(Projects submitting final reports after 1 January 2014 must use this format.)

LIFE09NAT/LT/00581

FINAL Report
Covering the project activities from 13/10/2010 to 01/10/2014

Reporting Date
26/10/2015

ECONAT

Development of Pilot Ecological Network through Nature Frame Areas in Southern Lithuania

Project Data

Project location	Lithuania: Alytus, Lazdijai, Varena districts
Project start date:	01-10-2010
Project end date:	30-09-2014
Total Project duration (in months)	48
Total budget	€ 765 939,09
Total eligible budget	€ 765 939,09
EU contribution:	€ 380 640,60
(%) of total costs	49,66
(%) of eligible costs	49,66

Beneficiary Data

Name Beneficiary	Lithuanian Fund for Nature
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1. List of contents

List of key-words and abbreviations

LFN – Lithuanian Fund for Nature
LZS – Lithuanian Zoological garden
AC – Amphi Consult
DNP – Dzukija National Park
VRP – Veisiejai Regional Park
MRP – Meteliai Regional Park
MoE – Ministry of Environment
RED – Regional Environmental Department
CB- coordinating beneficiary
AB – Associated beneficiary
E.o. – European pond turtle (Emys orbicularis)
Target species - all species foreseen in the project:
H.a. – tree frog Hyla arborea
B.b. – fire-bellied toad Bombina bombina
P.f.- The common spadefoot Pelobates fuscus
B.c - Natterjack toad Bufo calamita
B.v - European green toad Bufo viridis
R.a. - Moor frog Rana arvalis
R.l. - Pool frog Rana lessonae
L.a. - Sand lizard Lacerta agilis
EN – ecological network
EPMA - The Environment Projects Management Agency

2. Executive Summary

Overall aim of the project was to create an ecological network in Southern Lithuania by ensuring favourable conservation status for and the saving of threatened populations of selected Annex II and Annex IV species and simultaneously enhancing the ecological value of the target area. The aim was reached fulfilling the project's objectives:

1. **To secure the long-term viability of Annex II and Annex IV species populations**

Pond creation and restoration is more than foreseen to reach coherent connectivity of the populations of the rarest species of herpetofauna in Lithuania, i.e. Eo and Ha. This objective was reached by restoring habitats and creating new habitats: raising water level in the wetlands, digging ponds, clearing bushes, creating shallow slopes, amphibian hibernation places and egg laying places for E.o. Sustainable land use practice is successfully implemented in the demonstration farm. To ensure long term impact of these efforts: Action plans for Eo and Ha were prepared, 4 new and 1 extended Natura2000 areas were designated, nature management plans for these areas were prepared, an example of the demonstration farm widely disseminated.

2. **To develop a pilot ecological network in Southern Lithuania**

The criteria and methodology for establishing of the network were developed and C actions implemented for creating the network in practice. GIS model created for dissemination of best practice of development of ecological network for protected amphibian species.

3. **To save the small and isolated populations of *Emys orbicularis* and *Hyla arborea* in Southern Lithuania.**

E.o. population conservation was carried out by protection of egg clutches in situ (all known egg laying sites were protected from predators by nocturnal watch and covering) and rearing of eggs ex situ (127 juveniles reared). 101 turtle juveniles released into 8 restored habitats spread in the overall area of the ecological network. H.a. rearing in situ was carried on, during 3 years 2799 metamorphosed Ha were released in 10 ponds in the target areas LT06 and LT07.

4. **To raise awareness of the local population**

There was much done on education of the general public. The press releases broadcasted, which were widely accepted by the wide range of mass media, starting from the main Lithuanian television channels to the local newspapers of Lazdijai district. The numbers of schoolchildren reached by the lessons is much higher than foreseen in the application. 11 guided tours were organized in the project area, educational trail by Ilgabalė wetland installed. Constant meetings with the landowners were held. The webpage was constantly updated. The web camera was acting on the LZS webpage which can be accessed by anybody. Dissemination material produced and distributed during different events. Also extra events have been organised outside LIFE which also spread message about LIFE and the project.

5. **To generate, share and exchange expert knowledge**

4 workshops were organised, all of them sharing not only Lithuanian experience, but also experience from a wide range of the other countries. A final seminar was organised as an international conference, presenting experience acquired during the project and comparing it with experience from the other European countries. 4 study tours on topics, which were the most relevant for the project partners to Germany, Latvia - Estonia, Denmark and Poland were organised. Project team communicated with other LIFE projects and their experts. Several visits were made, also not only LIFE but other projects were involved. 5 meetings with other projects implemented: 4 of them with other LIFE projects, 1 with non EU financed. Informational material for agricultural advisers and farmers, Handbook on Natural Frame, Best Practice Guidelines published in Lithuanian and English and distributed among the specialists, who are interested in the experience of the project.

3. Introduction

- Overall and specific objectives

Overall aim of the project was to create an ecological network in Southern Lithuania by ensuring favourable conservation status for and the saving of threatened populations of selected Annex II and Annex IV species and simultaneously enhancing the ecological value of the target area. The aim was reached fulfilling the project's objectives:

1. To secure the long-term viability of Annex II and Annex IV species populations;
2. To develop a pilot ecological network in Southern Lithuania;
3. To save the small and isolated populations of *Emys orbicularis* and *Hyla arborea* in Southern Lithuania;
4. To raise awareness of the local population;
5. To generate, share and exchange expert knowledge.

- Which sites are involved

Target areas around: Juodabalė Zoological Reserve LT01 - LTLAZ0010; Bestraigiškė forest LT02 - LTLAZ0037; Kučiuliškės Herpetological Reserve LT03 - LTLAZ0001; Stračiūnai Reserve LT04 - LTLAZ0039; Western part of Dainava forest LT05 - LTVARB005; Petroškai Forest LT06 - LTLAZB001; Baltoji Ančia herpetological reserve LT07.

- Which habitat types and/or species are targeted

European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), Sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*), European tree-frog (*Hyla arborea*), Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), Fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*), Green toad (*Bufotes viridis*), Natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*), Pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*), Moor frog (*Rana arvalis*), Common spadefoot (*Pelobates fuscus*)

- Main conservation issues being targeted (including threats)

Loss of aquatic habitats; Predation on nests (*Emys orbicularis*); Loss of open habitats, loss of nesting area for *Emys orbicularis*; Afforestation; Introduction of fish; Habitat fragmentation and migration barriers; Lack of hibernation sites; Use of fertilizers; Introduction of alien species, invasive species; Lack of public awareness.

- Socio-economic context

Short term effects: increase of workplaces in Southern Lithuania, i.e. local specialists from the project area employed as personnel; local companies hired as external in the project. Long term effects: increase of knowledge in the region, i.e. specialists of the local authorities was trained about the needs of the target species; local schools, landowners and farmers involved in conservation of reptiles and amphibians. Overall effects: increase of the value of the landscape by restoring traditional elements, such as overgrown cattle ponds and small wetlands and increasing number of charismatic species, i.e. Eo and Ha, which attract tourism to the region.

- Expected longer term results

Ecological network for reptiles and amphibians created, which encompass ca. 40 000 ha area. Individuals of Eo increased directly by release of juveniles from estimated 500 to 601, individuals of Ha increased from estimated 2000 to 4799. Number of other target species increased by restoring their breeding and other types of habitat.

4. Administrative part (maximum 3 pages)

4.1 Description of the management system

Main project management is performed by the coordinating beneficiary (CB). In order to ensure smooth running and management of the whole project CB has dedicated wide range of specialists to fulfil task of the project. International project manager and project director (or financial manager) is set by CB. The project manager in the start of the project was Nerijus Zableckis, the executive director of the CB, but later in June 2011 this function went to Dalia Batyte, former assistant of the project manager. Nerijus Zableckis was a project director, and performed supervision of the project; controlled general performance; helped in reporting. In 2012 Nerijus Zableckis changed his role from project director to financial manager and his responsibilities included compiling financial reports and helping in certain actions of the project, such as A5, A7, C3. Whereas project manager Dalia Bastytė was responsible for smooth implementation of actions and targets, also general accountancy and technical reports. She was also responsible for organising meetings, seminars and all collaboration among the project partners.

Other AB dedicated specialist teams as foreseen in the revised application. Additionally accountants were dedicated to work for the project and manage AB finances. Every specialist or expert of the AB (VRP, DNP, MRP, LZS) has a dedication of relevant public staff for work in this LIFE+ project. 2 persons from MoE were nominated to work for the project. Every AB had to report financial and technical implementation with results to the coordinating beneficiary yearly or according to the demand. Every person filled in time sheets, which were modified after the visit of monitor.

The steering committee was set up during kick-off meeting in December 2010. It consists of the persons: Nerijus Zableckis – secretary, without voting right; chairman: Lars Briggs – director, AC ; members: A.Klimavicius – head of protected sites strategical department, MoE; Eugenijus Drobelis – head of nature department, DNP; Irma Maciuleviciene – specialist, VRP; Ramunas Krugelis – director, MRP; Virginija Raudeliuniene, deputy director, LZS. A meeting of the Steering Committee was organised once per year. There were 4 meetings of Steering Committee; the minutes of the meetings were attached in the Inception repost as annex 20, midterm report as annex 30, progress report as annex 9 and the minutes of the last meeting are attached to this report as Annex 29. Generally project management structure has not changed since the Mid-term Report. The organigramme of the management structure:

ACTION E.1: Project management and accountancy

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 30/09/2012*
Project Management Team and Project Director appointed	01/10/2010	Completed by 31/12/2010
Project's Steering Committee established	01/10/2010	Completed by 31/12/2010

Expected results: Well running project management established.

Results of action: All needed personnel employed and structures set up. There is one local manager in every AB, who delegates project tasks to personnel and ensures proper running of the project.
DNP, VRP, MRP, LZS dedicated a bit more personnel to the teams as foreseen in the revised application – accountants of AB were not foreseen in the application. List of project personnel shown in table. Higher demand for personnel was raised because of more input needed in the fieldwork.

List of personnel

Foreseen	***Employed***					
	2010	***2011***	***2012***	***2013***	***2014***	***Occupation***
		LFN				
international project manager national manager assistant, and accountant	Project manager – N.Zableckis; Manager's assistant – D.Bastytė;	Project director- N.Zableckis; Project manager- D.Bastytė; Public relations specialist – A.Zelenė; Projects accountant – L.Meškauskienė; Local expert- J.Sidaravičius	Project director/financial manager- N.Zableckis International project manager – D.Bastytė; Projects accountant - L.Meškauskienė	Financial manager- N.Zableckis; International project manager – D.Bastytė; Projects accountant - L.Meškauskienė Local expert – Ž.Sinkevičius	Financial manager- N.Zableckis; International project manager – D.Bastytė; Projects accountant - L.Meškauskienė Local expert – Ž.Sinkevičius	Part time Full time Part time Part time Temporarily
		AC				
Senior	Field expert	Local project	Local project	Local project	Local project	Part time

project manager Senior herpetologist	– M.Meeske	manager – F.Bibelriether, Senior herpetologist – L.Briggs, Field experts – W.de Vries, L.Hansen	manager – F.Bibelriether, local accountant – T.Buchwald	manager – F.Bibelriether, field expert – W.de Vries, senior Herpetologist – L.Briggs, local accountant – M.Voigt, Financial manager – M.Rasmussen	manager – F.Bibelriether, senior Herpetologist – L.Briggs, local accountant – M.Voigt, Financial manager – M.Rasmussen	Part time Part time Part time Part time
	DNP					
Local manager Local ecologist		Local manager – E.Drobelis; Biologist – V.Slavickas; Senior biologist – M.Lapelė Accountant – A.Truncienė	Local manager – E.Drobelis; Biologist – V.Slavickas; Senior biologist – M.Lapelė Accountant – A.Truncienė	Local manager – E.Drobelis; Biologist – V.Slavickas; Senior biologist – M.Lapelė Accountant – A.Truncienė	Local manager – E.Drobelis; Biologist – V.Slavickas; Senior biologist – M.Lapelė Accountant – A.Truncienė	Part time Part time Part time Part time
	MRP					
Local manager Biologist		Local manager – R.Krugelis Ecologist – I.Čitavičienė Accountant - J.Buinickienė	Local manager – R.Krugelis Ecologist – I.Čitavičienė Accountant - J.Buinickienė	Local manager – R.Krugelis Ecologist – I.Čitavičienė Accountant - J.Buinickienė	Local manager – R.Krugelis Ecologist – I.Čitavičienė Accountant - J.Buinickienė	Part time Part time Part time
	VRP					
Local manager Local biologist		Local manager – L.Žukauskienė Ecologist - I.Maciulevičienė Accountant – V.Muliuolienė	Local manager – L.Žukauskienė Ecologist - I.Maciulevičienė Accountant – V.Muliuolienė	Local manager – L.Žukauskienė Ecologist - I.Maciulevičienė Accountant – V.Muliuolienė	Local manager – L.Žukauskienė Ecologist - I.Maciulevičienė Accountant – V.Muliuolienė	Part time Part time Part time
	LZS					
Director Local manager Specialist Veterinarian Emys keeper Educational worker Worker		Local manager – V.Raudeliūnienė; Herpetologist – A.Pikūnienė; Animal keepers – J.Šimkus, D.Kalnelytė, D.Vičius, Educologists – R.Jautakienė, V.Lazarevičienė, Accountant – V.Valiulienė	Local manager – V.Raudeliūnienė; Herpetologist – A.Pikūnienė; Animal keepers – J.Šimkus, D.Kalnelytė, D.Vičius, Educologists – R.Jautakienė, V.Lazarevičienė, Accountant – V.Valiulienė Technical workers- V.Kopica, R.Mikuličius, designer – R.Malžinskaitė, specialist of technical means – P.Beinaris	Local manager – V.Raudeliūnienė; Herpetologist – A.Pikūnienė; Animal keepers – J.Šimkus, D.Kalnelytė, D.Vičius, Educologists – R.Jautakienė, V.Lazarevičienė, Accountant – V.Valiulienė	Local manager – V.Raudeliūnienė; Herpetologist – A.Pikūnienė; Animal keepers – J.Šimkus, D.Kalnelytė, D.Vičius, Educologists – R.Jautakienė, V.Lazarevičienė, Accountant – V.Valiulienė	Part time Part time Part time Part time Part time Part time Part time Part time Part time Part time
	MoE					
Biological Desk Officer		Biological Desk Officer – G.Godienė	Biological Desk Officer – G.Godienė	Biological Desk Officer – D.Sungaila	Biological Desk Officer – D.Sungaila	Part time

– Description of changes due to amendments to the Grant Agreement.

More personnel have been employed by CB and almost all partners. Accountants and additional local experts have been temporarily or part time employed because of need to fulfil actions in order to reach project goals. The comparison between applications' budget and really employed personnel is shown in E1. CB underestimated personnel cost for project manager and project accountancy. International project manager had to be employed for 100% of time instead of part time. The time unit rates are described in the comments for the financial report.

– If relevant, indicate with which report the Partnership agreements were submitted to the Commission (copies should have been given to the Commission in earlier reports, since 2007 with the inception report)

Inception report.

4.2 Evaluation of the management system

– The project management process, the problems encountered, the partnerships and their added value, including comments on any significant deviations from the arrangements contained in the partnership agreements

Constant contact (by phone and email at least once per week) was kept between the partners. Periodical meetings of AB with CB were held at least once per two months. The progress of the project actions was being discussed, further actions planned, the methods how to carry out the actions better, discussed. Especially such meetings were important when the season changes and a new group of actions start, for example, before the field season the methods for the field inventories, people interviews, habitat restoration, population conservation were discussed. After the field season the results of the previous season are discussed and habitat restorations, workshops, etc are planned or already carried out actions evaluated. It was a successful partnership and useful division of the roles because of sharing capabilities, in which each partner was the strongest, from very local expertise to international experience. Partnership agreements were attached as Annex I to the Inception Report.

– Communication with the Commission and Monitoring team

Constant communication with the Commission and Monitoring team was during the whole duration of the project. This communication helped to fulfil the actions of the project in the best way.

5.Technical part

5.2 Technical progress, per task

Actions A: Preparatory actions

ACTION A1. Development of action plans

Milestone	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 01/11/2013*
50 % of action plan prepared	01/03/2011	Completed by 30/10/2011
50 % target project areas visited	01/05/2011	Completed by 30/06/2011
All project sites visited	01/10/2011	Completed by 30/09/2011
100 % of action plan prepared*	01/10/2011	Completed by 30/10/2012
100 % of target species inventory carried out	01/10/2011	Completed by 30/07/2012
100 % of target species inventory carried out	01/10/2012	Completed by 30/07/2012

* the meaning is to have prepared action plan for creation of ecological corridors

Deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Action plans for the target species developed	01/12/2013	30/02/2015
Produced action plan	01/02/2012	Completed by 30/10/2012

Expected results: One action plan for the creation of ecological corridors; 1 National action plan for tree frog prepared and submitted to MoE; Updated national plan for E.o. and submitted to MoE.

Results of the action: The investigation of the project area itself consisted of surveying the distribution and abundance of the project species, their habitats, studying the localities to define the potential corridors and places for habitat management, identifying the landowners, with whom the project could cooperate in the actions of habitat and population management. All the project areas were visited by the project staff. During these visits the state of small water bodies and surrounding environment was evaluated and distribution of amphibian species surveyed. The species distribution is marked in the data base (Action E2).

The action plans for the corridors are attached in Annex 1. The action plans are prepared for each project site, i.e. LT01 – LT07. These plans were prepared according to the species distribution and the landscape. The permissions for each concrete action from the landowners and/or municipality were achieved before starting each concrete habitat restoration action. All the project concrete conservation actions were later implemented according to these plans.

In the period from 01/11/2013 till 30/09/2014: The action plans for *Emys orbicularis* and *Hyla arborea* were finalised, attached as Annexes 2 and 3.

Encountered problems: The action plans for the target areas were prepared later than foreseen, because the project team needed one more spring-summer season to inventory amphibians. This delay had no effect on the implementation of the project, because habitat restoration activities were started on time in the places, which where the species distribution was well known. The action plans for the species were completed later than foreseen, because of the need to have them legally accepted by the MoE.

EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12: I am concerned that the foreseen project action plan and consequent deliverables are substantially delayed, some being due since 01110/2011. Similarly action plans for the target species should have been developed by 01/02/2012 according to the corrected project time schedule submitted with the Inception report. Please ensure the completion of action A.1, including all the related field works before this year ends.

Reply to the request: The action plan is based very much on the inventory of the target species, which can happen only in the warm season (April – September). Therefore, having in mind that the project has started 01-10-2010, the deadline 01/03/2011 for the action plan was not realistic.

EC's request in the letter of 18/08/14: I note that the national action plans for the target species Hyla arborea and Emys orbicularis are still not yet completed, despite the fact that this action has already been extended twice (first till 1 December 2013 and later till 1 April 2014). I understand that the plans were expected to be completed and submitted to the Ministry of Environment in July 2014. Please note that in order to consider the costs incurred for the preparation of these action plans eligible they have to be completed by the end of the project and approved by the competent authority, and legally operational by the submission of the project's final report at the very latest.

