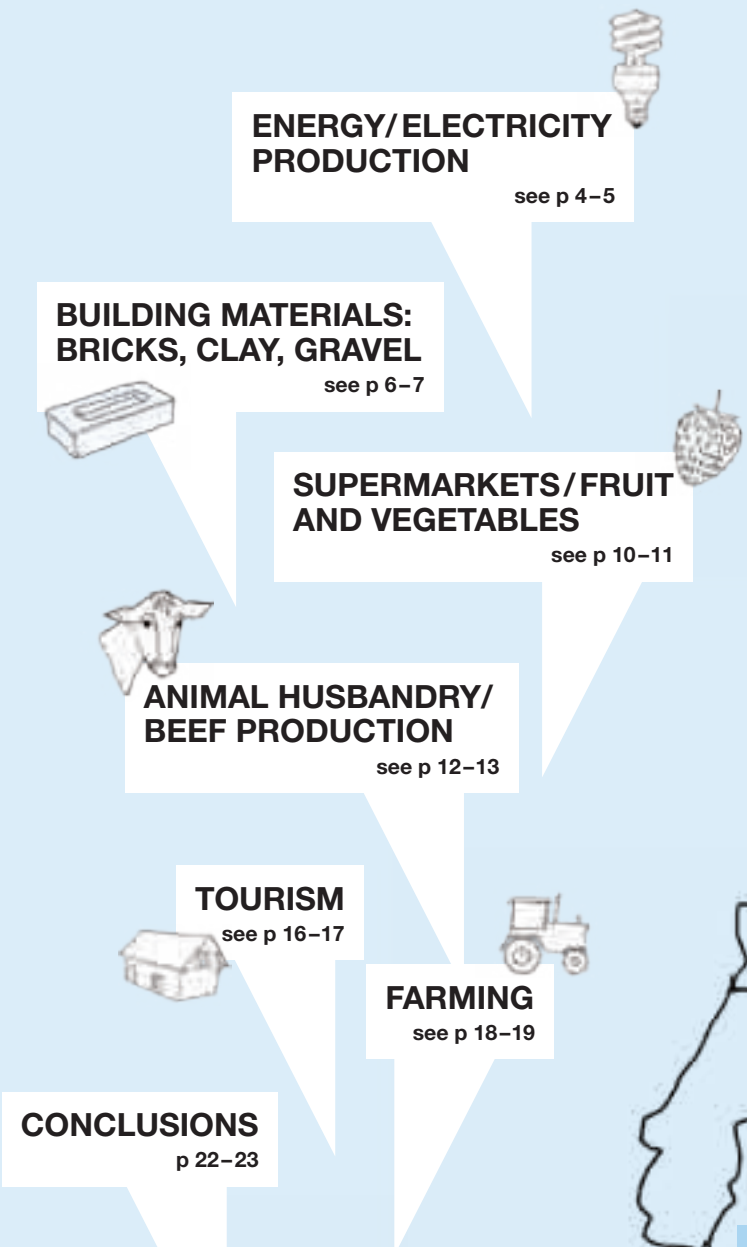
About this Project

The success stories all come from WWF International’s One Europe More Nature project (OEMN). This set out to solve environmental problems through developing, testing, and implementing practical business/nature combinations which benefit business, nature, and local people.

Pulling together a group of stakeholders including business partners, local communities, and landowners, OEMN developed a conservation vision, and then worked out the business case for it. Market research, technical feasibility, communications, and policy work followed where necessary. Together, these elements set the basis for a new arrangement, a “mechanism”.

Funded and inspired by WWF Netherlands, OEMN runs from 2003 to 2009, in which time those business/nature “mechanisms” have become self-financing. In all cases nature has become integrated into the companies’ business operations. Here, nature is no longer something on the side: it is now a fundament of business; it is one pillar of a new business-as-usual.

Good for business, good for nature, and good for local people – WWF’s One Europe More Nature project.



**CONCLUSIONS**  
p 22–23





# GREEN ELECTRICITY

from / for

# NATURE

**“For green electricity generation we need lots of raw materials, ideally at the lowest price. For us, Amorpha is fine, wood is wood! That it’s from our local neighbourhood, and good for nature, these are bonuses.”**

Mr. Ferenc Bozsó, AES power station (Hungary)



**“I have trees, I have grasslands, and I have Amorpha, and if I use those in a way which WWF tells me is sustainable, if there’s a clear market for my products, yes I’ll do it the ‘green’ way.”**

Mr. Loránd Baróczy, Entrepreneur and landowner, Tiszatarján (Hungary)

*Amorpha fruticosa is an invasive plant which is bad for biodiversity and bad for flood management, and it has colonised large areas of floodplain alongside the river Tisza in Hungary. Through OEMN, WWF sought to address this problem, in a way which would also answer the region’s socio-economic challenges, and open up new opportunities for nature. Very soon, an informal coalition including local landowners, the municipality of Tiszatarján, the power station AES, and WWF, had developed a mechanism.*



## A very simple idea

The mechanism was straightforward. After first establishing through trials whether the woody shrub was suitable for burning as biomass for green electricity generation, and whether the power plant AES would buy it, and for what price, the municipality and some landowners began clearing, transporting, and selling the wood. Key for WWF was what would happen to the cleared land. A purchasing contract was jointly developed which included stipulations concerning natural areas and which specified that a certain proportion of cleared land had to be set aside for nature, whilst a certain proportion could be planted with indigenous tree species for future burning, to ensure the mechanism was not just a “one-off”.

