

Rural development: targeting as the basic principle (a case study of the Hortobágy National Park¹)

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The efficiency and targeting of measures of the EU rural development policy, the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), has come to the front along the entry of Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) into the EU. The paper, without giving an answer but highlighting the difficulties, deals with the question of targeting in the case of a Hungarian national park. On the basis of literature, the territory of the Hortobágy National Park is examined: first as a nature reservation area, in the second step from institutional breakdown, and finally along development policies. The results show that the bottom-up approach, through “bioregionalism”, could be an answer to the problem.

Key words: rural development, territorial targeting, environmental protected area

INTRODUCTION

To the question whether rural development should be financed at the EU level, Núñez Ferrer (2008: 4) gives the following answer: “From the point of view of the EU budget, it is questionable whether rural development can be considered better handled and financed at the EU level. ... As such, most of the policy has to be considered a form of cohesion policy for rural areas where a central budget is used to finance actions in poor areas, i.e. should have what we call a territorial dimension”. He calls attention to the fact that along the principle of generating a European or Community value added, actions in the direction of better targeting should be made: “Targeting areas at greater need is thus a basic principle” (Núñez Ferrer, 2008: 16).

One of the conclusions of participants of the session “Rural and Regional: Policy Options beyond Pillar II” of the EAAE Congress in Ghent was that rural development policy has to address people in given regions.

In the understanding of the authors, there are two questions behind targeting rural development instruments: one of them is territory and the other is who inside the territory should be addressed to have the better results from the limited budget behind rural development.

The fact that in the EU-27 rural areas (predominantly rural and intermediate regions following the OECD methodology to define rural areas) represent 90% of the territory and 54% of the population in 2005 (DG Agri, 2008) also underlines the importance of targeting territory.

The aim of this study is to examine the question of targeting territory in the case of the Hortobágy National Park (HNP). The Hortobágy National Park, established in 1973, is the first and so far the largest national park in Hungary. One of the main values of the national park is an extended saline barren and a complex of various aqueous habitats. Its basic area is about 80,000 hectares (2009). The region belongs to the convergence regions, its GDP per capita is below 75% of the EU average. The population of the settlements covered by the HNP is 162 thousand, and the population density is 56 inhabitants / km². The average number of inhabitants / settlement is less than 8000, the highest number is 32 thousand. There are no significant industrial establishments in the region, while strong regulations give strict limits for agriculture (Süli-Zakar, 2009). Researches of Baranyi (2008) also underline that the region forms the periphery of the counties it covers. These data show the examined territory to be a region of “greater need”, so the need of it to be targeted is justified. The paper examines how the national park area is targeted and whether there is a link between the different approaches.

METHODOLOGY

The paper is based on documents and literature sources related to the HNP. The work examines how the area of the HNP is defined from different aspects. The collected documents are grouped into three sections. First the HNP is examined as a nature reservation area, secondly from the perspective of governance, and finally the area is analyzed in the context of development policy documents. Taking the principle of targeting support to areas of greater need,

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the HNP is unquestionably rural, and its GDP is low as it is in a convergence region. The paper reviews various aspects of the park in an attempt to identify its needs, some constraints on those needs and some approaches to overcoming the constraints.

RESULTS

The Hortobágy National Park as a nature reservation area

The National Park has become part of the World Heritage, all of its area is Important Bird Area (IBA), Special Protected Area (SPA) according to the Bird Protection Directive and proposed Site of Community Importance, or Special Area of Conservation (pSCI / SAC) according to the Habitats Directive. Contrary to what is generally believed, its area is not merely confined to the territory of the geographical, ecological area of the Hortobágy, especially as a result of annexations of recent years: it is much more extensive. On the basis of comprehensive research, the most valuable and still traceable natural landscape treasures of the Alföld (plain) were explored and placed under protection with comparative success, namely, the alkaline steppes and grassy loess steppes still preserving their original appearance at some places, alkali steppe oak woods, lakes, the remains of the once several hundred square km swampy marsh areas and the gallery forests along the river Tisza (IEC, undated). Some area of the HNP can be freely visited, other parts can only be visited periodically, and some strictly protected areas cannot be visited.

Territorial changes of the HNP

The area of the national park has increased by 50% since its foundation due to the gradual preservations and conservation.