Reply to the request: The discussions with the MoE continued for 2 years, but the plans were submitted only in the end of the project. Currently, MoE wrote official notes, that MoE agrees with the content of the plans and the plans are on the way to be legally operational (attached as Annexes 2a (Ha) and 3a (Eo)). However, by the submission of the final report, they are not legally operational yet.

The total cost for the action is 47 585 €, exceeding planned budget by 17 004 € due to higher demand of personnel (11 709 eur more than planed), more trips to the sites in travel (2875 € more than planed) and more external (5070 € more than planed) for experts, who performed research and evaluation of the sites, selecting ecological corridors, places for habitat restoration etc. Therefor we confirm that 80 % (38 068 €) of the whole amount was spent on elaboration and REGULAR UPDATES OF the action plan for the creation of ecological corridors while 20 % (9517 €) were spent on update of the national action plan for the E.o. and development of new national action plan for tree frog. Since update of the plan for E.o. required the same volume of work as elaboration of new plan due to changed regulations and requirements, therefor each plan cost the same amount - 4758.5 €

ACTION A2. Rearing methods for *Emys orbicularis*

Milestone/deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Elaboration of rearing methods	01/03/2013	Completed by 01/03/2013

Expected results: Development of methods for 2 type of breeding ex-situ: 1. Egg collection and rearing of hatchlings and 2. Adult turtle rearing. Experience exchange visits: 4 visits to Latvia, 1 to Poland, 1 to Germany and 1 conference (Actions D.1 and D.3).

Results of the action: The methodology of rearing turtles was completed and attached as Annex 2 to the Midterm Report. The methodology was updated until release of the juveniles in July 2014, the last version attached as Annex 4 to this report. 1 study tour organised for experience exchange with E.o. rearing institutions in Germany, which was described under D3. Constant contact by phone and email is kept with a LIFE+ Project LIFE-HerpetoLatvia LIFE09NAT/LV/000239. The project staff participated in a workshop – conference, organised by LIFE-HerpetoLatvia and presented our experience (please refer to the action E4).

In the period from 01/11/2013 till 30/09/2014: A study tour to Poland was organised, where experience in equipping turtle rearing facilities was exchanged among Lithuanian and Polish specialists and experience of release of the reared turtles was acquired from Polesia National Park (please refer to the action D7). One section of the Final seminar was devoted for the turtle rearing (please refer to the action D7)

Encountered problems: None.

ACTION A3. Determining the favourable conservation status for Annex IV amphibian and reptile species in South Lithuania

Milestone/deliverables	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Definition of favourable conservation status for Annex IV amphibian and reptile species	01/03/2013	Completed by 01/03/2013

Expected results: Definition of criteria for favourable conservation status of target species: H.a., P.f., B.c., B.v., R.a., R.l., L.a.

Results of the action: The criteria are attached as Annex 5. The criteria were compiled based on observations of the experts in the project sites, discussion with project partners and comparison with similar population structures in adjacent biogeographical areas (NE Poland, Latvia, Estonia). Indicative features were selected by comparing different evaluation systems of other EU countries. The criteria are accepted by the MoE as a tool, which can be used in the known habitats of the target species. The official note from MoE is attached as Annex 6.

Encountered problems: The target species have not been monitored neither have population been observed and analysed intensively over the last decades in Lithuania. This creates difficulties when trying to define the favourable conservation status for the species in Lithuania. Therefore, the existing data, together with recent observations gained by the project formed the basis for the formulation of the criteria for the conservation status. In order to reach the goal, data from comparable landscapes and habitats were included in the process of writing the favourable conservation status. The lack of data about the species distribution and abundance also creates a problem for the MoE to use the criteria in practice. Therefore the specialists from MoE have asked to help developing a methodology for investigating a certain data set which would be representative for the Lithuanian population.

In the period from 01/11/2013 till 30/09/2014: A meeting with Dalius Sungaila from MoE about the methodology of monitoring of herpetofauna species under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive was carried out. During the meeting Danish expert Dr. Kåre Fog told about advantages and disadvantages of Danish monitoring system and described the system he recommends to use for Lithuania.

ACTION A.4: Ecological network-development

Milestone	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Scenario and regulation of ecological network prepared	31/12/2012	Completed by 30/09/2012

Deliverables	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 01/11/2013*
Scenario for ecological network development	01/02/2012	Completed by 30/10/2012

Expected results: Criteria for setting the ecological network prepared 2. The management regulation prepared and proposed for MoE; 3. Implementation of demonstration example in Alytus County.

Results of the action: Development of **the scenario for the ecological network** is completed. It was attached as Annex 5 to the Mid-term report. The scenario defines that ecological network is a model for protecting biological diversity with regard to the negative affecting human use of natural resources. The project investigates target species´ distribution and abundance in the project areas as well as classification of land-use elements and management schemes as basis for the drawing of the ecological network. E.o. is chosen as an umbrella species. Core areas have to be made of suitable water bodies, total water surface > 1 ha (in spring and early summer) located in distances < 500 m to each other and >10 nesting places. Corridors can be linear, stepping stones and made of interlinked landscape matrices' areas. Buffer zones around core areas and corridors linking core areas are necessary with small human impact and sustainable land use.

The demonstration example is created so, that it would connect Natura2000 areas which are designated for the target species (including the areas which are designated during the project) in the region of Southern Lithuania. The umbrella species is E.o. The habitat restoration is targeted towards the needs of other target species in cases when the populations of these species are small and isolated. The demonstration example is created in 7 areas, which connect all Natura2000 in the area. The main activity for the demonstration example is restoration of water habitats this way reducing the spatial resistance of landscape for species which are directly dependent on small shallow standing water bodies.

The criteria for setting the ecological network and management regulation is prepared as "Methodology for Creating the Ecological Network for the Target Species in the Nature Frame" and submitted to MoE, was attached as Annex 8 to the Progress Report. The methodology describes the legal basis for creating an ecological network, defines the goal, objectives of planning the network and a scope of the methodology. The methodology defines criteria for core zones and ecological corridors according to the needs of the target species. It outlines the management regulation to maintain the network. The methodology also describes how the ecological network can be planned using GIS databases, to be possible to replicate the ecological network in the other regions of Lithuania. An official note from MoE is attached as Annex 9. In the note it is stated, that

the methodology is a useful methodological means for preparing local territorial planning documents. It is recommended to use the methodology for specialists of territorial planning to project the needs of the target species in the plans. A handbook, according to the plans of Action D4., was prepared.

ACTION A.5: Establishing new Natura 2000 sites

Milestone	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
All new Natura 2000 sites proposed	01/06/2014	06/12/2013

Deliverables	Deadline according to the project	*Date of completion*
Local plans for new Natura 2000 sites developed	01/08/2014	19/09/2014

Expected results: 5 new Natura 2000 sites (from several hectares up to 10-20 ha) established; 5 local management plans prepared and submitted to MoE.

Results of the action: 5 new and 1 extension of existing *Natura 2000* site were submitted to MoE for inclusion into the list of *Natura 2000* sites. The letter of submission of new Natura 2000 sites for MoE is attached as Annex 10. 4 sites are located in the state owned land, and 7 private owners own 1 site (called Vilkiautinio – Radyščiaus site). Agreements for state owned land were obtained from local Division of Lazdijai of National Land Service under the Ministry of Agriculture and additionally agreed by appointed owners (Veisiejai Forestry Enterprise), which will administer the area in the future. Proposals for inclusion of sites into Natura 2000 list were based on criteria for Sites of Community Importance according to the Ministerial order No.291 of 20-04-2001.

4 sites were designated as Natura2000 by order of the Minister No. D1-783 (The order attached in Annex 10) and Natura 2000 site Bestraigiske LTLAZ0037 was extended from 47 ha to 61,5 ha adding 14,5 ha of nesting sites of E.o., which were found as a result of project ECONAT actions. Maps of the areas are attached as Annex 11.

Table. Newly designated Natura2000

No.	Project area	Name	Size (ha)	Target species
1	LT01	Šlavantų kaimo apylinkės LTLAZ0040	8	B.b >500 in., T.c> 100 ind.
2	LT01	Avižienių miškas LTLAZ0041	14,7	T.c.> 150 ind.
3	LT02	Bestraigiškių kaimo apylinkės LTLAZ0037	47+14,5	E.o ~15 ind., 2 egglaying sites
4	LT03	Drapalių kaimo apylinkės LTDRU0004	3,6	E.o. ~ 10 ind., 2 egglaying sites, B.b > 60 ind.
5	LT06	Paveisiejų kaimo apylinkės LTDRU0042	11,6	E.o. ~ 10 ind., 1 egglaying site

It was not possible to convince the landowners to establish protected area in Vilkiautinis-Radyščius site. After discussions with MoE and SC it was decided that at the current stage no constraint for the landowners should be used, because it could cause hostility of the landowners and eradication of turtles as a consequence. The data for designating Natura 2000 was transferred to MoE. MoE, as responsible institution, sent official notes to the landowners (7 landowners and municipality, an example from one of the landowners is attached as Annex 13a), explaining, what are the responsibilities and benefits from strictly protected species that lives on their land. The note is introducing the landowners that in that area Natura2000 will be designated and the landowners will be consulted about concrete conservation measures applied for that site. Additionally, State Land Foundation performs establishment of Bestraigiske herpetological reserve, which currently is in progress.

Vilkiautinis-Radyščius site is an important part of the ecological network, it connects the target areas LT04 and LT05, and therefore all habitat restoration works carried out in Vilkiautinis-Radyščius site were necessary for establishment of the ecological network.

Management plans are prepared for all 5 sites, attached as Annex 12a, b, c, d, e. The plans describe and assess state of Natura 2000 areas, target and other rare species in the area. Aim, objectives, means to reach the objectives and their alternatives are set in the plans. The nature management actions are set in concrete plan, the institutions which are going to implement the actions are appointed, their human resources and technical possibilities analysed, budget for the actions calculated. In the end, monitoring and revision of the management plan is defined.

The plans are officially approved by the local forestry enterprises (in the cases, when the enterprises own the forest), Directorates of the local protected areas, Regional Environmental Department, Municipality and State Service for Protected Areas. After the plans were approved by all stakeholders, they were sent to MoE.

EC's request in the letter of 18/08/14: I understand that the work on the management plans for the new Natura2000 areas is ongoing and are planned to be completed and submitted for approval to the Ministry of Environment by 15 September 2014. Please submit the final versions along with their official approval documents with the final report at the latest.

Please note that in case the management plans are not legally operational by that stage, the relevant costs may be considered ineligible. Otherwise please provide a written confirmation from the Ministry of Environment that those plan not yet operational will be adopted after the end of the project, and indicate the expected time frame, funding and other relevant details."

Reply to the request: MoE replied to us with an official note, that MoE approve the management means, MoE plans to adopt the plans during 2015 and names the foreseen funding. The note is attached as Annex 13.

ACTION A.6: Preparation for permissions

Milestone	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
50% of permissions achieved	01/03/2012	Completed by 01/03/2012
100% of permissions achieved	01/03/2014	01/03/2014

Expected results: 40 permissions for management.

Results of the action: The permissions were achieved for the habitat management from the private landowners and from the state institutions in the cases when the land is owned by the state for digging ponds, cutting trees and to work with the protected species. We have achieved 95 permissions from the private owners to work on their land and 36 permissions from the state institutions.

ACTION A.7: Farm development

Milestone	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 01/11/2013*
Ecological development of 2 farms carried out	31/12/2012 (originally it was 01/06/2014)	Completed 10/05/2013

Expected results: 2 farms established; 10 horses, cattle or 20 sheep purchased; contribution to farm business (development) plan made.

Results of the action: one beef demonstration farm established, 22 *Angus* breed beef cattle purchased, grazing performed in a core area of the network, farm business plan made.
Action is completed and promised results and objectives are reached. The primary objective of this action was to demonstrate possibility for long term farming in accordance to nature conservation objectives by meeting target species needs in farmed area.

The grazing aims to keep open shorelines of the turtle ponds, nesting sites and the buffer zones open. The area of enclosures encompasses the main ponds and egg laying sites of the Eo population in the Reserve. There are 4 ponds (6500m^2 of water surface) and egg laying sites (900m^2 surface), restored by previous conservation efforts inside the enclosures. Also there are 5 ponds created (Action C1) in this project (namely Juodabalė 166, Juodabalė

206, Ročkiai 175, Ročkiai 177A and Ročkiai 178) with the water surface of 5000m^2, 2 ponds restored (Action C2), i.e. Ročkiai 176 and Ročkiai 177, with the restored shallow parts of 4000m^2; 2 dams (Ročkiai 2, Ročkiai 3) built (Action C3), damming creating 6500m^2 of wetland; and 3 egg laying sites created (Action C1), with the surface of 80m^2.

Setting the farm

We established 1 farm in one core area instead of 2 farms in two core areas of the ecological network. Since the action is listed under A actions, the main goal is demonstration, which was achieved by establishing one bigger farm instead of 2 smaller farms. Purchasing 22 cattle instead of foreseen 10 cattle due to demonstrative reasons doubled the initial amount of cattle. The reason behind was that small farms are not economically capable to sustain themselves; they are limited by possibilities to realize the production for reasonable price, which could enable them to continue grazing and expansion of the farm. Such farms cannot act as demonstration farms. When selecting the farmers we did consultations with Swedish experts from WWF and used previous LIFE project experience in working with small farms. Technically we achieved project objective – demonstration of habitat management of target species by setting up one farm.

Selection of the farmer

The farmer was selected based on the requirements listed in the application, e.g.:

1. Registered as a farmer;
2. Owns or rents farmland within a Natura 2000 area, designated for the target species of the project, i.e. Emys orbicularis, Bombina bombina or Triturus cristatus, not less than 5 ha, including ponds and slopes;
3. Agrees to project requirements: keep extensive meet cattle, i.e. either Galloway, or Aberdeen Angus, or Hereford, or Lithuanian traditional breeds inside *Natura 2000* area with the habitats in the need extensive farming; graze according to grazing plan.

   Bellow there is a table of farmers, who were interviewed.

Table. Farmers, who were interviewed

Name of the farmer	The area	The species	Additional information
Stasė Chadijeva	Kučiuliškė Herpetological Reserve	*Emys orbicularis*	Has some land in the Reserve, but not enough and couldn't see the possibilities to rent (or buy)more land
Valė Šimakauskienė	Kučiuliškė Herpetological Reserve	*Emys orbicularis*	Has some land in the Reserve, but uses it for hey production, to graze with the cattle there for the farmer seems too far away – could not take care of the cows
Virgis Kukučionis	Veisiejai Regional Park	*Hyla arborea*	Owns two ponds with Hyla arborea, it is the target species, but Annex IV of the Habitat directive, moreover, the farmer intends to keep intensive meet cattle, which is not suitable for the habitat management
Liudas Jurčiukonis	Juodabalė Herpetological Reserve	*Emys orbicularis, Lacerta agilis, Bombina bombina, Rana lessonae*	Has some land in the Reserve, rents half of the Reserve land, grows crop there, agrees to convert his ploughed fields into pastures for the extensive meat cattle

Young farmer Liudas Jurciukonis was selected since he met all requirements.

Agreement

Agreement No. MEATBAL-FL1 with the farmer Liudas Jurciukonis was signed on 18th May 2012 (agreement and its' translation attached as annex 57). The farmer was granted 94 118 LTL (27 258,46 €) for purchase of not less than 20 cattle. In turn the farmer was obliged to purchase cattle, prepare winter stable, restore meadow, get permits for renting the land, fence enclosures, finally graze 70 ha of the area according to the plan keeping proportion of not more than 1 cattle/1 ha. The farmer was paid only for cattle purchase. Attached invoices (annex 58) prove that 22 cattle were purchased for agreed amount. Other obligations were fulfilled by the farmers' own resources, however fencing of enclosures was significantly delayed due to disagreement by land owners and changed ownership of land parcels in Meteliai Regional Park.

If the farmer breaks the agreement, he returns a proportional amount of the money, each year of implementation the amount is 10%, i.e. if the farmer breaks the agreement after 1st year, he returns 90% of the sum, if he breaks the agreement after the 2nd year, he returns 80% of the sum and so on. In such case LFN will use received money to establish another farm.

After 5 years the farmer has to give back 11 cattle of equal sex to the Lithuanian Fund for Nature, which is going to be used to establish other farms for the habitat management of herpetological sites unless farmer will use heifer (bulls will be sold to get income for the farm) to increase the herd and expand grazed area keeping agreed intensity of grazing (not more than 1 cow per ha).

Grazed area

Total grazed area in the end of the project was 92,34 ha, out of which 56,99 ha are in Meteliai regional park, which is *Natura 2000* site as indicated in the grazing map (annex 26) It is 81% out of the promised 70 ha totally. It was impossible to acquire 70 ha of the area in *Natura 2000* site, therefore additional area was grazed outside protected area, however this land falls within the ecological corridor No.LT01; Fire bellied toads and green toads are found within these plots. Projects AB MRP performs monitoring and keeps regular contact with farmer to supervise the grazing and fulfilment of foreseen 70 ha inside Natura 2000.

Table. Grazed area.

Plot No. / area, ha	In Natura 2000	
	2013	*2014*
1	22,74	22,74
2	14,96	14,96
3		9,79
4*		9,50
total	**37,7**	**56,99**
	Non Natura	
	2013	*2014*
5	15,35	15,35
6	20,00	20,00
total	**35,35**	**35,35**
subtotal	**73,05**	**92.34**

* the plot No.4 was set in September 2014 at the end of the project.

We acknowledge that farmer did not fulfil his obligation to perform grazing in promised area of 70 ha, instead it was grazed 57 ha; therefor we assume that part of of incurred

farmers' expenditure are ineligible to be declared to the project. Total expenditure of the action was 37 375,52 €, the biggest amount incurred in external – 28 396, therefore we acknowledge that 3556 € paid in external is ineligible due to not complete fulfilment of obligation to graze in Natura 2000 site and avoidance of substantial budget changes over 10% and 30 000 of the category.

Model

The selected farmer Liudas Jurciukonis serves as a good example for other farmers.
It follows criteria of grazing, favourable for protected species: European pond turtle, Great crested newt and Fire-bellied toad.
Grazing criteria developed by project experts for target species are:

- Density of cattle;
- Timing of grazing
- Regular supervision of pastures including natural key elements;
- Proper manure management in wintertime.

Density of cattle is regulated according to seasons, which are distinguished into early summer (spring-July) and later summer (July – autumn). Intensity of grazing is calculated: 1 adult cows/1 ha. Calves and heifers are converted into adult cows according to the rules of organic farming, approved by the Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture, there are recommended densities in the handbook (page 59) for the farmers and agri-advisors on beef farming (Action D4.) (it can be downloaded at http://www.glis.lt/?pid=48 .
Known egg laying places after discussion with nature conservation specialists and botanists were fenced against cattle. Manure coming from cattle might fertilize the place and change the vegetation structure into more dense cover, which will change microclimate and thus, negatively influence success of the hutch, or even make the place unsuitable for egg laying. It was enough that cattle graze around the nesting sites and keep good accessibility for young turtles to reach water bodies from nesting sites. AB MRP regularly mows nesting sites; therefor it is enough to graze surrounding places and water bodies keeping them ungrown.