## Turning biomass into nature

In this way cutting and burning 5 hectares of Amorpha leads to the restoration of 2 hectares of grassland or wetland, and the planting of 2 hectares of fast-growing willow trees which in 3 years time will also be burnt as biomass. And then the cycle begins again.

Biomass for green electricity generation needs to be cheap, and local sourcing is necessary to cut down on transport costs. Biomass from within a 50 km radius of a power plant is economically feasible, and the Tisza floodplains around the Kazincbarcika power plant have thousands of hectares of Amorpha which could be cleared.

## More than 40 jobs

At present only about 1% of total biomass burnt in the power station comes from this source. Yet that amount has already created more than 40 full-time and seasonal jobs, and has led to the restoration of 50 hectares of “new” nature – wetlands and grasslands.

Beavers have been re-introduced to act as wetland managers, and water buffalo have been re-introduced to play the same role for the species rich grasslands. The landscape – and the economy – of this area have been completely transformed.

## Huge expansion possibilities

The limited company Tiszatarján Kft. was established in 2007 with the mission to manage and develop these operations. It is already profitable. Opportunities exist for expansion all along the Tisza. Already other municipalities have expressed interest to start work. Eventually much of the entire river length could be transformed. This would mean more green electricity, more income, more profit, more jobs, and more nature.



Clay for brick production is often located in floodplains next to large rivers, such as the Rhine in the Netherlands. Traditionally, extractive industries such as clay and gravel mining operations were seen as harmful to the environment and a threat to nature. Wienerberger – the world’s market leader in bricks – together with NGO and consulting partners worked out a way to excavate the clay and leave behind grasslands and wetlands which approximate the natural floodplain system. This gained the company access to new areas of clay, which was key at that time as environmental regulations became ever stricter concerning where they could, and could not, excavate.

# BRICKS from / for NATURE

“We have produced and sold countless bricks using clay from Geldersepoort. Then we did it elsewhere, by now in more than 100 places. And we are still looking for new sites here and abroad. Why? Because for us, building with nature is now part of our business model”.

Mr. Leen de Jong,  
Wienerberger brick company, Netherlands

“Visitors come from nearby cities, from Germany and from further afield to this wilderness, right here in the Netherlands! We tell them how it all came about, about the bricks. It’s a beautiful story.”

Mr. Twan Teunissen,  
Wilderness Cafe (Netherlands)

## Building with bricks is building with nature

That was 15 years ago. By now, millions of bricks have been made using clay from the Geldersepoort project site, and nature has returned to the Millingerwaard area. Lowering the floodplain level allowed flood waters back, and nature has re-colonised the low-lying parts previously covered with a thick blanket of clay. Herds of wild horses and cows now populate the area, as well as birds, beavers, and deer. Tourists come in large numbers to visit this beautiful and unusual wilderness.

## Building a new economy

As well as an entirely new landscape, an entirely new economy now exists in the region – Wienerberger is there as a large and profitable employer, and many businesses have sprung up to service the needs of visitors. Hotels, farm accommodation, a tea house, ferry operators, and the Wilderness Cafe in Kekerdom all make a profit out of the new nature which the mechanism produced.