1972–1990

The HNP was founded originally – according to the No. 1850 / 1972 OTvH (National Nature Conservation Agency) Announcement – on 52,000 hectares. The rating system for protected areas of the International Union for Conservation of Nature classified it to the second category. To this, the so-called connecting protected area of 63,335 ha was attached, based on No. 1851 / 1972 OTvH Announcement, in the early 90's.

The original core land (52,000 hectares) was announced as a Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO MAB Program) based on the No. 2100 / 1980 OKTH (National Environment and Nature Conservation Office) Announcement. Several parts of it belong to the Ramsar Convention based on the No. 2436 / 1980 OKTH Announcement (Directorate of HNP, undated).

Seven conservational areas (so-called connecting protected areas) were part of the original 52,213 hectares (which did not belong legally to the national park): the Bird Reserve

of Tiszafüred, the Floodplain of Tiszacsege, the Forest and Meadow of Újszentmargita, the Ohati Wood, the Swamps of Pusztakócs, Forest of Vajdalahos and Barren Ágota.

1990–2008

The so-called connecting protected areas were attached to the former core area of the HNP in 1993 based on the No. 11 / 1993 (III. 9) KTM Order. At this time, their extension was based on the No. 1851 / 1972 OTvH Announcement (extension of the core area and the previous ones is still 63,335 hectares, because at this time the similarly registered extension of the core area was not affected by the change according to the status in the No. 1850 / 1972 OTvH Announcement).

The protection of the Great Saline of Balmazújváros was originally registered as part of HNP (2,132 hectares based on No. 7 / 1990 (IV. 23) KVM Order. In 1996, the Német Island of Nádudvar became protected, also as part of the national park, with 12,231 hectares. The same order (No. 6 / 1996 (IV. 27) annexed the southern area of the bird reserve for Tiszafüred with 3,648 hectares to the national park, and thus the area of the national park became officially 68,419 hectares.

According to the last land register, the area of the national park is 74,831 hectares. In the process of the more accurate land registration based on topographical data, it turned out that the former core area and the area of the Swamps of Egyek-Pusztakócsi, Bird Reserve of Tiszafüred and Ágota Barren are much more extended than their legal status shows.

The UNESCO World Heritage Commission entered the area of the HNP on the list of the World Heritage on 1 December 1999. On 31 December 2000, the area of the park reached 80,549 hectares including the protected parts handled by the national park (Láng, 2007).

The core area of the wood reserve for Forbidden Wood of Újszentmargita (22 hectares) became an increasingly protected area based on No 15 / 2000 KÖM (Ministry of Environmental Protection) Order.

NATURA 2000 areas in the HNP

The HNP takes part in the NATURA 2000 Program. In reference to the EU Wild Bird Directive (92 / 43 / EEC), the so-called SPA (Special Protected Areas) belongs to the administration of the national park.

Administration of the Hortobágy National Park

The national park – similarly to other domestic parks – carries out administrative tasks cooperating with partner organizations and ministries.

The operational area of the Hortobágy National Park Directorate concerns to the counties Hajdú-Bihar, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Heves and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén. This area involves the North Great

Plain Region, which means a 1100 km² protected area. Beside the Hortobágy National Park, four landscape protection areas (Hajdúság, Szatmár-Bereg, Middle-Tisza, Bihar Plain) and 20 separate nature protection territories share this area. The seat of the Directorate is in Debrecen (Baranyi, 2008).

Between 1990 and 2005, the Hortobágy National Park Directorate was a nature reservation managing organization and authority. Since 2005, the Hortobágy National Park Directorate is mainly a managing organization and not an authority (which was taken over by the National Inspectorate for Environment, Nature and Water).

The Directorate was founded on the territory of Szolnok and Hajdú-Bihar counties. As a managing area it was founded in 1973; its main task was the management of the first national park of the country. This duty was changed later when the competence area of the Directorate was defined by the 36 / 1997 (XII. 8) KTM Order. According to this order, the competence area of the Directorate was expanded widened (actually to the Northern Great Plain Region).

From the natural reserve authorities, the Northern Great Plain Inspectorate for Environment and Nature and the Northern Hungarian Inspectorate for Environment and Nature as partner organizations were in cooperation with the national park before 1990.

According to the 1997 KTM Order, all protected natural value in the area belongs to the Directorate. In its competence there are six natural protection territories.