Grazing was organised according to grazing plan, which is attached as annex 26. It was developed after consultations with WWF experts, experienced in management of semi-natural pastures, and exchanging experience with other NGOs working on semi-natural pastoralism, e.g. European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism. As it is indicated in the grazing plan, there are recommended densities of cattle per 1 ha in extensively and intensively farmed areas. Grazing in project sites was organised in a way, that total grazing density of cows (adult and calves) does not exceed the recommended figures while temporary grazing in separate plots might exceed recommended intensity of grazing. Since cattle are moved between the plots, thus, overgrazing is avoided, or in opposite, cattle are staying longer in a plot if enough grass is available. Therefore in *Natura 2000* site grazing in early summer in 2014 was 2 adult cows in one ha, while in late summer it reached only 0.6 and 0.5 cattle in 2013 and 2014 correspondingly. Intensively managed plots are important for sustainable grazing since cattle are moved to these plots to feed while grass is recovering in the plots within *Natura 2000* site. However even in these plots density of cattle remains 1.2 – 1.5 cattle in one ha which is several time less than recommended 3 adult cows in one ha in early summer or 1.5 adult cow in late summer.
Generally, in all project sites grazing regime was more intensive in early summer due to more intensive grazing in smaller area including intensively managed plots. However

grazing periods were brief and always followed by longer periods with no grazing. It was avoided that all parts of the terrain were not completely grazed. Grazing intensity was higher in early summer and much lower in late summer and autumn; generally bellow 1 adult cow in one ha. We have to keep in mind that these areas are dominated by sandy soils, with only small parts of more fertile and intensively managed areas, e.g. plot No.5. Therefore we can conclude, that such management is optimal for the area and target species, but it must spread out over the space in the future to avoid too high density of cattle in these poor soil habitats.
This experience and description of grazing model for amphibians and reptiles is described in the handbook mentioned above. Model was demonstrated for other farmers by organising 3 field days in projects farm. Liudas example was shown to regional farmers, who either have beef cattle, or have plans to buy it, and have intentions to manage beef herds in nature friendly way or areas, which are not suitable for intensive farming. This particularly concerns grazing "wild areas": wetlands, sandy slopes, forests, selection of beef breeds most fitting to such conditions, grazing intensity etc.
Few farmers already established their farms using our farm experience. Farmer Kęstutis Jungevicius in Vytautai village, which is located in 5 km distance from Liudas farm and still falls within corridor LT01 started his farm in 2011, but all wetlands were fenced against cattle. After visit of Liudas farm he changed his mind and removed fences from the wetlands letting cattle graze and keep open wet habitats. One farmer in Simnas county about 10 km from Liudas farm started growing limusines (heavy and intensive breed) in rather sandy soils. He learnt that extensive grazing is possible even for more intensive breeds in rather economically perspective way while meat quality is better if cattle grow in semi-natural pastures. Aretas Paplauskas, who is farming in Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve, visited project farm several times and discussed about cooperation for marketing the beef meat.
2 farmers in Zarasai in Northern Lithuania: Gintaris Petrenas and Pavelas Kelecius had experience exchange with Liudas farm. As a result they extended their extensive farms and established their own reprocessing factory, which will let the farmers sell their production for reasonable price and continue extensive farming. Rare birds species, e.g. corn crakes are breeding in extensively managed meadows. Also another LIFE+ project „Restoration of degrading habitats of Community interest in the protected areas of Lithuania" LIFE10 NAT/LT/117, learnt lessons from Liudas farm. Project beneficiary Kurtuvenai Regional Park visited Liudas farm in 2013 to discuss actual questions on establishment of farm. The farm was set in their project site in 2014. The farmers were advised to use the economic appraisal, applied in Liudas farm, which is helpful tool in evaluation of farm profitability. (see section on farm business plan).
The programmes of field days are attached with lists of participants as annex 58. Totally 60 farmers and nature conservation specialists took part. As a follow up of these field days, the informal network of farmers was established, who are "pioneers" in beef farming. Constant contacts are kept with these farmers to replicate our farming model.

Farm business plan

In order to help the farmer to orientate in the incomes and expenditures of the farm and at the same time control the herd , a farm business plan was developed. It consists of two parts: 1. the economic appraisal, which was elaborated in collaboration with WWF experts; 2. Herd plan until 2018, which was established by Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service. The economic appraisal is based on the actual expenses incurred by the farmer for

cattle maintenance: ensuring stable, fencing the pastures, ensuring fodder, veterinary etc.; and incomes, received from the selling the offspring, receiving subsidies and other incomes if any. The appraisal covers only that part, which is related to animal production, e.g. production of grain, preparation of hay, but also it involves also not directly related incomes, for example selling of diary cows, which were replaced by beef cattle. Therefor it shows significant income but it is important to underline that such appraisal is helpful for any farmer, who wants to know approximate financial situation.
The herd plan shows the entire structure of the herd: new born, needs for a new bull, changes in age (from heifer to cow etc.), possible deaths, possible realization (selling) and total remaining amount . Based on the calculation it is shown that in 2018 total number of cows might be 51.8 , while selling every year about 20-30 bulls/heifers up to 2 years age. Business plan attached as annex 59.

EC letters:

EC's request in the letter of 09.10.2012.

- Please inform me what format the cooperation with the farmers will take, given that the 2nd farm will develop as planned. Please note that this action should not aim to be a management one, but rather be a demonstration activity, to show long-term farm development possibilities for nature conservation.
- I need you to provide the documented procedure for selection used to choose the farmers and explain how equal participation opportunities for all the farmers have been implemented (in compliance with the criteria and procedure for the selection process) in your upcoming report.
- I wish to emphasize that recurring habitat management activities are not eligible in LIFE+ programme.

Reply to the request: we explained in the text, that cooperation of the farmer is based on long term contract. 2nd was not developed as you were informed. All foreseen and even more resources were allocated for one farm. The selection procedure is explained in the text.

EC's request in the letter of 13 06 2013

- First of all please be aware that our position set out in the Commission's letter of 9th April 2013 remains unchanged, and the amended format for cooperation with the selected farmer under action A.7 cannot be considered approved before the final payment is issued. Thus all the changes under this action remain under your own risk.
1 take note that the agreement with the chosen farmer was signed already in May 2012. The cattle have been purchased by the farmer, but they are not grazing yet in the area, and installation of grazing infrastructure (fences) was still in progress on the date of the visit. It is not clear, why setting up grazing management of the area takes so long time, if the agreement was already signed almost a year ago. Please ensure that this activity is implemented according to its objectives as soon as possible and inform about the progress with the next report.
1 understand that regarding the second farm two places are still under consideration. I also take note that for the second farm, if still relevant, the cooperation format will remain as originally foreseen in the approved project proposal, i.e. the cattle would be

purchased and owned by the coordinating beneficiary. During the mission you have also informed my colleagues that there is still a possibility that the second demonstration farm will not be chosen at all, and the already selected one farm would probably be enough for demonstration purposes. Please make the necessary decision in this respect as soon as possible and inform me about it providing also the necessary justifications with the next
report. Please be also reminded to ensure that whatever decision is taken, the objectives of the action must be respected fully.
With the final report at the latest please explain clearly, how the selected demonstration farm/farms serve as a good example for management of habitats of project target species and how these cases can be successfully replicated beyond the LIFE+ program.

Reply to the request:

- we fully assume the risk of changed cooperation model than it was described in the application. We explained the reasons why the model of cooperation was changed and we are sure about our method that it is successfully working. Our objective – demonstration of sustainable grazing for target species is implemented and serves as a demonstration object for others.

EC's request in the letter of 27 01 2014.

I take note that you consider action A.7 to be completed now. However, grazing management in the selected demonstration farm is currently ongoing on 38 ha only. According to the information provided before, the agreement with the farmer foresees the management of 70 ha in favour of project target species. This target is clearly not reached yet. Please ensure that the conditions of the above mentioned agreement are fully respected and that the whole foreseen area is managed according to the objectives of the project. In case the selected farmer fails to ensure this, a proportional part of the costs for this action may be considered ineligible at the time of the final payment.
I also understand that you have decided not to develop a second demonstration farm within the scope of the project because the objectives of the action are reached with the one farm already selected. However, I would like to inform you that the eligible costs of the action might be decreased proportionally in the final payment stage, if the action delivers only part of its objectives.
Please be reminded again that the amended format for cooperation with the selected farmer and other changes under action A.7 cannot be considered as approved. Thus all the amendments under this action remain under your own risk until the success of the action is evaluated based on the final report.

Reply to the request:
The target of grazed are was reached before the end of the project. There are reasons, why delays occurred. Reasons explained in the text above. The objective of the action was reached by establishment of one farm.

EC's request in the letter of 18 08 2014

Action A. 7: Farm development
38 ha were covered by grazing management in the selected demonstration farm in the year 2013 and a further 19 ha are now prepared for grazing in 2014. Thus altogether there are 57 ha covered with grazing management in the selected farm, which means that the

contractual target of 70 ha is still not reached. Please refer to the Commission's letter of 27 January 2014 in this respect and ensure that the selected farmer fully respects the contractual obligations and ensures that the whole area foreseen in the contract is properly managed in favour of project target species. In case this will not be reached, the proportional part of the relevant costs may be considered ineligible at the time of the final payment.
Please be again reminded to explain with the final report, if and how the amended format for cooperation with the selected farmer and other changes introduced under action A.7 have still allowed reaching objectives of the action. Referring to the Commission's letter of 13 June 2013, please also explain clearly with the final report, how the selected demonstration farm serves as a good example for management of habitats of project target species and how this example can be or already is successfully replicated beyond the LIFE+ program.

Reply to the request: Detailed explanation how the farm acts as a model is described in the text. The main benefits of our grazing model for the target species are: certain density of cattle, which maintains not intensive grazing (what currently is not common in the beef production); certain breed of cattle, which grazes vegetation, which grows on poor soils and in amphibian ponds – this type of grazing is the same, which formed Lithuanian landscape for centuries and helped the turtles and rare amphibians to survive in the landscapes; and also proposal to keep undemanding cattle, which does not need a lot of infrastructure (it can stay outside with a simple shed all year round) and human care – to make it easier for the farmers. Even though the model seems rather easy, but it is quite revolutionary in the Lithuanian landscape, where farmers keep intensive breeds of beef cattle like limousines under intensive care and high density, graze more fertile meadows and fence water bodies that cattle would not reach them. At the same time meadows with sandy soils and natural ponds are left for overgrowth and degradation – which is currently the main reason for decline of the pond turtle population.

Actions C: Concrete conservation actions

ACTION C.1: Habitat management for target species in the project area

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
50 % of ponds, hibernation sites and nesting sites established	01/03/2013	15/10/2013
100 % of ponds, hibernation sites and nesting sites established	01/03/2014	15/04/2014

Expected results: 100 ponds restored (average size 800m^2), 40 nesting sites created and/or restored. Two or three sites for mirror populations of tree frogs will be created.

Ecological network was created in practice by:
- strengthening core areas (i.e. protected areas) with habitat restoration actions (i.e. new ponds, Eo egg laying sites, amphibian hibernation sites C1, restored ponds C2, restored wetlands C3, reared Eo and Ha, protecting Eo egg clutches against predators, etc);
- connecting protected areas with stepping stone habitats, needed for the target species and strengthening the smallest populations of the rarest target species. More ponds than initially foreseen were dug the corridors, which have bigger area, to guarantee proper connectivity for the target species through the landscape.

Results of the action:
Aquatic habitats

EC's request in the letter of 09/04/13: Thank you for the justification and clarification of the changes foreseen under action C.l. Based on the information provided with the mid-term report I hereby accept that pond creation/restoration will take place not only in the four project sites indicated in the description of the action in the approved project proposal but in all seven project areas.

Table 2. Number and surface of newly created ponds according to the project sites

Project site	Foreseen number of ponds (total surface m^2) according to the revised targets	Number of ponds (total surface m^2)
Juodabale LT01	35 (28000)	53 (51890)
Bestraigiškė forest LT02	8 (6400)	11 (11600)
Kučiuliškė LT03	10 (8000) + 9 (7200)	19 (15600)
Stračiūnai LT04	10 (8000) +8 (6400)	37 (28410)
Dainava forest LT05	10 (8000)	16 (12800)
Petroškai Forest LT06	15 (12000)	15 (12000)
Baltoji Ančia LT07	12 (4200)	12 (4200)
In total	**117 (88200)**	**163 (126500)**

LT01. 9 ponds for Eo, Bb, Pf, Bv, Ra were dug in the project area LT01 in 2013 October. 13 ponds for Eo, Bb, Bv, Ra were dug in this area 2013 October and November, 10 in December, 7 in January 2014, 7 in March and 6 in April 2014 to improve connections between Eo populations in Juodabalė, Ročkiai and Petroškai, and to strengthen existing Bb, Tc, Bv, Pf, Ra populations. 53 ponds were dug in this area in total. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 20.
LT02. 11 ponds, mainly for Eo, were dug to connect Mikabaliai-Demeniškiai and Bestraigiškė populations and to create some shallow ponds close to the egglaying sites.
The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 19.
LT03. 19 ponds for Eo, Bb, Tc, Bv, Bc, Pf, Ra, Rl were dug in the project area LT03 in 2013 August – October. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 18.
LT04. 2 ponds for Eo, Pf, Ra, Rl were dug in the project area LT04 in 2013 April. 25 ponds mainly for Eo were dug in this area in autumn 2014. 10 ponds for Eo, Bb and Tc dug in this area in February 2014. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 17. Two remote turtle populations were discovered during the project to the south from this area. Hence, the target area was extended and more ponds than foreseen were dug to connect the remote populations.
LT05. 3 ponds for Eo, Ra, Rl were dug in the project area LT05 in 2013 March. 7 ponds for Eo, Bb, Ra were dug in the project area LT05 in 2013 August. 6 ponds for Eo, Bb and Tc were dug in LT05 during February – March 2014. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 16.
LT06. 15 ponds for E.o. were dug 2012 March and April in the project area LT06, the photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 15.
LT07. In 2011 December 12 water habitats for H.a. were created in the project area LT07. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 14.

A map of new habitats attached as Annex 52. More detailed maps of all C actions are attached as Annex 53.

EC's request in the letter of 27/01/14: Besides the already reported progress, action C.l also foresees creation of two or three sites for mirror populations of Hyla arborea in order to ensure the survival of the species in Lithuania. There was no information provided on this sub-activity in the mid-term report, and it is not described in the current progress report either. Please clarify this and provide details on the results of this sub-activity with the final report.

Reply to the request: The sub-activity is described more in detail under C5. 2 mirror populations in Kalveliai and Petroškai created, not only by creating the habitats, but also by releasing young Ha.

EC's request in the letter of 18/08/14: I am pleased to note that you have exceeded the quantitative objectives of actions Cl (169 cf 100 ponds), C2 (52 cf 40 ponds) and C3 (24 sluices improving 17.48 ha of wetlands, cf 20 to improve 10 ha), using unspent money from action C4. I also note that the objectives of action C4 have not been achieved, which may lead to a reduction in the budget of the project. The eligibility of the related costs of these actions will be evaluated with the final report. Please provide all the necessary information and arguments to justify these changes.

Reply to the request: According to the methodology for establishment of ecological network, the density of stepping stone elements should be not thinner than 500 m around the core areas and 2km in between. Creating ecological network some exceptions had to be made because of dry pine forests in the target areas LT05 and LT07, where rivers were accepted as elements facilitating migration. In the other areas this rule was kept, therefore in the corridors, which are longer, such as LT01, LT04 and LT05 the number of ponds is bigger than was foreseen. Moreover, C4, "Habitat management in sandpits" was moved to this action. Ponds, created in the sandy soils, have the same ecological effect for the target species, as restored sand pits.

E.o. egg laying sites

Table 3. Number of created/restored Eo egg laying sites according to the project target areas

Project area	Number of egg laying sites created/restored
LT01	11
LT03	8
LT04	11
LT05	4
LT06	6
Total	**40**

6 E.o. egg laying sites created in 2012 April in the project area LT06. 2 egg laying sites for Eo were created in the project area LT04 in 2013 March. 1 egg laying site for Eo was created in the project area LT05 in 2013 August. 8 egg laying sites were created in the project area LT03 and 4 in LT01 autumn 2013. 7 egg laying sites were created (or restored) in LT01, 9 in LT04 and 3 in LT05 during winter 2013-2014. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 21. A map of created egg laying sites attached as Annex 21 a. More detailed maps of all C actions are attached as Annex 53.

Amphibian hibernation places

Table 4. Number of created amphibian hibernation sites according to the project target areas

Project area	Number of amphibian hibernation places created
LT01	4
LT03	10
LT04	4
LT05	2
LT06	8
LT07	2
Total	**30**

2 hibernation places for amphibians created in the project area LT07 in December 2011 (nearby ponds 13, 16b). 8 hibernation places for amphibians created in the project area LT06 in March 2012 (ponds 602, 608, 614, 616, 617a, 617b, 623a, 623b). 1 hibernation place for amphibians created in the project area LT05 in August 2013 (nearby pond 11M). 10 hibernation places for amphibians created in the project area LT03 in 2013 autumn (nearby ponds 23, 25, Kučiuliškė 4, Karklynai 3, Karklynai 4, Karklynai 5, Karklynai 6, Drapaliai 1, Drapaliai 5, Drapaliai 6). 4 hibernation places for amphibians created in the project area LT01 in 2013 autumn (nearby ponds Juodabalė 165, Juodabalė 166, Juodabalė 206, Ročkiai 212a). 3 hibernation places for amphibians created in the project area LT04 (near ponds Barzdžiūnai 1, Barzdžiūnai 2 and Šaulėnai 1), 1 hibernation place for amphibians created in the project area LT05 (near pond Radyscius 1A). A map of amphibian hibernation places is attached as Annex 37.

ACTION C.2: Renovation of ponds, mitigation of predation on target species

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
50 % of ponds renovated	01/03/2013	Completed 15/10/2013
100 % of ponds renovated	01/03/2014	Completed 15/04/2014

Expected results: Renovation of ponds, mitigation of predation on target species in 40 sites implemented.
Results of the action:

Table 5. Number of restored ponds according to the project target areas

Project area	Number of restored ponds
LT01	11
LT02	4
LT03	15
LT04	11
LT05	1
LT07	10
Total	**52**

In 2011 December 10 water habitats mainly for H.a., B.b, T.c. were renovated in the project area LT07. In 2012 April 1 water habitat for E.o was renovated in the project area LT01. 1 pond was restored mainly for Eo in the project area LT04 spring 2013. The overshading shrubs were cut and shallow slopes created. 2 ponds were restored for Bb and young Eo in the project area LT01 autumn 2013.15 ponds in the project area LT03, 4 ponds in LT01, 5 ponds in LT04 were restored for Eo, Bb, Tc, Bv, Bc, Pf, Ra, Rl autumn 2013. 4 aquatic habitats for Eo, Bb, Tc, Bv, Bc, Pf, Ra, Rl were restored in LT01, 4 in LT02, 5 in LT04 and 1 in LT05 during 2013 winter – 2014 spring. Shading vegetation and mud was cleaned from these aquatic habitats and shallow clean slopes were formed. These renovated habitats complement newly dug ponds and reduce spatial resistance of the corridors. The photos and a table with coordinates of the restored habitats are attached as Annex 22. A map of created egg laying sites attached as Annex 22 a. More detailed maps of all C actions are attached as Annex 53.