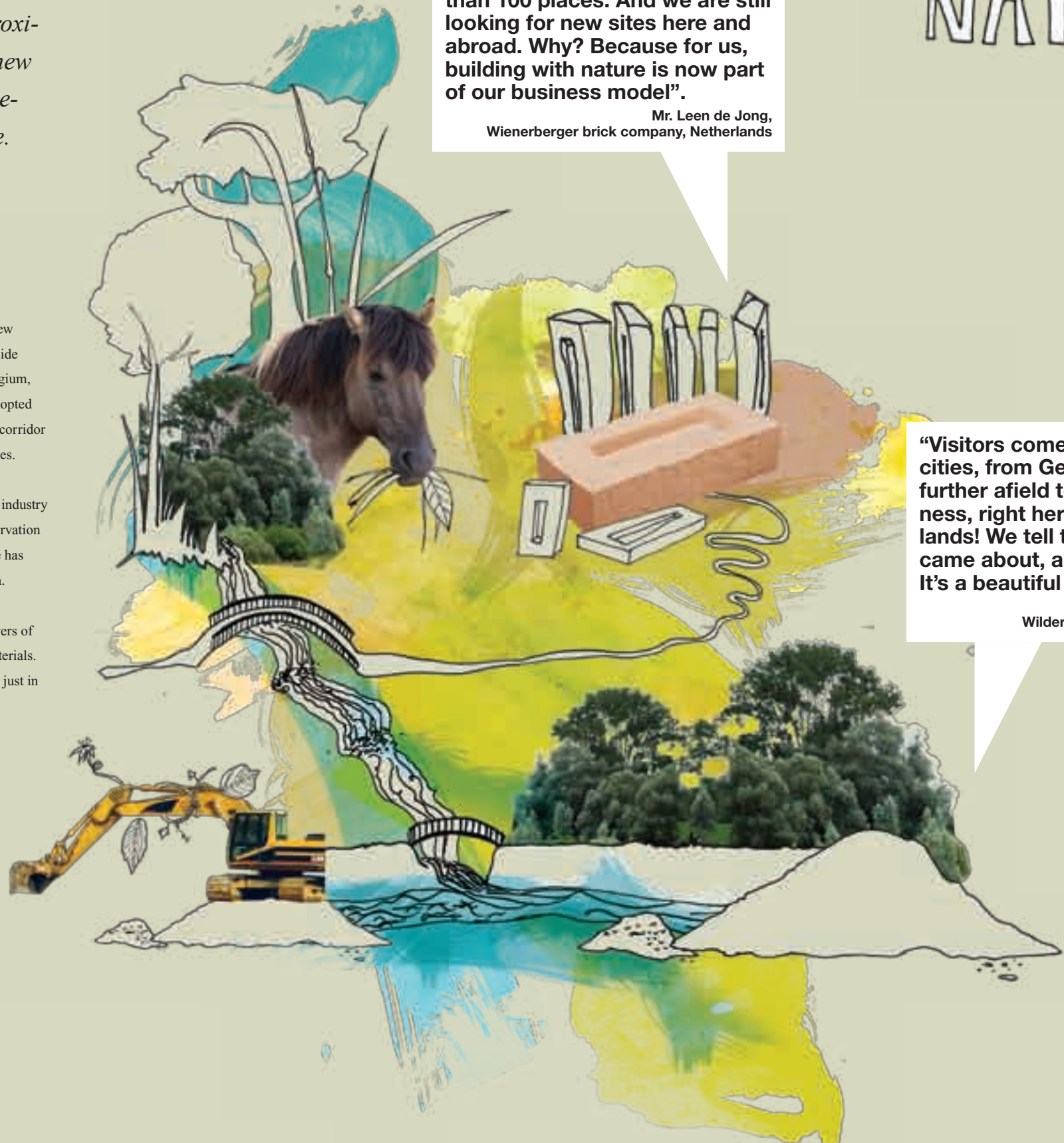
Wienerberger went on to use the excavation technique in more than 100 other locations in the Netherlands, leading to profits for the company and new natural areas on a scale unimaginable to the original partners all those years ago.

## More than just clay, and not just in the Netherlands

It’s not just clay excavation which can create new nature. Gravel mining can do the same. Alongside the Maas (Meuse) river on the border with Belgium, the Grensmaas Consortium has adapted and adopted similar techniques for creating a green natural corridor after gravel extraction for construction industries.

It’s another example of a seemingly destructive industry contributing to – indeed driving – nature conservation whilst at the same time making a profit. Nature has become a part of the overall business operation.

Clay and gravel are needed everywhere: the rivers of Europe are intensively mined for these raw materials. Bricks for nature could be the way forward not just in the Netherlands, but all across the continent.







#### Green Electricity from and for Nature

1 Amorpha colonising typical wetland landscape around Tiszatárján (Hungary)

2/3 The invasive bush is cut, bundled and dried ...

4 ... and taken to the AES power station nearby, where it is burnt for green electricity

5 This leaves space for nature, including beavers such as these, released in October 2008



#### Clay and Gravel Mining from and for Nature

1 Clay excavation for these bricks, produced from Geldersepoort (Netherlands), leads to the return of nature in the floodplain

2, 3, 4, 5 This gives space to wild animals such as these Konik horses and touristic and recreation opportunities for local people and foreign visitors



# SUPERMARKET FRUIT AND VEGETABLES *from / for* NATURE

**“WWF approached us to change our purchasing policies for Doñana strawberries, and once we were sure it made economic and technical sense for us and the growers, we made our decision very quickly.”**

Mr. Bas Hauwert, Albert Heijn supermarket (Netherlands)

*Almost all of the winter strawberries sold in northern Europe come from Spain, and around 80% of those come from around Doñana, one of the world’s most valuable wetland areas. As the wetlands started to suffer from falling groundwater levels, WWF started to talk to farmers in the region and to the supermarkets which purchased the strawberries.*

## **Less water, more profit, more nature**

Quite quickly a solution was found to the problem of using too much water. Relatively simple computerised irrigation systems exist to monitor and minimise the use of water. Pilot projects showed that 20% of water could be saved without reducing yield quality or quantity. Farmers saved money on their electricity costs for pumping out the water, and made additional savings since less fertiliser and other chemical inputs were required.