As the Directorate is managing an area of three counties (NUTS-3 regions), it has to cooperate with several special authorities and administrative organizations besides the local municipalities. These organisations are:

Inspectorates for Environment and Nature

- Middle-Tisza Area Inspectorate for Environment, Nature and Water
- Lower-Tisza Inspectorate for Environment, Nature and Water
- Northern Hungarian Inspectorate for Environment, Nature and Water

Inspectorates for Water

- Middle Tisza Area Inspectorate for Water (managing organization and not an authority)
- Over the Tisza Inspectorate for Water (managing organization and not an authority)
- Northern Hungarian Inspectorate Water (managing organization and not an authority)

Land Registration Offices:

- Hajdú-Bihar County Land Registration Office, Local Land Registration Offices in Debrecen, Hajdúböszörmény, Hajdúszoboszló, Püspökladány
- Jász-Nagykun County Land Registration Office, Local Land Registration Offices in Tiszafüred, Karcag, Törökszentmiklós
- Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County Land Registration Office Local Land Registration Office in Mezőkövesd

- Heves County Land Registration Office Local Land Registration Office in Füzesabony Local Land Registration Office

Mine Captaincies in Miskolc and Szolnok

Northern Great Plain Regional Polity Offices.

The construction controller of the regional polity office as a construction authority of the first instance in the competence area, performs its duty, and the scope of its authority is defined in specific laws.

Construction authorities, notaries of the competent municipalities together with the local construction offices

Traffic Authorities, county traffic inspectorates

Forestry directorates:

- Debrecen Station of the Hungarian Forest Management Directorate,
- Miskolc Station of the Hungarian Forest Management Directorate.

The county plant hygiene and soil protection stations and the Northern Great Plain Office of the National Office of Cultural Heritage and the Offices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the seats of the concerned counties.

The Park from the aspect of governance

Hungary became a member of the EU in May 2004. As a result, new institutions and the NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) system were developed. The NUTS system brought new territorial units. Three NUTS-1 regions were created without their own administrative structure. Seven NUTS-2 regions were created from the 19 counties and from the capital of Hungary. In general, three counties form the NUTS-2 region (there were debates about the grouping of the counties), and the Central Hungarian region includes only one county and the capital. On the NUTS-2 level, new institutions were created, which take part in the development of the regional policy of these regions co-financed from the EU funds, but they have no role in the governmental institution only in the governance (Pálné Kovács, 2007). Twenty NUTS-3 regions are in line with the territorial system of the country, as 19 counties of Hungary comprise NUTS-3 regions, and one NUTS-3 region is the capital Budapest. These NUTS-3 regions have preserved the earlier local government institution system and have also developed new institutions for regional development. The LAU-1 regions of the NUTS system are the ones by the Central Statistical Office (their number changed over time, it is 174 in 2009). In 1996, the Hungarian law on territorial development created small regions (not covering those LAU-1 of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, HCSO); institutions on this level play a higher role in regional development and not in administration / government. Settlements on the LAU-2 level have an important task in administration / government (the average number of people on this level is around 3000) (Katona-Kovács, 2009).

NUTS regions with HNP area

A territorial unit specific to certain fields of activity (mining regions, rail traffic regions, farming regions, labour-market regions, etc.) may sometimes be used in certain Member States. NUTS excludes specific territorial units and local units in favour of regional units of general nature (OECD, 2005). Table shows the NUTS categories covered by the area of the HNP.

The national park area touches two NUTS-2 regions, four NUTS-3 regions, ten LAU-1 regions and 22 LAU-2 regions (Table). There is only one LAU-1 region (Balmazújvárosi) from where all LAU-2 regions / settlements are linked to the HNP area, the other LAU-1 regions are only partly linked as one to three settlements / LAU-2 regions of their LAU-1 region are under the HNP area.