Mitigation of predation on target species was moved to C5, where in the spring 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 all the known Eo nesting sites were protected from predators observing the females during the nesting period and covering the fresh nests with the metal net against foxes and raccoon dogs.

ACTION C.3: Restoration of wetlands

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
50 % of wetlands restored	01/03/2013	Completed 15/10/2013
100 % of wetlands restored	01/03/2014	Completed 15/04/2014

Expected results: 20 sluices installed; 10 ha of wetlands restored and recurring measures implemented.

Results of the action: For implementation of the project action C3, experience was shared between the project partners LFN and AC. Together, potential places for sluices and/or the blocking of smaller ditches where pointed out in the field and thoroughly discussed under the viewpoint of their suitability for the project´s goals.

24 dams were made, affecting a total area of 17,48 ha. The places and design of the dams were chosen by the experts from Amphi Consult. The dams were built on the small ditches draining natural wetlands. In the most cases the excessive vegetation and mud were cleaned from the wetlands creating shallow ponds. Because of the low water pressure to the dams in the chosen places, the dams were constructed of natural materials, i.e. clay and soil. The dams were built together with C1 and C2 actions, using the same digging machines in 2013 - 2014. These flooded areas improve the conditions for E.o. migration in the named corridors. They further represent a valuable habitat for all amphibians present at the site (as migration corridors, foraging or breeding areas). They complement the newly dug and restored habitats, creating small, swampy water habitats or increase the depth of drained and overgrown wetlands. The coordinates, descriptions and pictures of the places dammed are in the Annex 23. A map of created egg laying sites attached as Annex 23 a. More detailed maps of all C actions are attached as Annex 53.

ACTION C.4: Habitat and population management in sandpits

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Habitat management actions in 50 % sandpits done	01/03/2013	01/03/2013
Habitat management actions in 100 % sandpits done	01/03/2014	01/03/2014

Expected results: 5 sand pits restored; 1 exploited sand pit re-cultivated as demonstration site.

Clarification: As we have explained in the Inception Report we have noticed that because of sandy soils most of the exploited sandpits in the southern Lithuania do not hold water. Therefore, majority of them can be restored so, that they would suit the needs for terrestrial habitat of the target species, especially in those sites, where water habitats already exist. Sandpits can be reconstructed into egg laying slopes for turtles, e.g. on the basis of the sand pit in Vilkiautinis one turtle nest was found, but the slopes of the sandpit are too steep for the turtles, therefore we considered to make them more inclined. Also the exploited sandpits can be made into a perfect habitat for sunbasking of *Lacerta agilis* and digging for *Pelobates fuscus*.

The Geology Service stated that a big Vainiūnai sand pit (near Kučiuliškė Natura 2000), which is not used for the last 20 years, still has some resources and cannot be given for restoration. After the detailed inventories of the project areas it was found that it is not possible to install 30 sites with 1500 m2 water. The objectives of this action could be reached by restoring and creating new water habitats in the overgrown natural depressions, and creating egg laying sites for E.o and slopes for L.a., i.e. increasing the scope of Action C1. Such actions were considered being very important in the landscape of the project area, where majority of natural depressions and sandy slopes are overgrown.

We asked for reduction of target to decrease restoration of sand pits from 30 to 5 and increase action C1 accordingly in the Midterm report. We asked to increase Action C1 by 17 ponds, which would be dug in the project areas:
LT03 – 2 ponds
LT04 – 10 ponds
LT05 – 5 ponds.
This change was provisionally accepted in the Commission's letter of 09/04/2013. Now we would like to ask to reduce action C4 additionally by 3 sandpits and increase action C1 accordingly, area LT01 by 3 ponds. The ecological effect of ponds, dug in the sandy soils, surrounded by sandy hills is the same as restored sand pit. Practically, in the landscape of southern Lithuania, it was not possible to convince the landowners to stop using their private small sand pits.
Thus, only 2 small sandpits were restored, but their costs are reported under Action C1 because the work was done at the same time as pond digging.
Since the budget for action C1 was exceeded by 53 260 EUR , we ask you for acceptance to re-allocate all unspent budget 32 405 EUR from C4 to C1. It covers 3 positions in action C4: restoration of exploited sand grave - 5000 Eur, cleaning of 6000m2 sand pits from garbage - 5000 Eur and habitat management in sandpits - 8000 Eur, totally 18 000 EUR.
Results of the action: Changes to the Methodology for Reclamation of Damaged Lands submitted to the MoE, was attached as Annex 15 in the Mid-term report. Exploited sand and gravel pits in the project areas inventoried. A study tour to Denmark "Danish Experience in Amphibian Conservation – Prevention Of Road Mortality And Restoration Of Exploited Gravel Pits" was carried out 2012 April 17 – 20 (please refer to Action D.3).

2 small sand pits restored in the project area. The sites were restored using the same digging machine as for the actions C1 and C2, restoration was not time consuming, therefore the costs are not calculated separately. Egg laying sites for Eo created instead of pits with small landfills:
Karjero rekultivacija ir vėžlių dėtavietė 54,216142; 23,772671 – 2013 autumn, LT01
Papiškės 2 - 54,127311; 24,033271 – 2014 spring, LT04.
The photos attached as Annex 25. Detailed maps of all C actions are attached as Annex 53.

ACTION C.5: Population management of *Emys orbicularis* and *Hyla arborea*

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
1st young *Hyla arborea* released	01/09/2012	Completed by 30/07/2011
50 young turtle released	01/09/2013	09/07/2014
two new *Hyla arborea* populations established and 8 small and extinct *Emys orbicularis* populations by release of juveniles improved	01/09/2014	09/07/2014

Expected results: Nest protection (no quantitative indicator), 3 enclosures (1 of 8 m2 size for adult turtles and 2 of 2 m2 size for juveniles) and 1 laboratory for rearing installed; 60 eggs incubated; 50 hatchlings per year reared; 30 juveniles per year released (120 juveniles in total); 3000 eggs of tree frog released and 2 mirror populations created.

Clarification
The action has these sub-activities:
- Nest protection
- Rearing of Eo.
- Instalment of enclosures and laboratory
- Radiotracking
- Rearing of tree frog

Results of the action:

Nest protection – in the spring 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 all the known nesting sites were protected from predators observing the females during the nesting period and covering the fresh nests with the metal net against foxes and raccoon dogs. Predation of such nests is very high in the project areas, for example, 8 egg clutches were predated out of 8 just right after the turtles laid them in Bestraigiškė before the project team got to know that the turtles lay eggs there in 2011. Therefore this action is a priority action for protection of E.o. populations.

Staff from all the project partners, excluding LZS, was on duty in the egg laying sites in the evenings and at nights during the egg laying period in 2011. 26 nests were protected in 2011. It is a common knowledge that many E.o hatchlings are predated on the way from their nest to a water body by birds and other vertebrates. Another threat was discovered when the young turtles are coming out of the nests in April, it was noticed that the hatchlings from two nests were predated by *Formica rufa* ants. Therefore the hatchlings from the other nests were dug out and released directly to the water bodies.
It appeared that there were not enough people, therefore 2 local volunteers and 6 students from Vilnius University were invited to help in the year 2012. Still there was found 1 predated nest in Kučiuliškė Reserve. 31 clutch was covered by a metal net after the turtles laid it in 2012. 56 young turtles released to the ponds in 2013 April (from the eggs laid in 2012). 25 clutches covered against predators in 2013 May – June. There was a period of low temperature (-20C) and without snow during 2013 – 2014 winter, we think that it was the reason, why majority of the juveniles died out in the nests during that winter. 5 juveniles were released to the waterbody in LT06. In the biggest populations, which are in

LT03 all juveniles were found dead. 27 clutches covered against predators in 2014 May – June. During 4 years 86 egg clutches were protected.

This activity is of high importance for protecting Eo in Lithuania, therefore staff from VRP and MRP will continue protecting the clutches in the main nesting sites in the after – LIFE period.

Rearing of Eo - the egg clutches laid on the roads and roadsides (places, considered unsafe for development of the eggs) were collected and brought to the LZS. 47 eggs were collected in the year 2011. 40 turtles hatched, 6 eggs were not fertilized, one embryo died. Reportage about hatching turtles was shown on the main Lithuanian TV channel (Please refer to the Action D2a). 3 of these hatchlings did not survive during the adaptation to the outdoor enclosure. 74 eggs were collected in the year 2012. 67 turtles hatched in August. 4 clutches, 46 eggs, 35 turtles hatched in 2013. 29 juveniles grew up from 2011, 64 from 2012, 35 from 2013, 128 juveniles were raised in total. The strongest juveniles, 101 in total, were released to 9 localities July 2014. A map with release places of Eo juveniles attached as Annex 32. 27 juveniles were left in LZS to become stronger; they will be released summer 2015 June, when the weather will be suitable for successful adaptation, i.e. +30C.

Majority young turtles were released to the restored habitats. Each batch of turtles were released close to their maternal populations to the habitats where is data that the turtle populations previously (before the habitat degradation) existed there. The habitats were restored, the whole complex of shallow ponds for young turtles, deeper ponds for adults, hibernation places and egg laying sites, so that a population could live there for a long term. The event for mass media, specialists and broad public was organised on the release date (please refer to the Action D2a). In three localities the young turtles were observed, caught and measured during the first summer in the wild. An article with the results of the observations is published in the Best Practice Guidelines.

Table. Released turtle juveniles

Year of hatching	Number of reared juveniles	Released to the nature	Remained in LZS	Locality	Target area
2011	8	8	-	Nauja Kučuliškių BAST	LT03
2011	13	13	-	Radyščius - Vilkiautinis 1	LT05
2011	8	8	-	Paveisiejai	LT06
subtotal:	29	29	0		
2012	31	25	6	Kučuliškių herp. dr.	LT03
2012	6	-	6	Ročkiai	LT01
2012	10	8	2	Bestraigiškės	LT02
2012	10	7	3	Paveisiejai	LT06
2012	7	7	-	Radyščius - Vilkiautinis 2	LT05
Subtotal:	64	47	17		
2013	9		9	Kučuliškių herp. Dr.	LT03

2013	11	11	-	Čivonys (Petroškai)	LT06
2013	7	6	1	Radyščius - Vilkiautinis 2	LT05
2013	8	8	-	Margai (Drapaliai)	LT03
Subtotal:	35	25	10		
Total:	128	101	27		

Instalment of enclosures and laboratory (in application referred as turtle rearing place) **and rearing of E.o.-** the laboratory was started in the spring 2011, two incubators were bought, and when more eggs were collected one more incubator was bought in 2012. R COM JURAGON PRO PX-20RD (Professional) and R COM JURAGON PRO PX-20R (Standart) incubators are used for E.o. eggs. Aquariums for the hatchlings prepared. Each clutch is grown separately; each young turtle is identified according to the pattern of plastron. To photograph and print the turtle data camera and printer acquired. Computer for the laboratory was acquired. Each turtle is being measured once a month, their behaviour is being observed. A refrigerator for the turtle hibernation is acquired. In autumn 2012 a special room for the turtle hibernation was installed. A biology student Dovydas Vičius from Vytautas Magnus University defended a bachelor thesis about the development of these turtles.

Two enclosures were installed in the LZS spring 2012. The area of each enclosure is 20m^2. One of the enclosures was divided into two in the year 2013, 4 new pools were installed. The photos of the enclosures are attached as Annex 27. These enclosures are built on the old foundation. Therefore they have no detailed plan of a building and the expenses for building them are included as many smaller items, like wires, nets, etc.
A camera for the direct translation to internet was installed in the enclosure (please refer to the Action D.4). The young turtles could be observed for 4 years online here: http://zoosodas.lt/c/gyvos-transliacijos/transliacijos/

Radiotracking – The radio tracking has been described in the application without indication of results and budget for equipment. The radio tracking helps to get more data about population: spatial distribution and disperse, find nesting and hibernation sites. Therefore turtles are equipped with radio transmitters and followed by radio receiver with antenna. However the radio transmitters, which work and a sufficient distance and long enough (i.e. at least until the next spring after the release) might be disturbing young animals, therefore radio tracking was applied to adult turtles. The sites where nesting sites were unknown were of most importance to radiotrack. The turtles were catched using Servan type traps where beef heart meat is used as a bait. Traps cause no damage for animals. Trap is checked twice a day. Transmitter is glued on carapace of cached animal and the animal is measured and released back. Later monitoring is performed by checking the location of animal by radio receiver. The frequency of monitoring depends upon the aim of investigation. More frequently – 1 time per day – location must be checked if egg laying places must be found, less frequently – location of summer or hibernation places.

6 turtles from Vilkiautinis turtle population (LT05) were radiotracked during spring 2011-spring 2013.

EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12: I take note that instead of the initially planned radio tracking of young turtles, which were born and raised within the scope of the project, this

method is now used to survey an already existing turtle population. Please provide more details on this change and justify its relevance towards the project objectives.

Reply to the request: The reason to radiotrack the turtles from this population is to gather more data about newly discovered, but one of the biggest E.o populations in Lithuania. Information about the movements of the individuals in this population is very valuable to plan restoration and protection of the habitat. The data gathered so far shows that turtles from this newly discovered population hibernate in the same pond and lay eggs on the slopes, roads and arable fields not far away from the pond. It defines the size of new Natura 2000 area.

The remaining 4 transmitters were decided to be used for investigation of small turtle populations. The places were chosen according to the information we had – presence of several turtles during summer was confirmed, but not known how many and where they are during the other part of the year. Turtles were caught in the project area LT01, in a wetland 54.213985, 23.780648 (WGS) in MRP spring – summer 2012. Young turtles were caught, but they were too small to attach the transmitters.

The efforts to catch turtles were continued 2013 spring – summer in the project area LT01 in the other population 54.174013, 23.616489 (WGS) not far away from VRP. Ecologist from VRP has observed 2 turtles there, we assumed that the population should be bigger and we were interested to know where they lay eggs and hibernate. However, the efforts to catch the turtles were not successful.

Rearing of the tree frog – rearing of H.a. started one year earlier than planned, 283 young H.a. were released in the summer 2011. There was a reportage about H.a. rearing in Lietuvos Rytas TV (please refer to the Action D.2a). The cages for the rearing were borrowed from AmphiConsult. The eggs were collected from a pond with the biggest H.a. population (54.013786, 23.652706 (WGS)). 10% of young H.a. were released into the same pond, 90% of H.a. were released to the wetlands on the northern range of the distribution, namely 54.108164, 23.661602 and 54.107358, 23.682072 (WGS). This activity was carried out in the project area LT07.

Eggs were collected from the same pond and also from the ponds near to the Belorussia border (in Bugieda) year 2012. 1644 young H.a. were reared and released. 10% of the reared froglets were released in the mother populations and 90 % to the nearby ponds – three new ponds, which were created by the project (1a, 2 and 2a), so the young ones had good conditions. This activity was carried out in the project area LT07.

The eggs were collected from the same pond as in the previous years in 2013 – the biggest known population, no. 16 in the table. Having no more possibility to borrow cages from AmphiConsult, 10 cages were acquired. 872 froglets were raised and released into 8 ponds to strengthen populations existing there. This activity was carried out in the project area LT07, the release area no. 18 is the project area LT06, where the tree frogs appeared after habitat restoration. 2 mirror populations in Kalveliai and Petroškai created. The methodology how to rear Ha was adjusted to the Lithuanian situation. Rearing methodology is attached as Annex 28. A map of places where reared Ha were released attached as Annex 33. More detailed maps of all C actions are attached as Annex 53.

Table. Distribution of reared *H.arborea* into the wild populations

No.	Village	Amount of froglets released	Coordinates (WGS)
	2011	**In total 283**	
1	Kapčiamiesčio miestelio apylinkės	28	54.013755, 23.652711
2	Kalvelių km.	127	54.108164, 23.661602
3	Kalvelių km.	128	54.107341, 23.682055
4	**2012**	**In total 1644**	
5	Kapčiamiesčio miestelio apylinkės	164	54.013755, 23.652711
6	Bugieda	132	53.942097, 23.806705
7	Bugieda	178	53.941934, 23.80856
8	Kalvelių km.	258	54.107344, 23.663416
9	Kalvelių km.	274	54.106907, 23.664209
10	Kalvelių km.	320	54.107288, 23.682069
11	Kalvelių km.	318	54.107953, 23.679639
	2013	**In total 872**	
12	Kalvelių km.	41	54.107935, 23.679689
13	Kalvelių km. (prie A. Truskos sodybos)	225	54.107037, 23.6642
14	Jančiulių km.	143	53.995591, 23.682913
15	Semoškų km.	45	54.050457, 23.649808
16	Kapčiamiesčio miestelio apylinkės	53	54.013755, 23.652711
17	Kapčiamiestyje	76	54.009277, 23.65402
18	Petroškų km.	229	54.106605, 23.607996
19	Valentų km.	60	54.011047, 23.707027
In total:		**2799**	

The froglets were released in the southern part of the EN, where Ha distribution in Lithuania occurs, i.e. target area LT07. Currently, after habitat restoration, Ha were noticed to spread towards the north, i.e. target area LT06.

EC's request in the letter of 18/08/2014: As reported previously there have been in total 2,799 tree frogs (Hyla arborea) released so far of the 3,000 foreseen, both in the ponds of the eggs' origin and in other ponds, which were created or renovated by the project during the years 2011-2013.1 understand that no more tree frogs will be released during the remaining project lifetime due to a disease that has affected the population. Please clarify this issue in more detail with the final report and explain how this problem has affected the objectives of this sub-action, i.e. the expected strengthening of the species' wild populations."

Reply to the request: Animals were observed in the wild populations, no spreading of disease was noticed. It was recorded that Ha distribution range is increasing and it was not affected by any disease.

ACTION E2: Monitoring of the effect of project

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
The programme	01/06/2011	Completed by 01/06/2011
Database	28/02/2012 (from the Inception Report)	Completed by 01/02/2012

Expected results: Updated database prepared; preliminary monitoring reports to be sent in the end of each season to MoE; final report prepared and submitted to MoE.

Results of action: Online database prepared. The data base is created using ARCGIS maps. The target species are marked in the project area and described which year it was observed, who is the observer, notes about the amount of individuals, life stage and their habitat. It can be found: http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=3f3d32494f984f119e1448acfa50fe71. The data base currently is not a shared version, it can be connected only with one user name: bastyte, password: dalia5. The database is fully updated, all the information gathered by the project is included there. The database is used in the after LIFE period too, if the new data appears, it is marked in the database.

After each field season the reports to the Ministry sent. 4 reports to the Ministry sent, the form used as defined in the Methodology for Use of Protected Species, Annex II. The reports were attached to all previous reports as Annexes, as the last reports are attached Annex 50. The scientific data gathered in course of the project concerning the finding places of the rare target species transposed in a special designated website and included in the information system of wild animals, plants and mushrooms, existing or temporarily present in the natural environment in Lithuanian territory, administered by the MoE (SRIS; https://sris.am.lt). This information has to be considered when planning economic activities and assessing its potential impact on both the EN (ecological network) and endangered species. Information submitted to in this database combines all results of the monitoring; moreover, it provides a protection status for the habitats.