## **Supermarkets change their purchasing protocols**

Together with the supermarkets, WWF devised an improved set of environmental criteria – integrated into the companies’ purchasing protocols – encouraging farmers to invest into the new technologies as a way of saving money and securing market access.

The mechanism has proved to be good for all concerned: good for the supermarkets (as a risk reduction strategy vis-a-vis their customers who value environmentally-conscious products); good for farmers who make savings in production costs; and good for nature.

## **Not just strawberries**

It’s not just with strawberries that such a mechanism can work. In Greece, the Prespa lakes are surrounded by irrigated agriculture for bean production. Water crop needs are high and agriculture is mainly of an intensive form. Local partners Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) worked out a new production system linked to a special “Prespa Park Products” label. Already more than 50 hectares of land is inside the pilot labelling scheme. The Group Carrefour supermarket in Greece is waiting in the wings ready to purchase and market the beans.

Farmers see a stable and profitable market for their beans. The retailer sees the opportunity to add to its ever-growing “green” range of products a well-known brand connected to an interesting and important story. And the lake ecosystem, with its unique fish and bird biodiversity and large colony of Dalmatian pelicans, will benefit as well from receiving more water and fewer chemicals.

## **First Spain, and Greece, now Morocco, where next?**

Strawberries are also produced in Morocco. So WWF has started to work out similar solutions there. In fact, all across the Mediterranean – and further afield in Africa and elsewhere – there exist countless potential mechanisms of this kind: wherever fruit and vegetables are produced and traded, wherever water is a limiting factor, wherever there is interest to work out a deal which benefits local people, makes a profit for business, and where nature is also a winner.

**“The Prespa pilot project is for us the opportunity to inform our customers of our vision and aim of preserving this unique area by promoting the Prespa beans. They have undertaken the best manufacturing process assuring the highest quality of products.”**

Ms. Florentia Koulampa,  
Group Carrefour supermarket (Greece)



# QUALITY MEAT from/for NATURE

**“Growth in kilos per animal is smaller than with mainstream beef, but labour costs are lower and it fetches a higher price. So economically, as well as ethically, it makes sense.”**

Mr. Tõnu Kaptein, Beef farmer (Estonia)

*Animal husbandry – beef production – is another economic sector which can drive nature conservation. The best quality meat comes from extensively grazed, natural grass systems: we might call it “nature”. And grazing maintains and even enhances the rich biodiversity found in these grasslands. So finding a way to profitably market meat products from natural grasslands would appear to be a mechanism which once again can benefit people, businesses, and nature.*

## Restoring natural grazing

In the past very large areas in Europe were grazed by grass-eating animals. Mountain meadows, coastal pastures, grassy floodplains, all of these habitats were formed and maintained in this way. So-called semi-natural grasslands are very species-rich and valuable for biodiversity.

Animals have disappeared from our landscapes. They have been herded up and concentrated into industrialised stalls, whilst many very beautiful grassland areas are threatened with becoming bushed over with colonising shrubs as a result of abandonment.

## Healthy meat, higher price

In Vainameri (Estonia) and in Maramures (Romania), WWF and partners re-populated grassland areas with sturdy beef cattle capable of thriving in natural conditions and at the same time producing excellent quality, healthy meat. In Estonia, as herd sizes increased, ever larger areas of grassland were restored, and larger numbers of local farmers joined in the scheme. Biodiversity is returning, including millions of migratory water birds which stop over to eat the young shoots of grass. And the meat and meat products are sold at a premium price.

As in other OEMN locations, the return of nature has been exploited by local people in many ways. The Vainameri project has led to a profitable network of tourism and handicraft services and outlets – new life has been given to the remote coastal and island communities. In Maramures, local landowning entrepreneurs have invested heavily to develop tourist accommodation high on the scenic Oas-Gutai plateau – alongside the cows – in order to diversify the revenue streams derived from nature.

## Turning obstacles into opportunities

But beef remains the principal product. Many challenges present themselves along the way: not least the need to find technical and financial ways of slaughtering, butchering, processing, distributing and marketing the meat in a way which reflects and underlines the natural, high-quality nature of the products. Yet these are all opportunities as well.

There are hundreds of thousands of hectares of semi-natural grassland in Europe, and millions of consumers who generally appreciate good quality, healthy, meat. The grasslands/beef mechanism has much potential – for people, for business, and for nature.

**“There is definitely a market in Romania for good quality, organically-produced meat. The beef from the plateau is the best, so I will be processing it and distributing it. That’s my business.”**

Mr. Ioan Tataran, slaughterhouse director, (Romania)





#### Supermarket Products from and for Nature

- 1, 2 Beans from Prespa (Greece) are now produced in a way which minimises their ecological impact  
3 As are strawberries from Donana (Spain). In both cases, the role of supermarkets is significant, since farmers need a market for their new, improved goods

- 4 Now OEMN is working in Morocco, where strawberry cultivation around the important Merga Zerja wetland has intensified in recent years



#### Quality Beef from and for Nature

- 1 Maramures (Romania) is one of the OEMN project sites where grazing of natural grasslands is promoted as an economic mechanism  
2 Most people who have tried pasture-fed beef agree that it tastes much better than normal meat

- 3 Cows on these meadows actually increase the biodiversity of the grass, insect and flower species

- 4, 5, 6 Better taste, more nature! What could be better than that? Bon appetit!