Table. Regions with link to the HNP area on different NUTS levels

NUTS-1		NUTS-2		NUTS-3		LAU-1	LAU-2		
EU code	Label	EU code	Label	EU code	Label	Label	Label		
HU3	Alföld és Észak	HU32	Észak-Alföld	HU321	Hajdú-Bihar	Balmazújvárosi	Balmazújváros		
							Hortobágy		
							Tiszacsege		
							Egyek		
						Püspökladányi	Püspökladány		
							Nádudvar		
						Polgári	Görbeháza		
							Újszentmargita		
		Hajdúszoboszlói	Hajdúszoboszló						
			Nagyhegyes						
		Hajdúböszörményi	Hajdúböszörmény						
		HU31	Észak-Magyarország	HU312	Heves	HU311	Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	Tiszafüredi	Nagyiván
									Tiszafüred
								Karcagi	Karcag
Kunmadaras									
Füzesabonyi	Poroszló								
	Újlörincfalva								
Mezőcsáti	Ároktő								
	Tiszabólna								
Mezőkövesdi	Tiszavalk								
	Borsodivánka								
	Négyes								

Source: authors' set-up following Regulation (EC) 1888 / 2005 (2005: 4).

The Park along development policies

National level concepts

National Development Policy Concept (NDC) 2005–2020

The overall aim of the concept is to be the most dynamically developing country of the EU over the average, following the principles of sustainable development, as a result (comparing the present situation): more jobs, higher income; safe, clean and good quality environment; healthy and longer life.

The document indicates that in regional and sectoral programmes special development is needed in certain rural areas, which have been identified as follows:

- the development of areas rich in natural, cultural and landscape value (Figure)
- revitalisation of regions characterized by the predominance of small farms

- preserving values, changing function, and equal opportunities in regions characterized by the predominance of small villages

- developing regions with a large Roma population
- representation of the values of ethnic minorities (NDC).

The document also calls attention to the importance of better governance. It states that following the principle of subsidiarity, the direction of development is the competence of the regions, micro-regions and other regional groups. Sustainable development is the first of the seven basic principles of the NDC.

National Spatial Development Concept (NSDC) 2005–2020

The aim of the NSDC – in accordance with the NDC – is to set out the country's spatial development policy

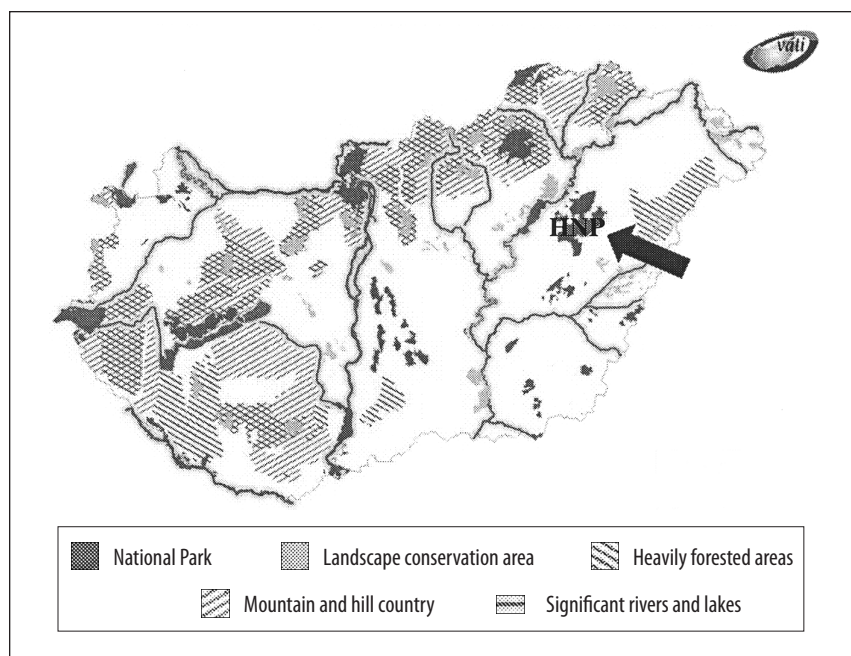


Figure. Areas with a high natural or landscape value in Hungary, including the HNP

Source: National Office for Regional Development (2005: 20).

objectives, principles and order of priorities, creating the opportunity possibilities of a consistent endorsement of regional considerations in the elaboration of all departmental policies and the national and regional programmes. The overall objectives of the document until 2020 are regional competitiveness, territorial convergence, sustainable territorial development and protection of heritage, spatial integration into Europe, decentralization and regionalism.