Monitoring programme prepared, attached as Annex 51. Presence/absence of the target species was checked in all the created and restored habitats. H.a. is the fastest coloniser, it was found in 7 habitats just next spring after creation or restoration, spring 2012, next year the species was observed in 2 more ponds. The R.l was the most wide spread colonizer of the new ponds. Adults of this species were found in 53 ponds, R.a was found in 30 ponds, B.b in 23 ponds, T.c in 23 ponds, P.f in 6 ponds, B.c in 2 ponds. Even though majority of the ponds were newly dug (dug 2013 autumn – 2014 spring) and had not yet developed the vegetation needed for the target species, this investigation already suggested positive results of the first colonisations. The tables of amphibian monitoring results according to the pond numbers and project target areas are attached in Annex 51.

Observation of the restored and newly created habitats found the pond turtles sun basking in 16 newly created ponds (LT01: 101, 102, 199A, 176, 177, 174; LT03: Drapaliai 1, Drapaliai 2; LT04: Kūdrėnai 1; LT06: 601, 602, 608, 614, 616, 623b, 608). The proportion of inhabited ponds is high for Eo, since this species is a slow coloniser. The turtles were observed in various areas of the EN, mainly in the restored or newly created habitats, which are less than 1 km away from the bigger turtle populations. One can therefore assume that these ponds are already inhabited by turtles on a more constant basis than migration. In order to observe migration of turtles, different methods of investigation should be used, for instance, mark-recapture in different sub-populations for several years.

In the After LIFE period, species, which are listed in the II Annex of the Habitats Directive, will be monitored while carrying out monitoring for the species of European Community importance. Such monitoring is being carried out in Natura 2000 areas and other areas inhabited by big subpopulations of these species. The monitoring is carried out by the staff of protected areas once in 2 to 6 years, depending on species. Methodology for monitoring of species, which are listed in the IV Annex of the Habitats Directive, is not endorsed in Lithuania. In the presence of funding, state of these species will be monitored the same as species, which are listed in the II Annex.

EC's request in the letter of 27/02/2014: I see that the monitoring data for 2013 is not included in the progress report. Upon our latest check of the link to the database on 20 January 2014 it appears that the last modification of the database was made on 22 April 2013. Thus it seems that the database has not been updated for a long period. Please ensure that the project database is fully updated as soon as possible. Please be aware that a detailed monitoring report should be provided with the final report to allow the Commission to assess the effect of the restoration actions. Please ensure that this report contains both the base-line data as well as the preliminary results and impact assessment of the concrete conservation actions in all the project sites.

Reply to the request: The database is fully updated; all the information gathered by the project is included there. The scientific data gathered in course of the project concerning the finding places of the rare target species transposed in a special designated website and included in the information system of wild animals, plants and mushrooms, existing or temporarily present in the natural environment in Lithuanian territory, administered by the MoE (SRIS; https://sris.am.lt). This information has to be considered when planning economic activities and assessing its potential impact on both the EN (ecological network) and endangered species. Information submitted to in this database combines all results of the monitoring; moreover, it provides a protection status for the habitats. The monitoring report is attached as Annex 36.

ACTION E.3: After Life Strategy

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
After Life Strategy	01/09/2014	01/09/2014

Expected results: After Life conservation plan prepared.

After Life conservation plan prepared, which presents results of the project and situation in the end of the project, but majority attention is paid to plan how longevity of the project's actions will be assured. Objectives of the plan are to ensure:

1. favourable conservations status of the target species in the core zones of the ecological network,
2. migration possibilities between the core zones,
3. legal status of conservation and management of the ecological network,
4. strengthening of Eo populations
5. monitoring of population status of the target species
6. favourable and informed attitude of the local people
7. collaboration of the specialists.

The objectives are described analysing methodology to implement the objectives and financial outlook. The AfterLife conservation plan is attached as Annex 52.

ACTION E4: Networking with other projects

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Networking with other projects	31/12/2013	24/05/2013

Expected results: 3 two-three day meetings with other projects.

Results of the action: 6 meetings with other projects implemented: 4 of them with other LIFE projects, 2 with non EU financed.

1 exchange meeting with a Project LIFE08NAT/EE/000257 described in the Inception Report under the Action E4. Project manager Dalia Bastyte went to the seminar organised by Project LIFE08NAT/EE/000257 "Securing *Leucorrhinia pectoralis* and *Pelobates fuscus* in the northern distribution area in Estonia and Denmark" for the workshop "Biota of small water bodies – amphibians and dragonflies", which was carried out 13-17 June 2011 in Estonia. Project manager has learnt about monitoring of dragonflies species and *Pelobates fuscus*, which also belong to target species of our project.

The project manager participated in EU Workshop on Amphibian Mortality on Roads in Peterborough, UK, 7-8 March 2012, organised by Froglife. The workshop was organised as a start of the networking between different EU countries solving problems of the connectivity of amphibian populations. The project manager presented the LIFE projects carried out by LFN, namely NELEAP and ECONAT, and the problems of the connectivity of amphibian populations in Lithuania. The programme of the workshop, the presentation

of the manager and the workshop book of abstracts was attached as Annex 31 to the Midterm Report.

The project manager and project director participated in Wetland study trip 22-23 May 2012 in Finland, organised by WWF Finland. This trip showed possibilities for damming of the drainage ditches and creating wetlands instead. The programme of the trip was attached as Annex 32 to the Midterm Report.

A group of Polish foresters had a study tour in 20-22 August 2012 in the project areas in the framework of a project LIFE08NAT/PL/000510. The ECONAT project team introduced the foresters to the actions of reptile and amphibian conservation carried out in the framework of the project. They had excursions in the project sites LT01 and LT05.The programme and photos of the study tour was attached as Annex 33 to the Midterm Report.

The staff from our project participated in the workshop – conference "RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN HERPETOFAUNA AND ITS ENVIRONMENT: BOMBINA BOMBINA, EMYS ORBICULARIS, AND CORONELLA AUSTRIACA", organised by LIFE-HerpetoLatvia, which took place in Daugavpils, 2012 October 8-9. The staff of our project made there 3 presentations about the project activities, namely Dalia Bastytė "Ecological Network for the European Pond Turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) in Lithuania", Jonas Šimkus „The Assessment of the Methodology for the Feeding of the European Pond Turtles (*Emys orbicularis*) Juvenile up to one year", Dovydas Vičius and Alma Pikūnienė „Growing of European Pond Turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) Juveniles in Lithuanian Zoological Garden". The book of abstracts of the conference was attached attached in Annex 3 of the PR submitted in December 2013.

Results of this Life project were presented in poster section during the 9th European Conference on Ecological Restoration in Oulu, Finland on 3-8th of August, 2014. Nerijus Zableckis prepared poster "Establishment of ecological network for European pond turtles (Emys orbicularis) and threatened amphibians in abandoned farmland in Lithuania" and presented on 4th of August in poster session 1 for more than 100 participants. Totally about 400 participants had possibility to see the poster. Presentation of the project was successful since grazing and management of grasslands was one the main topics of the conference; contacts were taken made with other organisations and Universities,e.g. Anhalt University, Germany, who perform researches on impact of herbivores ondifferent habitats.
Poster abstract was printed in the abstracts of the conference. The abstract is attached as annex 54. Part of costs of the participation in the conference are declared to this project (shared with another ongoing Life Aukstumala LIFE12NAT/LT/000965)

EC's request in the letter of 27/02/2014: I have taken note that you participated in a symposium "On Freshwater Turtles Conservation" on 22 - 24 May 2013. However, a book of abstracts and details on this event is not attached to the report. Please provide them with the final report.

Reply to the request: Project manager Dalia Bastytė participated in a symposium „On Feshwater Turtles Conservation", 22 – 24 May 2013, where she gave two talks: "Development of an ecological network for *Emys orbicularis* between protected areas in South Lithuania" and "Rearing of *Emys orbicularis* for conservation of the wild

populations in Lithuania." The book of abstracts is attached as Annex 31 in the electronic version and programme of the conference in the printed version.

Forthcoming activities: Project manager Dalia Bastytė will present the results of the project in two forthcoming events - 7th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks under the Bern Convention, on 16-17 September 2015, Strasbourg (Draft agenda attached as Annex 55) and "CEEweb Academy on Building Blue-Green Infrastructure. Restoring and protecting wetlands and their ecosystem services" on 6-8th October 2015, Budapest (Draft agenda attached as Annex 56)

5.2 Dissemination actions

5.2.1 Objectives

The target species are heavily dependent on people activities, since they need habitats, which appear as a result of human impact. Nowadays these species can hardly survive if people do not understand the importance of their survival and do not put efforts to conserve them.

Objectives of the dissemination actions were to:

- Inform the public at large about activities of the project and LIFE programme in general;
- Introduce the public at large to the protected amphibians and reptiles, autochthonous to Lithuania;
- Explain to the public at large the main threats emerging for the target species;
- Introduce the public at large to the needs of the target species;
- Explain what the possibilities are for concrete conservation actions, what can be done by the landowners and anybody who cares about nature conservation.

The objectives were reached to the much greater extent than it was planned in the application of the project. For example, instead of 4 press releases foreseen in the application, 59 were broadcasted, instead of 100 visitors of project website per month in, there were 1997, instead of 10 internet articles there were 161 posted in the different web portals about the news of the project, a number of additional event for the public at large were organised, etc.

5.2.2 Dissemination: overview per activity

ACTION D.1: Experience exchange workshops

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
First experience exchange workshop organised	01/12/2010	Completed by 28/02/2011
Second experience exchange workshop organised	01/06/2011	Completed by 31/05/2011
Third experience exchange workshop organised	01/11/2012	Completed by 17/04/2013
Forth experience exchange workshop organised	01/11/2013	Completed by 26/04/2014

Expected results: 4 informative workshops and 1 kick off meeting organised. Up to 30 participants in each. 2 staff members participate in regional kick off meeting.

Results of the action: 4 workshops and 1 kick off meeting organised; regional LIFE kick-off meeting attended. Kick-off the project was organised on 19th November 2010. During the seminar the project was presented, and each AB introduced to their tasks. Representatives from each AB attended the seminar, and also introduced to each other. The programme and list of participants was attached as Annex 12 to the Inception Report.

The first workshop "Establishment of ecological networks – experiences and perspectives" was aimed to discuss the methodology for establishing ecological network and corridors. It was organised on 23-24 February 2011. A wide range of Lithuanian and international experts and officers from Lithuanian responsible institutions participated in the workshop, 36 participants in total. It was eminently successful workshop with a series of presentations encompassing different experiences from a number of countries, excursion to the case sites and discussions, providing suggestions for the Lithuanian case. Participants, agenda and minutes of the workshop were attached as Annex 13 to the Inception Report.

The 2nd workshop "Inventory, habitat restoration and monitoring of protected amphibian and reptile species" was organised on 24-26 May 2011. The target group of the workshop were people, who are responsible mainly for state monitoring of Annex II species: E.o., tree frog, B.b. and t.c. in Lithuania. 32 biologists and ecologists from those National and Regional parks and Nature Reserves, which encompass Natura 2000 designated sites for amphibians. This workshop aimed to introduce the methods of turtles and amphibian surveys and monitoring and habitat restoration. After the presentations the participants were divided into groups and surveyed the project area. This workshop allowed not only teaching the staff from protected areas and gathering some data about the species distribution in the project area, but also sharing their experiences. Programme and list of participants of the workshop were attached as Annex 14 to the Inception Report.

The target group of the 3rd workshop was the specialists of the Regional Environmental Departments (REDs), responsible for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in the area

of biodiversity. The workshop "Aspects of biodiversity in the process of environmental impact assessment with the special focus on protected reptiles and amphibians" was carried out 2013 April 16 – 17, with 36 participants. The programme and list of participants were attached as Annex 18 to the Progress Report. The audience listened to the presentations about the project target species and their needs, habitat restoration and arising impacts, their mitigation.

EC's request in the letter of 27/02/2014: The fourth experience exchange workshop originally planned in the autumn of 2013 is now postponed to the spring of 2014. I can accept this postponement. Please provide information on the results of this workshop with the final report.

Reply to the request: The 4th workshop "Examples of ecological networks and legal preconditions for their formation in Lithuania" was organised in 26 May 2014, when it was possible to see the target species and to visit their habitats. It presented our experience about developing ecological network for the target species and also foreign experiences of creating ecological networks. The target audience was landscape engineers, architects and planners, 28 participants in total. The programme and list of participants are attached as Annex 34. Also a handbook how to strengthen the framework of the nature frame in the relevant habitats and for the targeted Annex IV species (Please see action D.4.) was presented and distributed during the workshop.

ACTION D.2.a: Dissemination and cooperation with local players

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 01/11/2013*
Instalment of 7 notice boards	01/12/2010	Moved to D2e
50 % of meetings implemented	01/11/2012	Completed by 01/12/2011
100 % of meetings implemented	31/03/2014	Completed by 01/10/2013

Expected results: 40 meetings and agreements, press articles published. 7 information boards erected.

Clarification: As it was agreed in the letter on 13/06/2013 – 7 notice boards in the Action D2a (with budget 2700 EUR) and 7 information boards in the action D2e (with budget 350 EUR) are combined into one action and moved into D2e.

Under this action we have additionally included reportages in television, radio broadcasts and two events we have organised for the 20th LIFE anniversary.

Results of the action: Even though this action was foreseen to be started from the autumn 2011 it has already started in the spring 2011. 40 meetings with the landowners were carried out. Some landowners were convinced to carry out habitat restoration actions, the others were not. Some were only informed that rare species live on their land and about the requirements of the species. A list of the meetings is attached as Annex 35. The meetings

with the landowners happened all duration of the project, inventorying the habitats, getting ready for the habitat restoration and restoring the habitats. We worked mainly on the private lands and communicated with the local people a lot.

EC's request in the letter of 27/02/2014: I take note that all 40 foreseen meetings with the landowners have been held. The list of these meetings, however, does not include the dates of these meetings. Please submit a combined list of all 40 meetings with landowners with the final report, clearly indicating the locations, the dates and the number of participants at each meeting.

Reply to the request: The list of all meetings with landowners, the locations, the dates and the number of participants at each meeting is attached as Annex 35.

Two events for the LIFE 20th anniversary were organised. The first one was organised together with the LIFE project "Bombina in the Baltic Region - Management of fire-bellied toads in the Baltic region" LIFE04 NAT/DE/000028. It was called "Bombina song contest", where one week before Eurovision choirs of the red-bellied toads competed live from 5 countries: Denmark, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania and Germany. The winner was chosen by people voting in LIFE-Bombina project website. Lithuanian Bombina choir won the competition. The event was organised in the cooperation of Trakų Vokė Cultural Centre in Trakų Vokė town 11 May 2012. 120 people and 5 journalists from the different televisions and web portals participated in the event. The event was widely broadcasted in the mass media (Please refer to the project publicity). More detailed description, programme and pictures were included as Annex 22 to the Midterm Report.

The second one was organised together with three other Lithuanian LIFE projects (LIFE05/NAT/D/000152 (LFN is AB in this project); LIFE07/NAT/LT/000531 and LIFE09 NAT/LT/000235) in a shopping centre Panorama in Vilnius 12 May 2012. The event was attended by 5.000 people. The poster, invitation, programme, invitation for the pictures competition and photos from the event are attached as Annex 21 to the Midterm Report.

Project publicity – we have not ordered professional monitoring of the mass media after our press releases, which is an expensive service, therefore the numbers are only of those broadcasts, which we have found. In reality the project was mentioned more times. There were 11 press releases, 7 TV reportages, 5 radio programmes about the project until 01/10/2012:
A press release about protection of turtle eggs in situ. Two video reportages prepared, was taken at least to 3 web portals and 1 article in a newspaper.
A press release about turtle rearing and the Turtle Day in the LZS 10 June 2011. Was taken at least to 8 web portals.
A reportage in television was broadcasted about H.a. rearing 21 June 2011:
http://www.lrytas.lt/-13086459891307805041-%C5%ABkininkas-medvarli%C5%B3-buo%C5%BEgalvius-augina-kibiruose-nuotraukos-video.htm
http://infodiena.lt/Ukininkas-kibiruose-augina-egzotiskuju-medvarliu-buozgalvius-Pramogos-443999rss.html
A press release about E.o. population protection rearing the eggs 15 September 2012. Was taken to at least 7 web portals, 3 reportage broadcasted in different radio stations and one 4 reportage broadcasted in different television channels.

Press release „Ecological network in southern Lithuania“ 19 September 2011. Taken at least to 2 web portals.
Press release about restoration of H.a. habitats taken at least into 4 web portals and 2 local newspapers of Lazdijai district.
An article about the lessons carried out in schools on the topics developed by the project team 23 December 2011 in a local newspaper.
Press release about invasive turtles 5 March 2012. Taken into at least 5 web portals.
Press release about amphibian migrations 10 April 2012. Taken at least into 4 web portals.
Press release about the 20th LIFE anniversary 9 May 2012. Taken into at least 4 webportals and two reportages in television shown.
Press release asking for information about turtles noticed in the nature 19 June 2012. Taken into at least 9 web portals, several newspapers and a reportage in radio broadcasted.
Press release about an excursion organised by VRP 23 August 2012. Taken into at least into 10 web portals and 1 local newspaper.
Press release about photography contest for a photography exhibition 5 September 2012. Taken into at least 6 web portals.
Press release about the turtle rearing activities 14 September 2012. Taken into at least 5 webportals and a reportage in television shown.

In the period from 01/10/2012 till 01/11/2013: 13 articles were written about different project activities after 01/10/2012. The articles were taken into different webportals. The articles and broadcasts researched different project activities, i.e. Eo and Ha rearing; habitat restoration; seminars, which were organised; invitation to participate in the photography contest after which traveling exhibition was created; and invitation to visit the exhibition.

An event for the general public was organised in Verkiai Regional Park 9 May 2013. During the event the public was introduced to the species of protected reptiles and amphibians, their habitats, listened to their voices and voted for the most beautiful voice. It is estimated that few hundred people participated in the event. Two TV channels filmed the event.

In the period from 01/11/2013 till 01/10/2014: The topics broadcasted to the mass media:
About the travelling photography exhibition, when it changes its location;
About the turtles of the project, reared in the zoo and different periods of their life;
About the results of the project, for example, that numbers of tree frogs have increased in Veisiejai Regional Park, in total 18 press releases and 4 reportages in TV.
About different means of herpetofauna conservation, for example, building of fences to reduce the road kills;
About the workshops, seminars and other events, organised by the project. List of articles and broadcasts is included in the Annex 38.

ACTION D.2.b: Installation of nature educational trail

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Educational trail established	01/09/2014	01/09/2014

Expected results: 1 km long education trail

Results of the action: While planning the project the educational trail was planned to be established in the project area LT05, near Merkinė town, by Ilgabalė wetland.

In the period from 01/11/2013 till 30/09/2014: An educational path by Ilgabalė wetland was established summer 2014. The path is 1 km long, it consists of wooden infrastructure, such as 8 directive arrows, one project's informational board described under the action D2e, another 90x120 cm informational board, where species variety of herpetofauna living in the area is described, two wooden benches, 36m length wooden bridge through the wetland with 3.30x2 m viewpoint. Photos and map of the trail are attached in Annex 39.