*Tourism remains – despite the current worldwide recession – the fastest-growing and a very dynamic economic sector. We have seen that once nature is secured by any of a number of mechanisms, tourism always becomes a possibility. People like nature. People want nature. But people will often not pay for nature; rather they will pay for goods and services related to nature. So tourism waits in the wings until the main mechanism has worked, and then people come to visit the nature. And when people come, tourism appears – as an income generator for local entrepreneurs.*

# TOURISM from / for NATURE

## Jobs from the mechanism, then jobs from the multiplier

All the OEMN mechanisms have this “multiplier” effect. Jobs are provided by the (principal) economic mechanism, nature returns, and then a new wave of (secondary) jobs and income are possible, derived from tourism based on that nature.

In Maramures, WWF helped to establish a visitor “Greenways” trail to connect the many cultural and natural attractions. As mentioned previously, new accommodation has been built, using local natural materials and featuring food from the high altitude organic beef herd. In Geldersepoort, and in Vainameri, tourism is now a significant income generator where previously it was absent.

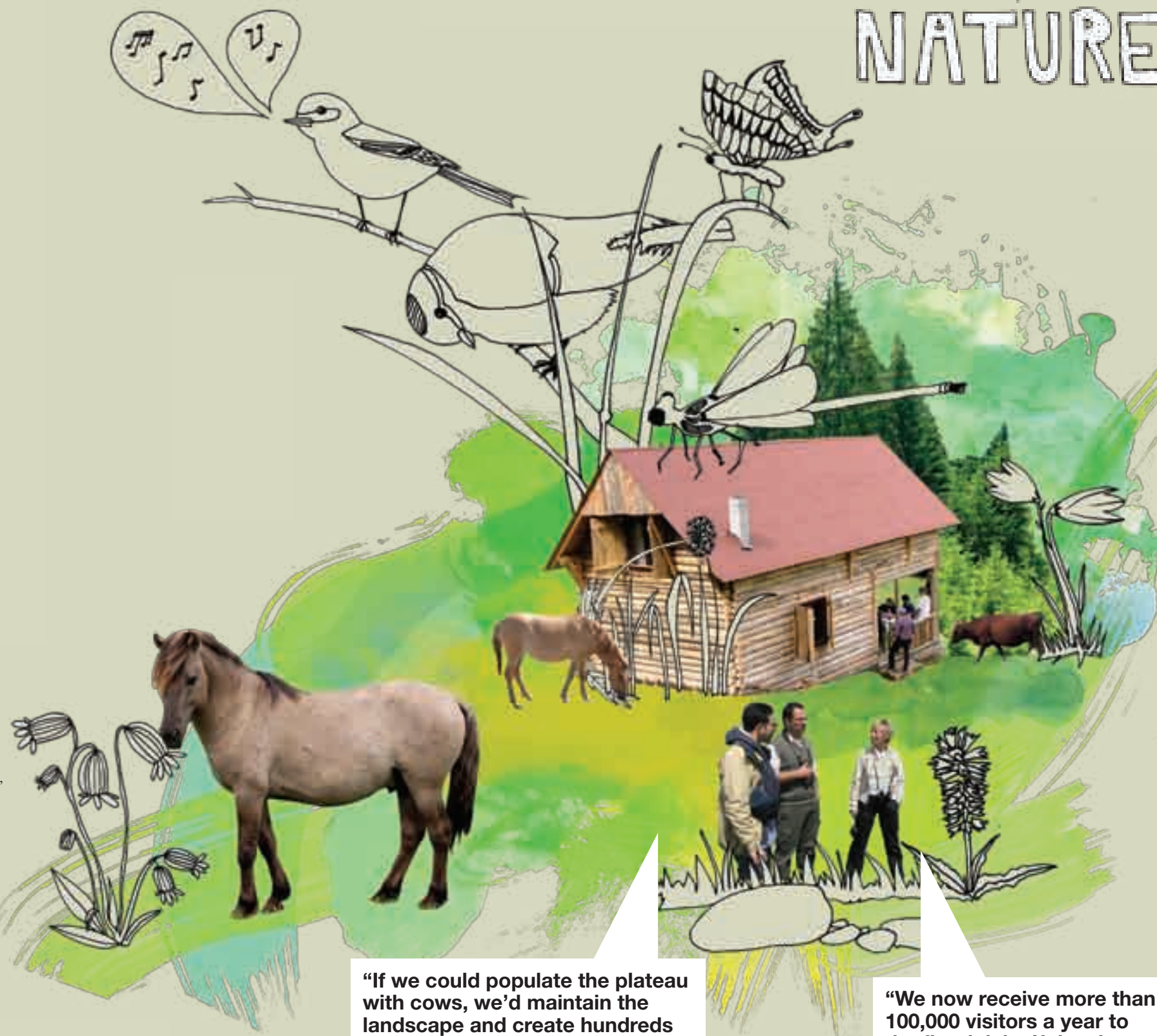
Tourism is an excellent way of diversifying a rural business, of adding a new stream of income to the main one be it agriculture, forestry, biomass or bricks. Often rural families need more than one economic activity in order to make ends meet.