The document consists of the medium-term national territorial objectives until 2013 as well. In order to realize the vision and the overall objectives, it is necessary (from the national point of view) to fulfil the decisive regional objectives which are listed below (rural development is one of the six pillars in the NSDC, serving to achieve the aims of the spatial development policy):

- development of the highly competitive Budapest metropolitan area
- strengthening the poles that dynamise the regions and the development of a system of interconnections forming a network of towns
- levelling up the internal and external peripheries, backward regions
- integrated development areas and themes of national significance (Balaton area; the River Tisza area; the Danube Riverside including the whole of the sandy Danube–Tisza interfluvium); integrated territorial usage of the national reserve of thermal water and increasing the share of renewable energy resources
- strengthening the development of border regions and cooperation between cross-border regions
- spatially integrated developmental priorities for rural areas. This part defines development priorities of the different types of rural areas (also defined in the NDC, see above).

Developments will seek to serve not just the needs of the agricultural sector, but to go beyond it to eliminate the problems that typically beset rural areas, by building on their intrinsic qualities. An increase in the rate of employment is considered to require the local retention of intellectual and skilled work force, and the human and infrastructural basis capable of supporting businesses.

The document groups the micro-regions of Hungary into rural and urban areas using the following indicators:

- rural micro-regions (<120 inhabitants / km²)
- rural micro-regions with an urban centre (<120 inhabitants / km²), urban centre (min. 20,000 inhabitants)
- urban micro-regions (>120 inhabitants / km²)

Three from the ten micro-regions with HNP area belong to rural micro-regions with an urban centre and seven to rural micro-regions.

Regional development concepts

From 2007 on, the NUTS-2 regions in Hungary prepared their development strategies with their own funds as part of the New Hungary Development Plan for EU Structural Funds 2007–2013. The area of the HNP, as shown in Table, is part of two NUTS-2 regions, namely the Észak Magyarország / North Hungary and the Észak Alföld / North Great Plain. Regional development concepts highlight the HNP as a resource of the regions, but it is less important in the case of the North Hungarian Regional Plan. The development option in the case of North Hungary in relation to this resource is eco-tourism, because there are other protected areas in this region (Figure).

One of the specific objectives of the Strategic Programme of the North Great Plain Region is creating an Eco-region. The objective is the establishment, conservation and

sustainable use of the natural and environmental systems of the region, their management as environmental values ("Eco-region"). Priorities behind this objective are:

- protection and sustainable development of the region's natural conditions, creation of a safe environment
- environmentally sustainable development, sustainable economic activities based on environmental attributes (NHDP, 2007).

Leader

The third level examined along the development policy in question is the micro-region level. The Leader programme, started as a Community Initiative in the European Union in 1991, has given positive results in the rural development of the EU-15 and became the fourth axis of rural development between 2007 and 2013. A Leader + type pilot programme was launched in Hungary in 2001, but settlements from the HNP region did not take part in this programme.

The Hungarian Leader + programme was part of the Agricultural and Rural Development Operative Programme (2004–2006). Some settlements of the HNP region took part in Leader + programme, but the core region of the HNP, although forming a Local Action Group (LAG), finally was not among the 70 groups which were selected and were given the possibility to start their project with funding of EUR 400 000 per group in 2006.

Between 2007 and 2013, 96 LAGs in Hungary got the possibility to start their project and in this period all settlements belonging to the HNP area take part in a LAG. Altogether, there are even LAGs in the region with settlements linked to the HNP area. The core LAG of the region carrying the name of Hortobágy includes the highest number of settlements (7) with a link to the protected area. The aim of this LAG is creating sustainability in line with competitiveness. An important task is to increase the identity of people in the region.

Agri-environment management

One of the first measures along rural development in the EU was the agri-environment instrument. This was the only compulsory tool of the rural development regulation. As it is linked to agricultural production, we can examine it as a sectoral instrument. This measure is intended to promote the ways of using agricultural land which are compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, countryside, landscape, natural resources, soil and genetic diversity (Regulation (EEC) 2078/92).

After EU accession, Hungary had to prepare the National Rural Development Plan (NRDP) which included Hungarian regulations for Agri-Environmental Measures (AEMs). The correlation between the proportion of county areas involved in AEMs and the proportion of county areas under natural protection and LFAs was either low or non-existent. One of the reasons is that stewardship measures gave the 50% of the territory. In terms of AEM strictness, the share of land

under AEMs among the four regulatory categories ranked as follows: 69.8% of the territory lies in the first category specified as a less normative, 19.5% falls in the second category, 6.9% in the third, and 3.8% in the fourth with the highest strictness level (Katona-Kovács, 2007).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are presented along three outcomes. First, the rationale behind targeting a convergence region is discussed. In the second step, the capacity of a targeted territory is emphasised, and finally the linking of the targeting dimensions (environment protection, development policies) is stressed.