EC's request in the letter of 09/04/2013: I take note that due to change of the landowner the initial location for the planned nature education trail may be changed, and two other alternatives are currently being considered. With the next report please inform us about the final decision in this respect along with all the necessary details of the planned implementation of the action. In this respect I find it unfortunate that the specific area concerned - which is in the Dzukija National Park - has been sold from state ownership to private hands in the middle of the project period despite the fact that it was targeted not only by action D.2.b but also by actions C 1 to C4 of the project. Note is also taken that as indicated by the current need for an alternative solution no commitment has been obtained from the new owner to the project in particular or to nature conservation aspects in general. Please provide an explanation for the reasons underlying the sale of that land and also inform us about any actions taken - by the coordinating or any associated beneficiary - in order to avoid similar occurrences in the future.

Reply to the request: After considering the alternatives, we decided that originally planned locality is the best choice. DNP, as AB, which is responsible for the action D2b, established the educational trail in the locality, which was planned in the revised application. The locality is in a nice landscape, enriched by wetlands, depressions and ponds, the actions C1 and C3 carried out there. There is few years old data about turtle population from local people, which was not observed recently because of overgrowth of aquatic habitats. It is on the edge of historic town Merkinė, frequently visited by tourists.

EC's request in the letter of 27/01/2014: I understand that you have decided to establish the planned nature educational trail in the originaiiy planned locality in the project area LTOS, near Merkine town, in the Ilgabale wetland. There is, however, no information provided on any agreement reached with the new landowner in this respect. Please be ready to present this information during the next External Monitoring team visit planned in the spring of 2014. You have not provided either the explanation requested in the Commission's letter dated on 9 April 2013 for the reasons underlying the sale of the land in the above mentioned area. There is also no information about any actions taken by the

coordinating and the relevant associated beneficiary in order to avoid similar occurrences in the future. Please provide this information with the final report.

Reply to the request: An official note from Dzukija National Park explaining about change of land owner is attached as Annex 8. The note explains that the land was given to the landowner during the process of land reclamation. Land reclamation in this case is returning land, which was deprived by the Soviet Union, to the former owners.

EC's request in the letter of 18/08/2014: With the Commission's letter of27 January 2014 you were asked to provide information on the agreement reached with the new landowner about the establishment of the educational nature trail during the next External Monitoring team visit. By the time of the visit you, however, could not provide a copy of this agreement. Please submit it with the final report and provide the remaining information requested on this issue in the Commission's letter of9 April 2013 and repeatedly in the letter of27 January 2014.

Reply to the request: the agreement reached with the new landowner about the establishment of the educational nature trail is attached as Annex 7. It describes, that the landowner does not mind, that the trail is established in his land.

ACTION D.2.c: Guided tours in Meteliai Regional Park

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 01/11/2013*
5 guided tours implemented	01/07/2014	In progress

Expected results: 5 guided tours for 100 people.

Results of the action: 1st guided tour was carried out in MRP 31 August 2012. The participants of the guided tour were introduced to the habitats of the target species and restoration works carried out in Juodabalė Herpetological Reserve. 25 people participated in the guided tour, the list of participants was attached to the Midterm Report as Annex 23. 3 guided tours "Ecological corridors, conservation of species and habitats in Meteliai Regional Park" were carried out spring and summer 2013. The participants of the guided tours were introduced to the habitats of the target species and restoration works carried out in Juodabalė Herpetological Reserve. 15 schoolchildren and 2 teachers participated in the 2nd guided tour, 10 teachers participated in the 3rd, 43 schoolchildren participated in the 4rd guided tour, the lists of the tours were attached to the Progress Report as Annex 14. 2014 May 16 was the 5th guided tour "Ecological corridors, conservation of species and habitats in Meteliai Regional Park" 4 schoolchildren and 2 teachers participated in the guided tour. The participants were introduced to the aims of ECONAT project, amphibian and reptilian species, which live in MRP. The participants were introduced to E.o. habitats and habitat management. The schoolchildren helped to remove turf from the Eo egglaying sites. The list of participants is attached as Annex 40. In total 101 participant participated in the guided tours in MRP.

ACTION D.2.d: Guided tours in Veisiejai Regional Park

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
5 guided tours implemented	01/07/2014	Completed 05/06/2013

Expected results: 5 guided tours for 100 people.

Results of the action: 7 guided tours were carried out in VRP. The 1st was a bicycle orientation competition "Do not be slow as a turtle" organised on 30th July 2011. It was a competition for the teams with bicycles to find certain objects in the Regional Park, for example, informational board in Petroškai and to write which species are protected. 29 people participated in this guided tour. 2nd guided tour was for the schoolchildren from Veisiejai Gymansium. It was about amphibians in Veisiejai town on 25 April 2012, 20 children participated. These guided tours were described in the Mid-term Report. 3rd guided tour was also organised as a bicycle orientation competition. This time it was devoted for H.a. and called "with bikes where the tree frogs jump". 43 people participated, it was 25 August 2012. The 4th guided tour was for schoolchildren and teachers from Šeštokai school on 22 May 2013. 14 children and 3 teachers participated in the tour. The tour was guided around Kapčiamiestis in the habitats restored for Ha. The children and teachers were introduced to the tree frogs ecology, habitat restoration and activities of the project in general. The 5th guided tour was for the employees of Kaunas Botanical Garden, which were carried out on 05 June 2013. 6 participants were guided through restored habitats of Eo, Ha, introduced to the informational board and activities of the project. The lists of participants were attached as Annex 22 to the Progress Report.

Two additional guided tours were carried out in VRP. 67 schoolchildren from Lazdiju Motiejaus Gustaicio Gymnasium participated in the 6th guided tour on 2014 September 26 . 26 schoolchildren from Seirijų Antano Žmuidzinavičiaus participated in the 7th guided tour on 2014 October 7. In total 208 participants participated in the guided tours in VRP. There are no costs attributed for the project for the last 7th guided tour. The lists of participants are attached as Annex 41.

ACTION D.2.e: Installation of notice boards

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 01/11/2013*
Instalment of 7 notice boards	01/12/2010	Completed

Expected results: 7 notice boards

According to the regulations of the Regional Parks, all the information boards, which are erected in the area of the Parks, have to comply to the certain standards. According to the experience of the project partners DNP, VRP and MRP, when they carry out the procedures of public procurement, such information board costs around 1000 EUR. It took

some time for the project team to find a cheaper version, which would not exceed our foreseen budget for the information boards.

Results of the action: 8 information boards are installed in the project areas LT01, LT02, LT03, LT04, LT05, LT06, LT07 and 1 information board in LZS. Under this action we prepared big (1x0,7m text space) information boards with detailed descriptions of the project actions, target species and their habitats. Pictures of information boards and map, where they are in the project localities are attached as Annex 42.
Informational board in the target area LT01 is built in a viewpoint by lake Šlavantas together with an informational board of VRP, wooden tables and benches for rest. The board in LT02 is built in Seirijų Miesto Kolonija village by restored habitats (some restored by NELEAP Project, already inhabited by Eo, some newly created by this Project), the board is visible from a road of regional importance. The board in LT03 is built in Makariškė village by a newly created pond, the board is visible from a road of local importance. The board in LT04 is built in Geniai village by a newly created pond, the board is visible from a road of local importance. The board in LT05 is built in Merkinė town by a newly created pond, the board is a part of the educational trail (action D2b). The board in LT06 is built in Kapčiamiestis town by a newly created pond, the board is visible from a road of regional importance. The board in LT07 is built in Bugieda village, the board is visible from a road of local importance.

ACTION D.3: Study tours

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
1st study tour organised	01/06/2011	Completed by 03/04/2011
2nd study tour organised	01/05/2012	Completed by 08/04/2011
3rd study tour organised	01/06/2012	Completed by 01/05/2012
4th study tour organised	01/10/2013	Completed by 16/04/2014

Expected results: Two 4-5 days study tours for 30 people.

Clarification: As it was noted in the Inception and Midterm reports: it was mentioned 4 study tours in the project description. Since we had specific subjects, we asked keep 4 study tours as foreseen in milestone table. However, the study tours are specialised and a particular study tour cannot be relevant for 30 people, therefore the amount of participants is as many as there are people working with a particular topic. Moreover, there was a discrepancy for this action in the project proposal. In the timetable the action should last till II 2012 only, while in the list of milestones the 4th study tour is to be organised until 01/10/2013. The timetable is adjusted accordingly, i.e. action will be implemented until IV 2013.

Results of the action: 2 study tours were organised in spring 2011. The 1st study tour was organised on 29th March-2nd April 2011 according to the timetable. It was devoted for learning turtle rearing methods. 5 participants went to the study tour: 3 employees from LZS: 1 LFN representative and turtle expert dr.Martina Meeske. During 5 days 4 German institutions, which carry out turtle rearing, were visited: Naturschutzstation Rhinluch in Linum, zoological gardens in Frankfurt am Main and Berlin, and Nature station in Blümberger Mühle. During the visit experts and specialists of turtle rearing and keeping in captivity were visited, the methods for rearing discussed and knowledge exchanged. As a result of visit, the draft methodology was prepared; also adjustments were made to project for instaling rearing enclosures. The report about visited places wa attached in annex 16 of the Inception Report.

The 2nd study tour to selected Estonian and Latvian farms was organised on 6-8 of April 2011. The participants were potential farmers from project sites: Jonas Sidaravicius, Jovita Pociute, also agriculture advisors, totally 9 people. The programme was compiled of visits to 5 demonstration farms. The farms were developed by the joint project DEMO FARM "Development of Latvian – Estonian network for demonstration of environmentally friendly farming practices" run by Latvian Fund for Nature and Estonian Fund for Nature assisted by Latvian Agriculture Advisory Service. The farms were advised and changed their activities into more environmentally friendly way; mainly they started to graze grasslands by beef cattle, installed water bodies for biodiversity. Project managers shared their experiences in development of farms and cooperation with farmers. This experience was used for development of farms in project sites (Action A.7). DEMO FARM project is implemented within Estonia - Latvia Programme under European Territorial Cooperation and it supports cross-border cooperation between Estonia and Latvia. The programme and list of participants attached in annex 17 of the Inception Report. The report was attached in Annex 26 of the Midterm report.

3rd study tour was on "Danish experience in amphibian conservation – prevention of road mortality and restoration of exploited gravel pits". It was organised to Denmark in 17 – 20 April 2012. It had two aims:

1. to learn restoration of exploited sand and gravel pits that they would fulfil the needs of the project target species;
2. to learn about prevention of amphibian road mortality.

The first aim is directly connected with the Action C4. The second aim is directly connected with the general aim of the project – to connect the fragmented populations of the target species. Currently the infrastructure for reducing amphibian road mortality is starting to be built and many mistakes are made. Also no experience in restoration of the exploited sand pits for the reptiles and amphibians exists in Lithuania. Therefore people responsible for these activities (staff from the Lithuanian Road Directorate, MoE, Alytus Regional Environmental Department and protected areas) were invited to the workshop; 10 participants in total. A list of the participants, the programme and the report of the study tour were attached as Annex 26 to the Midterm Report. The photos are uploaded to the project website:
http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/galerija/mokomoji-isvyka-i-danija.

EC's request in the letter of 27/01/2014: Hereby I take note that the fourth study tour has been postponed to the spring 2014 due to the problems with organising it in 2013. The foreseen location of the study tour is changed to Poland. Please provide details on the

results of this study tour and its benefits for the project with the final report, especially in the light of the late stage of the project when the study tour would be taking place.

Reply to the request: The 4th study tour "Management of restored reptilian and amphibian habitats, and Emys orbicularis rearing and release experience in Poland" was organised 14-16 April 2014. A study tour was planned in spring 2013 to see the habitats of Eo and Ha across the border and plan the possibilities for their connectivity with the Lithuanian populations. Belorussian herpetologists, who work with Eo and Ha, were contacted. However, the herpetologists could not devote their time during spring, explaining that they are busy with their fieldworks. The study tour was moved into summer 2013, but the Belorussian herpetologists were still unavailable. Therefore the study tour with the same objectives was organised 2014 spring to Poland.
The study tour had two aims:
1. to learn long term management practices of restored habitats for the target species;
2. to exchange turtle rearing experience and to learn about release of juveniles.

12 participants from all partner institutions, Lithuanian Herpetological Society and Vilnius University, visited Napiwodska-Ramucka Natura 2000 area, Bierbza and Poleski National Parks, where they saw habitats for turtles and rare amphibians restored up to 12 years ago and Eo rearing station. The list of the participants, programme and report of the study tour are attached as Annex 43.

ACTION D.4: Printed educational material, touring exhibition

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 01/11/2013*
The folder about the project produced	01/12/2010	Completed by 01/12/2010
Educational material for schools prepared	01/05/2010 Another date in deliverable table is 01/13/2013	Completed by 01/10/2011
All educational material printed	01/05/2014	Completed by 30/09/2014
The folder about the project (brochure) produced	01/12/2010	Completed by 01/12/2010;
Posters printed	01/01/2012	Completed by 01/10/2012
T-shirts produced	01/01/2012	Completed by 01/05/2012
Touring exhibition	01/09/2013	Completed by 01/09/2013
DVD produced	01/09/2014	Completed by 30/09/2014
Handbook on Natural	01/08/2014	Completed by 20/05/2014

Frame published		
Informational material (pocket guide)	31/12/2013	Completed by 21/11/2013

Expected results: Folders about the project (1000 copies in LT and 1000 in EN), posters (100 copies in LT and 100 in EN), educational material for schools (1000 copies), one exhibition, a DVD film (1000 copies), T-shirt (500 copies) on the issues of ecology of the target species and ecological corridors will be produced. Informational material (pocket-guide) for the management of the target species for agricultural advisors will be produced (500 copies). Non-stop web streaming will take place for 3 years in the warm season (starting by April and finishing in September). 4 Turtle days organized in Lithuanian Zoological Garden.

Clarification: Informational material (pocket guide) has no indicated deadline, therefore we foresee 31/12/2013 as described in application. Since the project organises a lot of events for the general public, it was decided to produce more posters than foreseen: 200 EN version and 800 LT version. The price is not bigger than foreseen in the budget. T shirt (500 copies) we would like to keep result of 200 T-shirts since this number is mentioned in description of action and foreseen in the budget. Educational materials for schools. There were two due dates – 01/03/2013 in deliverables table and 01-05-2011 in milestones table. The lessons in the schools were taught until 01/10/2011. Brochures has no description neither in the application text, nor in the budget, they were meant to be the same as the folders.

Results of the action:

a) Informative folders on the main target and umbrella species and the main goals of the project for general distribution were produced in 1000 copies each. Both versions were attached as Annex 18 to the Inception Report. Distribution details of all dissemination materials attached in Annex 48.

b) Educational materials for schools – was prepared and distributed in 5 schools (two types of the material: for the 2nd and 3rd grades and for the 10th grade) in the project area as foreseen in the application. The educational material was attached as Annex 27 to the Midterm Report. The material was uploaded to the Project website: http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/parsisiuntimui

   After discussions with the teachers it was decided that the children would be reached better if they had not only material prepared, but also the lessons would be given to them. Staff of VRP and MRP prepared the lessons and taught them in the schools. A painting competition was arranged, wining painting used for the project T-shirt (please refer to 5.3.8.d). All the paintings are scanned and uploaded to the project website: http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/vaiku-piesiniai

   The presentations for the 3rd grade missed Natura 2000 and LIFE logos, afterwards it was corrected and redistributed to all the schools, where the lessons were taught, i.e. Leipalingio, Kučiūnų, Seirijų, Kapčiamiesčio and Liškiavos schools.

Also LZS carries out educational lessons called “Does European Pond Turtle live in Lithuania?” for the schoolchildren about the target species, especially E.o., and the project activities. The contents of the lessons and list of schools where such lessons were carried out 2011 – 2012 were attached to the Midterm report as Annex 27. 2014 is attached in the Annex 45. All the educational material has LIFE and Natura2000 logos. 9 lessons were in LZS and 10 lessons were in the schools in 2011, 453 listeners in total. 1408 listeners participated in this education activity in their schools and universities and 254 in LZS in 2012. Lessons were taught to 37 groups 667 participants in 2013 and to 18 groups 373 participants in 2014 in total in LZS.

c) Posters – two versions of posters (in Lithuanian and in English) are produced, were attached as Annex 28 to the Midterm Report. Distribution details of all dissemination materials attached in Annex 48.
d) T-shirts – 200 T-shirts produced. On the front the t-shirts have the project logo and a picture, which was painted by Džiugas Klimašauskas, third grade schoolchild from Leipalingis school. He won the paintings competition, which was organized after the lessons were taught in the schools in the project area (please refer to 5.3.8.b). On the back side the t-shirts have LIFE, Natura2000 and all the partners logos in black and white version. A t-shirt was added to the Midterm Report. The t-shirts were used as prizes during different competitions, for example the events of the LIFE 20th anniversary, photography competition, bicycle orientation event in VRP and others. They are also used by the project team and volunteers, when the events are happening and the organisers are dressed with the project t-shirts. Distribution details of all dissemination materials attached in Annex 48.

e) Touring exhibition - an exhibition “Ramsar sites”, described in the Inception Report was decided to be updated. Therefore a photography competition was organised for the general public in September 2012. The competition was for the project’s target species and their habitats, it was widely broadcasted in the mass media. There was 51 authors participating and 316 works were received for the competition in total. A professional nature photographer Vytautas Knyva was invited to help choosing the best photos. 23 photos were chosen according to the quality, ideas pictured and also that it would reflect Lithuanian reptile and amphibian species diversity. Touring exhibition the exhibition was presented in 12 exhibition halls (see the table). The exhibition was opened in all the institutions named in the table telling about the project and its target species, showing filmed material. The exhibition started in Lazdijai Public Library. During its opening the project manager Dalia Bastytė told the background of the exhibition, explained the project activities around Lazdijai and showed a short film about the habitat restoration carried out by the project. The director of Veisiejai Regional Park explained the importance of the project activities. The photos from the exhibition opening can be found in the website of Lithuanian Fund for Nature: http://www.glis.lt/?pid=1&news_id=232 and on the Facebook profile: http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151153065638246.451808.96101993245&type=1 A short film from the exhibition opening can be found on LFN Facebook profile: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lietuvos-Gamtos-Fondas/96101993245?ref=ts&fref=ts. The second place where the exhibition was opened is Alytus Regional Department (RED). The project manager Dalia Bastytė

and the executive director of LFN Edmundas Greimas explained the importance of herpetofauna, the threats, which have emerged for it, introduced the audience to the project activities and showed short films about the project actions. The director of RED expressed his gratitude for the activities of the project in Alytus region. The photos from the opening are in LFN Facebook profile: http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151186058168246.456863.96101993245&type=1. Similar openings were also in the other exhibition halls.

All the exhibition halls are the closest towns from the project areas. Alytus and Lazdijai are the biggest towns in the region, later on the exhibition moved to the smaller towns. Before opening the exhibition the invitations are sent to the MoE, Service for Protected Areas, local municipalities, protected areas, all the schools in the surroundings and the local press. Currently the exhibition is hanging on the walls of meetings hall in LFN.