## Tourism as stimulator of change

Tourism as a main driver for nature restoration or conservation is a relative rarity. Yet at the OEMN project at Sinca Noua (Romania) a new tourism business was significant in helping the community to embark on a new path. The high-class horse-riding facility “Equus Sylvania” offers not just spectacular equestrian activities but also bear-watching and wolf-tracking possibilities in the unspoilt Transylvanian countryside. Meanwhile, the local council successfully declared a “Sustainable Development Vision” for the area in which all agriculture has become certified organic. New food-processing facilities have started, including small-scale dairy/cheese and forest fruits production centres. And, as if to complete the circle, additional tourist accommodation has opened.

## Quality landscapes and quality products – quality holidays, naturally

All OEMN locations lend themselves “naturally” to tourism: beautiful landscapes, intact cultural traditions, innovative and healthy high-quality food products. All bound intimately to the landscape. As with many features of the project, the main challenges relate to marketing and awareness, distribution, and infrastructure. But these are – of course – opportunities for entrepreneurs, which give depth and diversity to the emerging new economy, as well as investment possibilities to lenders.



**“If we could populate the plateau with cows, we’d maintain the landscape and create hundreds of jobs in animal husbandry, food processing, and especially tourism. That’s the future and we need nature for that.”**

Mr. Stefan Codrea, Mayor (Romania)

**“We now receive more than 100,000 visitors a year to the floodplain. If they have an average spend each of 25 Euros, that’s up to 3 million Euros annually into our region.”**

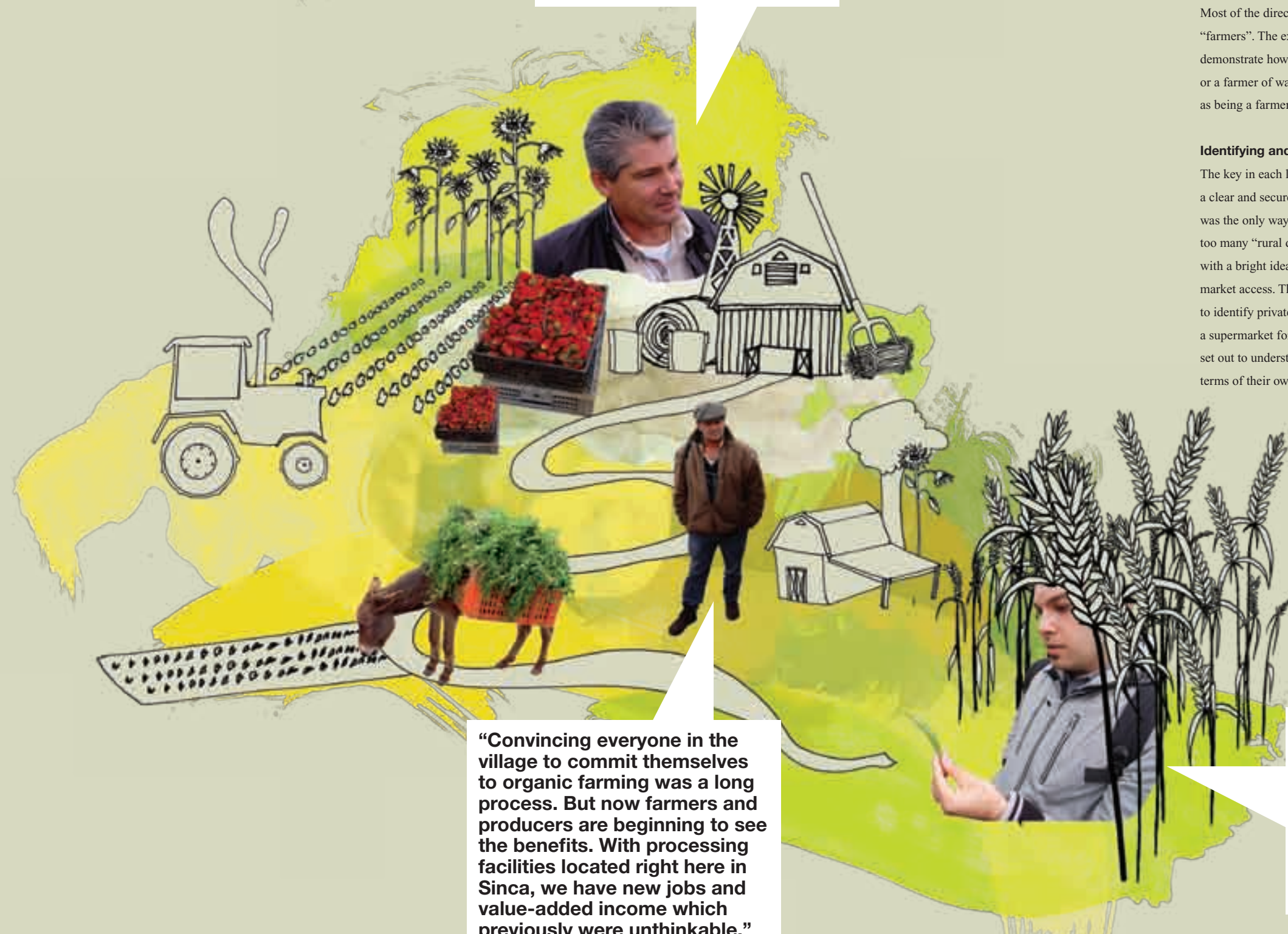
Mrs. Annamieke Vermeulen, Mayoress (Netherlands)