The examined HNP region forms the periphery of the counties it covers. This resulted in a restricted development along its history. It was always in the background as regards the distribution of resources and funds (Fehér, 1994). Sources of sectoral policies, even in the case of agri-environment management, also easier find stronger, bigger participants of the sector. While there are good examples, in Austria where AEMs were particularly relevant for mountain farmers, in Hungary, although these measures are also very important for farmers in restricted areas, most of such payments did not address these farms (Katona-Kovács, Dax, 2008). Agreeing with the statement of Núñez regarding this backwardness, it is important to directly distribute sources to these areas, for example, with a better targeting of AEMs. In our opinion, if the sources arrive indirectly through more developed regions, it may happen that they will meet the requirements of those regions and not of the poorer inhabitants. In development documents, the environmental value of these regions is emphasised from the aspect of society, but less attention is given to people living in the study territory and facing the problem of periphery and the consequences of environmental strictness.

Taking the results of the RUREMPLO project (Terluin, Post, undated) which states that there is no formula of success, but there are basic lessons, and the basic principle is the improvement of the capacity of local actors. Resources can be directed to a convergence region only if it has the human capacity to utilize them. So the first step should be development of the human capacity of a region.

There are a lot of documents targeting the HNP from different aspects. The protection of the environment is controlled and strict rules are monitored through different institutions. It is important to link all institutions involved along the HNP area from different aspects, as their networking could help to solve the problem of constraints. The bottom-up approach could be a possibility for the HNP, as the results of the RUREMPLO show, to strengthen the cooperation of actors inside and outside the region; it is the basic principle of the development of a region (Terluin, Post, undated). Dwyer and Findeis (2008: 38) indicate that group activities and networks can also be central for a successful rural

environmental management. In their work they wrote: “Effective environmental management and the provision of ecosystem services often require collective action holders. This is a key theme of **bioregionalism** – the principle that natural resources management is best organised with reference to natural territorial units rather than in relation to administrative boundaries (Thayer, 2003). The sense of place experienced and valued by rural people may be built upon elements of local custom, tradition and links with land or other local nature features”. In the work of Lee et al. (2005: 281) carried out within the RESTRIM project they state: “Good networks are inclusive, facilitating collective learning, allowing sharing of success and generating wider social acceptance. In this context, it is notable that most expenditure under the EU Rural Development Regulation is targeted at individuals rather than collective activities. There is a scope for the RDR to be more effective through promoting collective action”.

Finally, we can say that the targeting of the HNP region should be developed, but it already exists. The HNP has a combination of weaknesses (low population density) and strengths (high natural capital). Building the human capital to effectively use the support from the different sources is an important aspect of encouraging the sustainable development of the region. Building a better link between the dimensions targeting the region is also important. The leader program could be a starting point to solve these problems through “*bioregionalism*”, especially in the core Local Action Group of the HNP area.

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NACIONALINIO PARKO PATIRTIES NAGRINĖJIMAS**

S a n t r a u k a

ES kaimo plėtros politikos priemonių veiksmingumas ir tikslinis planavimas, antrasis bendrosios politikos ramstis, tapo svarbiu aspektu Vidurio ir Rytų Europos šalims stojant į ES. Šiame straipsnyje nepateikiama atsakymo, bet pabrėžiami tikslinio planavimo sunkumai, iškilę Vengrijos nacionaliniam parkui. Remiantis turima literatūra tyrimai buvo atliekami Vengrijos Hortobágy nacionaliniame parke: pirmiausia apžvelgiant kaip gamtinio draustinio teritoriją, toliau nagrinėjant institucinę struktūrą ir galiausiai – plėtros politiką. Rezultatai rodo, kad atsakymas į problemos sprendimą gali būti požiūris „iš apačios į viršų“ per „bioregionalizmą“.

Raktažodžiai: kaimo plėtra, teritorinis tikslinis planavimas, saugomos teritorijos