Table. Travelling of the exhibition

No.	Exhibition hall	Date of our exhibition
1	Lazdijai Public Library	30/10/2012 – 21/11/2012
2	Alytus Regional Environmental Department	22/11/2012 – 14/01/2013
3	Visitors centre of Dzūkija National Park	15/01/2013 – 28/02/2013
4	Emilija Pliaterytė Museum in Kapčiamiestis	01/03/2013 – 01/04/2013
5	Vilnius University	03/04/2013 – 03/05/2013
6	Young Naturalists Centre	06/05/2013 – 17/05/2013 and 23/05/2013 - 30/07/2013
7	Botanical Garden in Vilnius	18/05/2013 – 22/05/2013
8	Lithuanian Road Directorate	31/07/2013 – 12/09/2013
9	Veisiejai Museum	18/09/2013 – 18/10/2013
10	Lithuanian Agricultural Service	08/11/2013 – 04/02/ 2014
11	Ministry of Environment	13/03/2014- 03/05/2014
12	Exhibition centre of Meteliai Regional Park	25/08/2014 - 30/09/2014

Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12: The exhibition consists of a wall-up which describes the project, its aims and its importance. The wall-up has LIFE and Natura2000 logos. Another part of the exhibition is 8 photos of the project activities – a series of E.o. and H.a. habitat restoration. Under these photos also is an explanation of importance of such activities. The third part of the exhibition is 23 photos, which reflect diversity and beauty of Lithuanian reptiles and amphibians and their habitats. The photos of the exhibition are uploaded to the project's website (except wall-up): http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/ar-is-balos-tas-grazumas

f) Camera in LZS – installed in the outdoor enclosure, when the young turtles are moved to the laboratory in the autumn, the camera is moved there. The translation is stopped when the turtles hibernate. The link to the translation is http://zoosodas.lt/c/gyvos-transliacijos/transliacijos/ . It was functioning during the duration of the project.

g) DVD film– was started spring 2011 after tender procedure and completed 30.09.2014 in Lithuanian. It is named "Masters of the Ponds" emphasizing the importance of reptiles and amphibians to the pond ecosystems. It shows the yearly cycle of a pond, in the course of it diversity of herpetofauna is described, shown its life in the ponds and need for habitat restoration. It is enriched by impressions of the local people about reptiles and amphibians. The DVD is added to the report. LIFE and Natura 2000 logos are in the film as well as a note, that the film was created implementing LIFE + Nature project "Development of a Pilot Ecological Network through Nature Frame areas in South Lithuania" LIFE09 NAT/LT/00581 and it is financed by LIFE project. The film is on the project website in the chapter "About the project" Lithuanian version:
http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/projektas Distribution details of all dissemination materials attached in Annex 48.

h) A handbook how to strengthen the framework of the nature frame in the relevant habitats and for the targeted Annex IV species – published 05/2014 in Lithuanian. It describes criteria, strategy and work done for establishment of ecological network for Eo, and presents GIS model, which helps to choose areas for ecological network for protected amphibian species. The handbook printed in 300 copies. Handbook is attached as Annex 47. Distribution details of all dissemination materials attached in Annex 48.

i) Informational material about beef cattle and grazing of high nature value grasslands in favour for turtles and amphibians is prepared in Lithuanian. Informational material (pocket-guide) on beef farming and management of high nature value habitats was printed in November 2013. The pocket guide is called "Handbook for beef farmers" and describes various aspects of beef farming, e.g. which cattle breeds suit best for grazing of different habitats, animal welfare, manure handling and other things related to proper and nature friendly beef husbandry. It is the first handbook on beef and nature in Lithuania. We focused on project species and habitats presenting examples how to organize grazing in favour for turtles and amphibians.
The handbook was made in cooperation with experts from WWF and Uppland Foundation in Sweden, and Lithuanian Agriculture Advisory Service (LAAS). The book has 120 pages, printed in 3000 copies, and was distributed among agricultural advisers (40 branch offices of LAAS); farmers who are interested in starting beef farming; local communities, protected areas, which implement management plans and others who are interested in knowing more about beef cattle.
Since the material is targeted not only to the agricultural advisers, but also to the farmers we have increased the foreseen number of copies from 500 to 3000. The material is useful in the project areas and other areas of Lithuania where the habitats of protected reptiles and amphibians are overgrowing. It is distributed to the agricultural advisers and farmers encouraging them to keep extensive cattle and

graze valuable areas. The material is added to the Report. The material was presented for the agricultural advisors and farmers on 21st of November 2013.

EC's request in the letter of 27/01/2014: I understand that the produced informational material (pocket-guide) about beef cattle and grazing of high nature value grasslands is targeted not only to the agricultural advisers, but also to the farmers. This is why you have printed 3,000 copies of this publication instead of foreseen 500. The pocket-guide is overall of a good quality, but please provide more detailed information on the costs of this publication and its distribution results with the final report.

Reply to the request: copies were distributed to farmers via 44 local filials of Lithuanian Advisory Service (1000 copies); via Lithuanian Beef Growers Association (1000 copies), 300 copies during LFN seminars and events (events for farmers, project events), 200 copies sent to the libraries of Agriculture University in Kaunas and colleges in bigger cities, 500 copies are kept in the office for future Agri events.

j) We would like to report "Turtle Days" here, which belong to the activities of LZS. To address the attention of the general public a European pond turtle day was organized in the zoological garden. It was organized on the 12/06/2011 by the staff from LZS and LFN. It is estimated that approximately 1000 visitors participated in this event. During the event project director Nerijus Zableckis and local manager Virginija Raudeliuniene presented the project by giving public speech, also all other activities were related to the project: lectures and DVD show about turtles biology, games about turtles, planting the flowers in the shape of turtles etc. Photos from this event are attached as Annex 44. Similar activities were organised also during the next "Turtle Days". The second European pond turtle day was organised during the World Animal Day Care on 7 October 2012. Photos from this event are attached as Annex 46. The third turtle day was 30 November 2013, it was called "A day when the turtles are going to hibernate" having in mind the young turtles, which are raised in LZS in the framework of the project. The pictures from this even can be found here: http://zoosodas.lt/informacija/naujienos/vezliukai-zoologijos-sode-uzmigo-ziemos-miegu/. The last festival was on the 14 September 2014 and it was called "Au revoir in the nature!" having in mind the turtle juveniles raised in the zoo and released to the nature. Pictures of this even are here: https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.701534743266066.1073741876.278525858900292&type=3

ACTION D.5: Best practice guidelines

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Best practice guidelines published	01/10/2014	30/09/2014

Expected results: Best practice guidelines published in 500 copies (250 in Lithuanian and 250 in English).

Results of the action: Best Practice Guidelines 30/09/2014 in 500 copies (250 in Lithuanian and 250 in English). The main experiences of the project are described in the book. It starts with the description of the project localities, ecological needs of the target species and definition of favourable conservation status. Then separate parts discuss development of the ecological network, habitat restoration, rearing of Eo and Ha, knowledge exchange between the specialists and education of the public at large. The book has 50 pages. Both versions of the Best Practice Guidelines added to the report. Distribution details of all dissemination materials attached in Annex 48.

ACTION D.6: Web page

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Status 30/09/2012*
Web page developed	01/12/2010	Setting up completed by 31/04/2011; update ongoing

Expected results: Webpage prepared
Results of the action: The main project webpage is created, its address is http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/. The webpage is located under the main website of the CB guaranteeing long term support for the domain. Website is available in two languages: Lithuanian and English. Project website is of a good quality and frequently updated both in Lithuanian and English languages. Other AB have the links to the project website:
http://www.am.lt/VI/index.php#a/11110
http://zoosodas.lt/informacija/veikla/projektai/bandomojo-ekologinio-tinklo-rytu-lietuvoje-sukurimas/
http://gamta.cepkeliai-dzukija.lt/18735/projektai.html?read=12467
http://www.meteliuparkas.lt/index.php?id=127&hh=cHJvamVrdGFp
http://www.veisiejuparkas.lt/node/180
http://www.amphi-consult.dk/index.php/dk/projekter/life-econat.html

The website was regularly updated; it was visited by 1997 of visitors per month in average during the project duration. All the publications and other deliverables (like action plans, methodologies, movie etc.) are available on the project website. The website will be maintained at least 5 years after the end of the project.

ACTION D.7: Final seminar

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Final project seminar organised	01/10/2014	28/08/2014

Expected results: Final project seminar of 2 days for 40 participants organised

Results of the action: Final seminar organised in the end of August. Two days of international conference and one day of a field trip to the project localities were organised

during the final seminar. During the conference experience of the project was shared not only with Lithuanian specialists and journalists, but also with international audience – for each section was at least one speaker, who presented similar experience from his/her country. There were 5 sessions, namely: Habitat Restoration, Development of Ecological Network, Rearing of Eo and Ha, Education and Poster session. The presentations are uploaded to the project's website:
http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/parsisiuntimui/baigiamojo-seminaro-pranesimai
Since the seminar was with synchronic translation, some presentations are in English, some in Lithuanian. During the field trip the participants visited the habitats restored during NELEAP project, during ECONAT project and habitats managed by our demo farm. 44 participants participated in the Final seminar. The programme and list of participants is attached as Annex 49.

ACTION D.8: Layman's report

Milestone /deliverable	*Deadline according to the project*	*Date of completion*
Layman report published	01/10/2014	30/09/2014

Expected results: Layman report 5-10 pages printed in 100 copies in Lithuanian and 100 copies in English.

Results of the action: Layman report printed 20 pages 200 copies Lithuanian and English languages in the same book. It describes project's activities, the main results and achievements. The book is added to the report. A table with dissemination of publication is attached as Annex 48.

5.3. Evaluation of Project Implementation

In this section you should evaluate the following aspects of the project:

- Methodology applied: discuss the success and failures of the methodology applied, results of actions conducted and the cost-efficiency of actions

The project started with A actions: developing plans, methodologies and collecting permissions for the C actions. Some of the A actions needed more information gathered, for example, action plans for the species, therefore they were accomplished in the end of the project. Majority of the C actions were carried out during the second half of the project, after the way was paved with the A actions. D actions were implemented during the whole duration of the project. The actions were implemented in a cost effective way, for example, hiring local companies and specialists from southern Lithuania, thus reducing transportation costs.

- Compare the results achieved against the objectives: clearly assess whether the objectives were met and describe the successes and lessons learned. This could be presented in a table, which compares through quantitative and qualitative information the actions implemented in the frame of the project with the objectives in the revised proposal:

– **To secure the long-term viability of Annex II and Annex IV species populations**

Pond creation and restoration is more than foreseen to reach coherent connectivity of the populations of the rarest species of herpetofauna in Lithuania, i.e. Eo and Ha. This objective was reached by restoring habitats and creating new habitats: raising water level in the wetlands (foreseen 20 sluices to improve 10 ha of wetlands, reached 24 sluices improving 17.48 ha of wetlands), digging ponds (foreseen 100 ponds, reached 163), clearing bushes, creating shallow slopes (foreseen 40 ponds restored, reached 53), amphibian hibernation places (number was not foreseen, reached 30) and egg laying places for E.o. (foreseen 40, reached 40)**.** Sustainable land use practice is successfully implemented in the demonstration farm. To ensure long term impact of these efforts: Action plans for Eo and Ha were prepared, 4 new and 1 extended Natura2000 areas were designated, nature management plans for these areas were prepared, an example of the demonstration farm widely disseminated.

– **To develop a pilot ecological network in Southern Lithuania**

The criteria and methodology for establishing of the network were developed and C actions implemented for creating the network in practice. GIS model created for dissemination of best practice of development of ecological network for protected amphibian species.

– **To save the small and isolated populations of *Emys orbicularis* and *Hyla arborea* in Southern Lithuania.**

E.o. population conservation was carried out by protection of egg clutches in situ (all known egg laying sites were protected from predators by nocturnal watch and covering) and rearing of eggs ex situ (127 juveniles reared). 101 turtle juveniles released into 8 restored habitats spread in the overall area of the ecological network. H.a. rearing in situ was carried on, during 3 years 2799 metamorphosed Ha were released in 10 ponds in the target areas LT06 and LT07.

– **To raise awareness of the local population**

There was much done on education of the general public. The press releases (foreseen 4, publicized 42), TV reportages (foreseen 2, shown 13), radio programmes (foreseen 3, translated 5) broadcasted which were widely accepted by the wide range of mass media, starting from the main Lithuanian television channels to the local newspapers of Lazdijai district. The numbers of schoolchildren reached by the lessons is much higher than foreseen in the application. 11 guided tours were organized in the project area, educational trail by Ilgabalė wetland installed. Constant meetings with the landowners were held. The webpage was constantly updated. The web camera was acting on the LZS webpage which could be accessed by anybody. Dissemination material produced and distributed during different events. Also extra events have been organised outside LIFE which also spread message about LIFE and the project.

– **To generate, share and exchange expert knowledge**

4 workshops were organised, all of them sharing not only Lithuanian experience, but also experience from a wide range of the other countries. A final seminar was organised as an international conference, presenting experience acquired during the project and comparing it with experience from the other European countries. 4 study tours on topics, which were the most relevant for the project partners to Germany, Latvia - Estonia, Denmark and Poland were organised. Project team communicated with other LIFE projects and their experts. Several visits were made, also not only LIFE but other projects were involved. 5

meetings with other projects implemented: 4 of them with other LIFE projects, 1 with non EU financed. Informational material for agricultural advisers and farmers, Handbook on Natural Frame, Best Practice Guidelines published in Lithuanian and English and distributed among the specialists, who are interested in the experience of the project.

- Indicate which project results have been immediately visible and which results will only become apparent after a certain time period.

The effects of habitat restoration on amphibian species are visible faster than the effects on Eo because of their biology. The positive effect of the demonstration farm on the habitats of the target species is already obvious, Eo and Bb is observed in all the ponds managed by the cattle. In one of the ponds Nitella capillaris, which is extremely rare in Lithuania, was found. Evaluation of ecological network as a structure for Eo migration will become apparent after some years, when some individuals, which are known will be caught in the other populations. Since Eo are sedentary animals, this will take some time. Increase of juveniles turtles after headstarted juveniles were released is obvious, because there were relatively few turtle juveniles before; increase of Ha juveniles is less obvious, but starting up of 2 new Ha populations recorded. Increase of awareness of the public at large is obvious – before the project hardly anybody knew that turtles live in the wild in Lithuania, now this gap is noticeably smaller. Exchange of knowledge between the experts and increase of knowledge available in Lithuania is visible immediately, since a number of things, which were not done before, were mastered, for example, headstarting of Eo.

- Indicate effectiveness of the dissemination and comment on any major drawbacks

The target species are heavily dependent on people activities, since they need habitats, which appear as a result of human impact. In nowadays conditions these species can hardly survive if people do not understand the importance of their survival and do not put efforts to conserve them. Therefore we put a lot of efforts on raising public awareness and it was highly successful.

5.4 Analysis of long-term benefits

1. Environmental benefits
    a. Direct / quantitative environmental benefits:

Aquatic (163 + 52 ponds + 17,48 ha of wetlands) and terrestrial habitat (40 Eo egg laying sites + 30 amphibian hibernation sites) restoration for 10 target species and other rare and common species;
Populations of the rarest species strengthened (protected Eo egg clutches from predators, headstarted Eo (128 juveniles) and Ha (2799 juveniles));
New Natura2000 areas designated;
Favourable conservation status for Eo, Bb, Tc secured and Annex IV species populations in the southern Lithuania maintained. Additionally, secured Leucorrhinia pectoralis, improved the population status of Dytiscus latissimus and Nitella capillaris, Annex IV species of dragonflies helped by the corridors.

b. Relevance for environmentally significant issues or policy areas (e.g. industries/sectors with significant environmental impact, consistency with 6th or 7th (as applicable) EU Environment Action Programme and/or important environmental principles, relevance to the EU legislative framework (directives, policy development, etc.)

The pilot ecological network was distinguished in compliance with the Habitats Directive and in view of the Ramsar (1975), Berne (1982), Bonn (1983) and Florence (2000) Conventions, and the national laws, such as the Law on Environmental Protection and the Law on Protected Areas, as well as related secondary legislation. The results of the project are consistent with the 1st priority objective of 7th EU Environment Action Programme, i.e.: To protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital. Ecological protection of water bodies is one of the key objectives of the Water Framework Directive. The results of the project contributes to the EU Green Infrastructure Strategy, 'to promote the deployment of green infrastructure in the EU in urban and rural areas', as well as implementing the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and specifically Target 2 that requires that 'by 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems'.

2. Long-term benefits and sustainability

a. Long-term / qualitative environmental benefits

Key reason for extinction of amphibians and reptiles in Lithuania includes destruction and alteration of habitats required for the said animals. For this reason, the project largely focused on restoration of habitats of the target species. Upon completion of the project, it is foreseen to carry out maintenance of sound habitats.

1. In the core zones of ecological network

The core zones of EN have national and international protection status. The Law on Protected areas ensures that any activities potentially harmful to the protected habitats and species are either prohibited or restricted in the core zones of the EN, part of Natura2000 European ecological network. As far as Natura2000 areas dedicated for the European pond turtle, destruction of turtle habitats, injuring of animals when fishing, intimidation of animals by holding massive events or when navigating using navigational measures shall be prohibited. It is recommended to remove some vegetation, protect turtle's eggs from the predators and to restore places, where the turtles lay eggs. Similar measures are also recommended for the other two target species listed in Annex II to the Habitats Directive: the European fire-bellied toad and the great crested newt. The shallow bodies of water situated in the habitats of the said species may not be destroyed or polluted, amphibian hibernation places must be preserved, and the animals must be protected from casualties on the motorways. These general restrictions ensure the preservation of habitats in the EN core zones.

As regards the five Natura 2000 areas were established in the project, Plans of Natural management for them were prepared, including specific measures to maintain the habitats for a period of a decade. Action plans for the European pond turtle and the European tree-frog were prepared. Furthermore, there are EN core zones in the area of Dzūkija National Park and Meteliai and Veisiejai Regional Parks. The Directorates of these parks are responsible to ensure the protection of said species and their habitats.

2. **Corridors of the ecological network**

Not only the EN core zones, but also corridors and buffer zones must be conserved and the

ecological needs of the protected species must be protected. It is important to keep shallow bodies of water, new or restored ones, from overgrowing with vegetation. Mowing and grazing helps to keep an open landscape, hence an extensive, ecological farming is recommended in the EN corridors, as well as application of the agricultural environmental measures.

Landowners of the land plots, in which ecological network corridors were formed and new ponds have been dug, also agreed, on contractual basis, to maintain ecologically suitable environment for the rare and threatened species found in the area: refrain covering the ponds with ground, or deepening the water bodies, sustainably maintain buffer zones of particular water bodies - ensure grazing or mowing of the shoreline. It is recommended to keep the bodies of water fish-free, out of reach of poultry. We believe the environmental farm established in Juodabalė Herpetological Preserve will serve as an inspiration and educational case to numerous farmers in the region to take on the sustainable agriculture, thus contributing to the preservation of the habitats of rare species.