# FARMING from / for NATURE

**“I use 20% less water without hurting yield quality or quantity. That means I use 20% less petrol to pump the water out. That’s a saving of water, energy and fertil-izers, and about 300€ per hectare and year.”**

Mr. José Cáceres, Strawberry farmer (Spain)



**“Convincing everyone in the village to commit themselves to organic farming was a long process. But now farmers and producers are beginning to see the benefits. With processing facilities located right here in Sinca, we have new jobs and value-added income which previously were unthinkable.”**

Mr. Dumitru Flucus, Mayor (Romania)

*Agriculture is still the dominant form of land-use in Europe, covering more than 50% of our landscapes. Yet the ways in which farmers make ends meet are changing rapidly. OEMN shows new ways for rural people to make a living. Ways which benefit them, as well as benefitting nature.*

## **New types of “farmer”**

Most of the direct partners in each OEMN location are “farmers”. The experiences from these many countries demonstrate how a farmer can be a farmer of biomass, or a farmer of water, or a farmer of biodiversity, as well as being a farmer of food.

## **Identifying and understanding the market**

The key in each location was market access. Having a clear and secure outlet for the new goods or services was the only way a mechanism could start to work. Far too many “rural development” initiatives have started with a bright idea but have failed because of a lack of market access. That is the reason why OEMN set out to identify private sector partners (a power station, or a supermarket for example) which would buy, and then set out to understand what those partners needed in terms of their own business operations.

## **,Higher revenues, lower costs, lowered risks**

The business case for any particular conservation vision rested upon either lowered costs of production, or higher prices for (existing or new) products, or a combination of the two. Risk reduction, greener image, and social responsibility also played a part.

Farmers in each location altered their activities in light of this business case. Where the alterations incorporated clear immediate savings (like for the water in Doñana) the switch was easier to make, yet always the market side needed to be there. The same goes for beans, for beef, for biomass, even for tourism.

## **Farming as a common language**

Within OEMN, farmers from the Hungarian site visited the Dutch and Romanian locations. Greek and Moroccan farmers went to the Spanish site. The Estonian project – thanks to WWF Sweden – was built upon visits to and from Sweden, and has now led to a similar initiative in Karelia (Russia). Exchanges of this kind have been instrumental in showing to people that new ways of farming are not only possible, but profitable. Agriculture will continue to shape the European landscape. And farmers will continue to be the guardians of our land, trees, soil and water. Mechanisms which offer new benefits to farmers and at the same time open up new areas of nature; these are the future for European agriculture, and for European nature. OEMN shows concrete, practical, working examples of these types of mechanism.

**“Prespa’s beans are a part of its identity almost as much as the pelicans. If our business helps the two co-exist, that’s good for everyone. With the Prespa Park Products label, we expect to get a better price per kilo.”**

Mr. Stergios Nonas, Bean farmer (Greece)





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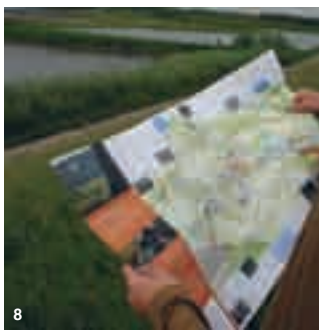
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8

#### Tourism from and for Nature

- 1, 2 Landscapes such as these (Maramures, Romania; Donana, Spain) await the visitor to OEMN project sites  
3 Park and Ride, Dutch style (Geldersepoort, Netherlands)

- 4 Always something interesting to capture (Donana, Spain)  
5 Exciting forms of transport for getting close to nature (Donana, Spain)  
6, 7, 8 Local contacts and information help get the most out of a nature holiday (Spain; Hungary; Netherlands)



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6

#### Farming for and from Nature

- 1, 2 Farmers in Prespa (Greece) are now working differently in order to secure the coveted Prespa Park Products label for their beans  
3 And water-saving techniques in strawberry cultivation (Donana, Spain) save precious water for the national park and its biodiversity

- 4 Taking advantage of new products and techniques sometimes leads to the learning of new and unusual skills (Tiszatarján, Hungary)  
5 Switching from milk cows to beef is a more easy step to make (Vainameri, Estonia)  
6 Ideas are often transferable: the farming of biomass (Tiszatarján, Hungary) has attracted attention within the power sector from as far afield as China



# What does this mean for...



## ... Business ?

OEMN shows that it is possible to do business not just in a way which is in harmony with the environment, i.e. does not harm, degrade, or over-use our natural resources, but that furthermore it is possible to make profit out of actually restoring or conserving nature.

### Nature as a new profit centre

This is an added level, and is the major lesson to be learned from the OEMN initiative. In all these locations, business did not “merely” reduce its footprint; it actively created or enhanced the landscape, the biodiversity, or both.

Nature thus becomes an integral part of the business model, a new profit centre perhaps. Companies can be drivers for habitat restoration and conservation everywhere. Nature conservation can become a part of business-as-usual.

Many businesses in many sectors – notably food, transport, clothing, consumer goods and tourism – are increasingly positioning themselves as “green”, most notably through the marketing of products which have progressively less and less impact on the environment. That is good.

### Securing premium positioning

Those companies which can also show that they actually create, restore, or conserve nature as a direct result of their operations; those are the companies who will have premium positioning, especially in the years and decades to come. And this premium positioning comes almost for free, simply as a by-product of doing (an altered) business-as-usual.

### Investment opportunities in abundance

Meanwhile, as shown in this brochure, the expansion possibilities for these mechanisms are immense. Significant investment opportunities therefore exist to upscale the businesses which are already operating, and to start-up new business/nature mechanisms in new countries, new areas, new sectors. For profit. And for nature.

## ... Nature ?

For too long nature and nature conservation have been seen as a restraint, or as a luxury, or at the very least as something peripheral to the important job of running an economy, running a company, or running a family. Providing for peoples’ basic needs has for a long time been seen as somehow incompatible – or problematic - with the needs of nature.

### Nature at the core of society, not on the periphery

This has to change. The OEMN experiences demonstrate that the needs of nature can – if cleverly addressed – be entirely compatible with the economic realities of life. Indeed they can be the fundamental starting point for profit and for income, not to mention health, well-being, quality of life, and the needs of future generations.

This evidence should change the way nature conservation is perceived. If business/nature mechanisms were the norm, there would in a sense be no need for formalised “nature conservation”.

### Nature conservation for free, forever

The widespread shortage of funds for “nature conservation” would no longer be an issue, because private sector operations would be transforming landscapes and safeguarding natural resources, everywhere, all the time. Environmental NGOs and governmental budgets would be freed up to undertake other activities, such as helping society prepare for the challenges associated with climate change.

## ... People ?

Local people nearly always understand their environment better than anyone else. They are also the ones who in any given region need the jobs, need the income. They are also the ones who do the bulk of the work. With a new way of working, a focus on seeking out business/nature mechanisms, local knowledge, energy, ideas and talents are matched with economic (purchasing, or investment, or market) power to develop truly win/win situations which address local needs, but for profit.

### The very best of old and new

Business/nature mechanisms help local communities take control of their resources and their future. In articulating a conservation vision for an area, a community is mapping out its own future. Will that future be based on plentiful nature, green spaces, and a thriving local economy? Will that future combine the very best of the past – traditions, customs, and the genius of place – with the best of the future – technologies, job opportunities, and a dynamic place to live?

### New perspectives for a green future

OEMN shows that when nature is given space, new possibilities arise. For local communities struggling to adapt in a changing world, betting on nature is like betting on the future.

Working out a business/nature mechanism is not easy, but it is rewarding. First and foremost, for local people.





## OEMN Mission Statement

WWF's One Europe More Nature (OEMN) project uses an innovative approach to forge unusual partnerships so that business and nature can co-exist. Its mechanisms lead to win-win solutions for all, allowing Europe's rural workers to make incomes from the countryside while protecting nature. OEMN, tested at many pilot rural locations throughout Europe, is now mainstreaming conservation into everyday European business life.

## WWF OEMN pilot project sites

Prespa (Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece), Väänameri (Estonia), Tisza Floodplains (Hungary), Merja Zerga (Morocco), Gelderse Poort (Netherlands), Maramures (Romania), Sinca Noua (Romania), Doñana (Spain)

## WWF Mission Statement

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

## CONTACT

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Or visit the OEMN website: [www.panda.org/europe/oemn](http://www.panda.org/europe/oemn) to download information on all the mechanisms and to get a copy of the OEMN Approach brochure.

**Text:** Charlie Avis

**Photos:** Toomas Kokovkin, Charlie Avis, Emil Pop, Ágota Kert, Csaba Vaszkó, Martin Woods

**Design and Concept:** Büro X Wien

**Illustrations:** Lisa Langmantel

**Date:** May 2009

Also available electronically on the OEMN website (above).

The One Europe More Nature project is funded and inspired by WWF-Netherlands through the WWF Global Freshwater Programme.