Officials responsible for environmental control will undertake checking of the state of particular water bodies at least once per year. The survey and observations will be combined with the active dialog and consultations with the landowners, local residents, other parties of agreements in order to stimulate good practices, give advice, provide active professional support, and comply with the obligations of legal acts and personal contracts related to the protection of rare species and the environmental state of EN.

Maintaining good ecological state of the populations

The project sought to directly enhance the numbers of the populations of the two rarest target species, i.e. the European tree frog and the European pond turtle. The project found that the tree frogs were successfully spreading, taking hold of the restored habitats; consequently, the said species will no longer be bred and released to the habitats restored. The number of individuals of the European pond turtle increase slowly; this is natural, however, for such long-living, sedentary animals, having few offsprings. The population of the European pond turtle will therefore be enhanced on a continuous basis. The staff of Meteliai and Veisiejai Regional Parks will protect the eggs of turtles from predators, while the eggs laid in unsuitable places will still be put to incubation in the Lithuanian Zoo.

Legal status of the protection and management of the ecological network

The greatest responsibility to preserve the established structure, integrity and state of the EN falls on the Public authorities. In accordance with the law on Protected areas the Ministry of Environment (MoE) prepares the material and initiates establishment of Natura 2000 areas. MoE is responsible for establishment of the EN core zones planning establishment and the management of protected areas designated for preservation and protection of the biodiversity and specific species. This authority must ensure that the EN core and buffer zones coincide with the national and biosphere reserves, national parks and reserves or their buffer zones. National institutions, the MoE particularly, will assess the outcomes of the Project, take them into account forming the tasks of National environmental monitoring, and consider them in the process of decision making concerning the new environmental measures implementation or introduction of the new environmental policy of the said areas.

The protection and adequate ecological state of the pilot EN in the Southern Lithuania will be guaranteed by the legal protection measures of the habitats approved on the National level. During the project, the methodology governing establishment of the EN for the target species in the national Nature frame was established and published in the website of the

MoE and shall contribute to the establishment of other ENs in the future. The methodology is available at: http://www.am.lt/VI/index.php#a/13910.

Local authorities of municipalities which territories possess habitats of rare and endangered species will be encouraged to take strategic legal decisions concerning establishment and protection of the EN corridors locally. National targets of Landscape and biodiversity protection and preservation of will be embodied providing the financial support – it is planned to include these specific targets and fields into the Plans for EU Structural founds financial assistance by the State and the EU for the period of 2014 to 2020.

The MoE will ensure that the data and information gathered by the project will be used to develop new or adjusting of existing integrated documents of Territorial (spatial) planning on local or regional level. These documents should officially set borders of the EN connective structures and other areas important for preservation of species and determine concrete regulations on protection and management of the said areas.

The Ministry of Environment is considering opportunities to develop the said activities on international level, including possibility to establish a Joint frontier Polygon of Biosphere jointly with the Belarus side in the EN area situated close to the State border of Poland and Belarus.

Solutions of the Documents of territorial planning and Environmental impact assessment of planned activities on the protected species and the EN

The most important solutions about the management and protection of particular territories are taken in the process of territorial planning. The success of this process depends on the consciousness and the knowledge of all parties (national and local authorities, planners, local communities, etc.) taking part in decision making. The lack of experience, how to support the protection of rare species through the rational and sustainable land use, how to safeguard the ecological state of populations, avoid and mitigate the potential risks still estimated.

The findings of the project will support development of the territorial planning methodologies both general and specific, related to EN and protection of rare species at all levels as well. Using the gatherings of the project National and Local authorities can identify and take into account the impact of any economic activities on the EN and the target species protected in the examined area.

Assessing the Impact of Plans and projects as obligatory by the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment, all transformation of an area (expansion of settlements, development of industry, road system and recreation, land improvement and land reclamation works, etc.) need to be assessed on the aspect of Landscape and biodiversity and safeguarded that no effect neither on the Natura 2000 areas (the EN core zones) nor on the EN corridors will be estimated.

Implementing the EU directive on Environmental Impact Assessment of planned economic activities involves mandatory assessment procedures of an impact on natural landscape and biodiversity, analysis whether the planned activity may affect an infringement of ecological needs of the species, foreseen measures to mitigate and compensate the anthropogenic impact, preservation or restoration of natural landscape and biodiversity. No roads may be built by crossing the areas of EN core zones, and where this is not an option, compensation measures must be planned (establishment of new bodies of water and guarantee of development of a landscape beneficial to a species in respective area; when

the migration corridors are breached, places for animal road crossing must be provided for).

Dissemination of information ensuring the long-term project outcome

The long-term nature of the project is guaranteed by adequately streamlined, protected and submitted information. The project partners shared the valuable scientific and practical experience gained in the project at various seminars, conferences, and meetings. To make sure that the representatives of the institutions subordinate to the MoE and representatives of the municipalities, professionals of environmental impact assessment and education, planners and landowners are aware of the needs of protected species, management methods of the terrestrial and aquatic habitats of rare animals, the type and nature of restrictions applicable to activities in the EN areas, important information is published on the website of the project, to be accessible even after the completion of the project (www.glis.lt/ekotinklas).

When the project was close to completion, the stakeholders agreed that the cooperation network will be continuously coordinated by the Ministry of Environment. Every partner of the project agreed to share the methodological experience they have acquired, thus contributing to better knowledge of various professionals as regards the ecological needs of the target species, the importance of the EN development, disseminate information on the outcomes of the project, encourage the territorial planning and road development sectors to take responsibility for the preservation of the biodiversity and landscape.

The scientific data gathered in course of the project concerning the finding places of the rare target species was published in a special designated website and included in the information system of wild animals, plants and mushrooms, existing or temporarily present in the natural environment in Lithuanian territory, administered by the MoE (SRIS; https://sris.am.lt). This information will have to be considered when planning economic activities and assessing its potential impact on both the EN and endangered species. The Lithuanian Fund for Nature has prepared a database of the water bodies located in the EN, as well as information about landowners, their contractual obligations and provide it to the Ministry of Environment who is responsible for this information storage and dissemination.

Raising of public awareness

During the project the general public was introduced to rare reptiles and amphibians, the need to protect them, as well as the measures available to each landowner (for description of these activities see Part 5) by big range of different activities.

The dissemination of information concerning preservation of the rare reptiles and amphibians will continue even after the completion of the project. Just as before, this will fall on the Lithuanian Fund for Nature, the Lithuanian Zoo, and the Directorates of the protected areas. Specialists from these organisations will be joined by the staff of local environmental authorities and specialists from the municipal administration, once trained and provided with the educational literature. Based on the educational material prepared in course of the project, the teachers, especially teachers from the local schools, shall use the EN and surrounding areas as educational spaces to explain the school children about the species, which are rare in the whole Europe, but live in the areas of the EN.

After-LIFE Conservation plan is attached as Annex 30.

b. Long-term / qualitative economic benefits (e.g. long-term cost savings and/or business opportunities with new technology etc., regional development, cost reductions or revenues in other sectors)
   - ✓ Farm has very good demonstration value how to maintain environment in a nature friendly way and have income at the same time;
   - ✓ In the region of Southern Lithuania, where landscape is typically poor in water bodies, retention of water in the landscape helps not only farmers to water their cattle, but also improves microclimate, reducing amount of frosts, etc;
   - ✓ Waterbodies and ecological network improve ecosystem services, by creating habitats for keystone species of herpetofauna;
   - ✓ It would had been more difficult and more expensive to revive Eo in Lithuania later on, when even fewer individuals of this species would had been left.

c. Long-term / qualitative social benefits (e.g. positive effects on employment, health, ethnic integration, equality and other socio-economic impact etc.)
   In unfertile soils of Southern Lithuania more and more land becomes abandoned. All this land could be grazed by extensive, unfastidious, labour undemanding cattle breads. Unemployment is also high in the region. Therefore, spreading farm example provides job opportunities.

d. Continuation of the project actions by the beneficiary or by other stakeholders:

A1 Development of action plans – Action plans for the target species plans will be used by the MoE, carrying out Eo and Ha conservation.
A2 Rearing methods for Emys orbicularis – will be used by LZS, who continue turtle rearing, and international community of conservationist, to whom it was presented in the conferences and through the Best Practice Guidelines.
A3 Determining the favourable conservation status for Annex IV amphibian and reptile species in South Lithuania – will be used by MoE defining conservation status of the target species.
A4 Ecological network development - criteria setting up ecological network within nature frame will be used by specialists of territorial for projecting the needs of the target species in the plans in various municipalities.
A5 Establishing new Natura 2000 sites – the new sites and their management plans will be used by MoE for the target species conservation.
A7 Farm development – developed farm will be used by MRP for conservation of Juodabalė Herpetological Reserve and by the other Directorates of Protected Areas, other farmers and agricultural advisers as an example of wetland and terrestrial habitat management, moreover raising of beef cattle.
C1 Habitat management for target species in the project area, C2 Renovation of ponds, mitigation of predation on target species, C3 Restoration of wetlands, C4 Habitat and population management in sandpits – will be maintained by the Directorates of Protected areas and landowners.
C5 Population management of Emys orbicularis and Hyla arborea - The project found that the tree frogs were successfully spreading, taking hold of the restored habitats; consequently, the said species will no longer be bred and released to the habitats restored. The number of individuals of the Eo increase slowly; this is natural, however, for such

long-living, sedentary animals, having few offsprings. The population of the Eo will therefore be enhanced on a continuous basis. The staff of MRP and VRP will protect the eggs of turtles from predators, while the eggs laid in unsuitable places will still be put to incubation in the Lithuanian Zoo. The eggclutches of Eo will be continuously protected by staff from the parks.
D2a Dissemination and cooperation with local players – Information boards will be read by the general public.
D2b Installation of nature educational trail - will be used by the general public.
D4 Printed educational material, touring exhibition – publications will be read by the general public and specialists.
D5 Best practice guidelines, D6 Web page, D8 Layman's report – will be read by Lithuanian and foreign specialists and general public.
E2 Monitoring the effect of the project actions – the data uploaded to SRIS will be used by MoE for the species conservation.
E3 After Life Strategy – will be used by all project partners for developing further activities.

3. Replicability, demonstration, transferability, cooperation: Potential for technical and commercial application (transferability reproducibility, economic feasibility, limiting factors) including cost-effectiveness compared to other solutions, benefits for stakeholders, drivers and obstacles for transfer, if relevant: market conditions, pressure from the public, potential degree of geographical dispersion, specific target group information, high project visibility (eye-catchers), possibility in same and other sectors on local and EU level, etc.

Since no previous practice of development of a functional ecological network, in terms of spatial system, exists in Lithuania (one to ensure ecological needs of the target species, to improve ecological stability of landscape, and to contribute to the preservation of its structure), the project is of fundamental importance in both the species preservation, and demonstration aspect. Likewise, in Europe majority of efforts to create ecological networks were invested into developing universal ecological networks (similar to the Lithuanian Nature Frame), which were planned on the maps, but not developed further. The project showed an example of creating an ecological network from theory to practice.

Fragmentation of European landscape is increasing and current measures of species conservation appear to be insufficient. The project provides a solution to the problem and therefore has a high potential for replicability in the other regions and also for the other species, connecting Natura 2000 areas. The main driver for transfer of this experience is decline of biodiversity.

Furthermore, the project serves not only for nature, but also for local people, thus it is transferable as a case of the Green Infrastructure. The project received community support (and provided benefits for the stakeholders, i.e. local population) for restoring historical habitats (overgrown wetlands), creating better possibilities for the extensive agriculture (watering the cattle), increasing landscape diversity, improving microclimate (by retention of water bodies in the landscape).

Securing favourable conservation status of small isolated populations by connecting them with ecological corridors is much more cost-effective than strengthening each population separately. The project was widely visible (as it can be noticed by the number of

reportages, etc), not only because of its importance for the nature conservation and local which has an image of an exotic animal for majority of Lithuanians and is respected by the communities, who lived close to these animals for generations, served as an eye-catcher.

4. Best Practice lessons: briefly describe the best practice measures used and if any changes in the followed strategy could lead to possible adjustment of the best practices

The main best practice lesson is development of the ecological network from theoretical model to creating stepping stone habitats, which connect the core zones. Several other lessons also were learnt, such as habitat restoration, turtle and tree-frog rearing methods, protection of turtles in situ, creating a demonstrational farm, teaching local schoolchildren in schools, organising events for the general public and workshops for the specialists. Possibility to monitor all created habitats after several years would be useful to suggest adjustment of the best practices.

5. Innovation and demonstration value: Describe the level of innovation, demonstration value added by EU funding at national and international level (including technology, processes, methods & tools, organisational & co-operational aspects)

Since no previous practice of development of a functional ecological network, in terms of spatial system, exists in Lithuania (one to ensure ecological needs of the target species, to improve ecological stability of landscape, and to contribute to the preservation of its structure), the project is of fundamental importance in both the species preservation, and demonstration aspect. Likewise, in Europe majority of efforts to create ecological networks were invested into developing universal ecological networks (similar to the Lithuanian Nature Frame), which were planned on the maps, but not developed further. The project showed an example of creating an ecological network from theory to practice.

6. Long term indicators of the project success: describe the quantifiable indicators to be used in future assessments of the project success, e.g. the conservation status of the habitats / species.

The main indicator would be favourable conservation status of the project target species. Comprehensive definition of criteria for the favourable are attached as Annex 5. The status should be defined by population size and structure, various features of aquatic and terrestrial habitat, connectivity and emerging threats. The features are different for each species according to its ecology.

6. Comments on the financial report

6.1. Summary of Costs Incurred

PROJECT COSTS INCURRED				
	Cost category	Budget according to the grant agreement*	Costs incurred within the project duration	%**
1.	Personnel	296 906,00	321 880,79	108%
2.	Travel	81 351,00	67 153,76	83%
3.	External assistance	175 257,00	205 256,00	119%
4.	Durables: total non-depreciated cost			
	- Infrastructure sub-tot.	52 468,00	46 329,36	88%
	- Equipment sub-tot.	76 673,00	24 567,66	32%
5.	Consumables	33 500,00	50 200,00	150%
6.	Other	0	1 130,71	
7.	Overheads	50 105,00	49 420,81	99%
	TOTAL	766 260,00	765 939,09	100%

*) If the Commission has officially approved a budget modification indicate the breakdown of the revised budget Otherwise this should be the budget in the original grant agreement.
**) Calculate the percentages by budget lines: e.g. the % of the budgeted personnel costs that were actually incurred

General comments on categories:
The total spent budget is almost the same as planed budget. However some categories are either overspent or underspent, but not reaching the threshold of 10% and 30 000 € . We already indicated in the progress report, that expenditures in some categories, e.g. personnel, external will increase while Equipment and Travel will be decreased.

Personnel: 108 % used, 25 214 € more than original budget.
It has biggest consumption among budget categories because of bigger workload than estimated.
LFN exceeded its' budget by 27 568,57 €. The increase is based on bigger demand of working days of main project management team, which consists of project manager and financial manager corresponding accordingly to international manager and National manager foreseen in the application. Their salaries exceeded foreseen budget by 30 000 € and 436 working days in comparison to foreseen budget accordingly 61 592 € and 741 w.d. International project manager (Dalia Bastyte) performed management of the whole project as well as a field expert (- defining exact location of the ecological corridors, their stepping stone elements and supervising the habitat restoration works, organising other activities e.g. study tours, workshops etc.). Later additional staff of field workers has been employed

to assist in the field. The assistance in the field was needed for the experts of AC, who did supervision of habitat restoration by rechecking location, pond design, quality of pond digging etc. Also, many practical issues had to be agreed by local persons due to language barrier.
Financial manager (Nerijus Zableckis), who in the beginning was the project manager, remained as a financial manager as this function was missing in the project, and dedicated only 20% of his employment time.
Further, more expenditures by 6 700 € were incurred by the projects accountant (11 970 instead of 5256 €, 225 w.d. instead of 73 w.d.) due to much bigger number of transactions in the whole project. Less personnel costs were paid for field workers (referred as assistant in the budget) by 15 000 € (spent 10 686 € instead of 25480 €).

AC: personnel increased by 9 220 € because initially foreseen costs under external experts for action E1 Project management were used for AC employees, who performed management of the project.
Other beneficiaries: LZS, DNP, MRP remained with unchanged or slightly under spent or overspent personnel, except VRP. The incurred cost presented in this report for VRP is lower by some 12 000 € than the real costs because of wrongly filled time sheets, where line indicating hours worked for this Life project indicated only part time of whole work performed for the project.

Calculation of Personnel costs

Lithuanian ABs

Personnel costs are calculated on the basis of the annual gross salary of each project employee received in the particular organisation. The calculation of real annual gross salary is based on the salary slip from permanent staff. Salary slip indicates 2 amounts: a salary of the employee 100% (income tax and social charges are paid out from this amount) + social contribution of the employer 30.98 % with exception for LZS in 2011, where social contribution was 31,7%. Example of salary calculation for Nerijus Zableckis in 2010-2014 is attached as annex FIN -1.

AC (Denmark)

The calculation of real annual gross salary is based on the salary slip from permanent staff. To this amount one small amount of social costs (ATP = Danish obligatory pension see www.atp.dk) is added, because the company contribution is not shown on salary slip.

Time sheets

The actual worked time has been registered in Time sheets. The calculation of annual working hours is based on the time sheets, which are completely filled in. it is indicated on time sheets when the permanent staff has worked, how many hours the staff has worked and the staff has had day-off, public and annual holiday and was sick.

LFN had 2 Life projects at once: Baltcoast and ECONAT. A worker registered daily devotion of the time on tasks related to the different projects on daily basis. Since 2012 time is registered in one LIFE projects time sheet, where hours for both LIFE projects are listed. AC also invented one time sheets for all LIFE projects from 2013.

However corrections were made in time sheets for almost entire project period of several ABs: MRP and VRP due to arithmetical discrepancies between project time sheets and national time recording as the total worked hours did not comply with each other. The time worked for Life+ project remained unchanged (only the line – other activities – was corrected). Therefor VRP did declare to the project lower salaries than actually incurred.
Most employees of Lithuanian beneficiaries used to work more than 8 hours a day. According to national legislation a person is allowed to work up to 12 hours a day (Labour code 149 paragraph 1 part, approved by law no IX-926 of 4 June 2002).

Daily rates

The hourly rate for the permanent staff is calculated by dividing the real annual gross salary by amount of real annual working hours. Daily rate is normally calculated hourly rate multiplied x 8 hours (8 hours is a normal working day).

Additional columns have been inserted in the report: the daily rate of €, which was calculated by multiplying hourly rate x 8 hours, which is the normal working time for Lithuanian conditions; another column indicates the foreseen rate, and third column indicates whether actual incurred rate is bellow foreseen rate or above 10% of foreseen rate.

LFN actual daily rates of most employees are bellow the foreseen daily rate except the nature conservation specialists: Zydrunas Sinkevicius and Jonas Sidaravicius, which in the report are referred to the budget line “assistant”. Their rates are higher by more than 10 % o foreseen rates (up to 40% in 2013) because of better financial situation and increasing salaries in all country, and increasing competitiveness in the market.

Explanation on functions:
Since both functions: international project manager and financial manager are highly qualified personnel, we use daily rate of international project manager foreseen in the budget.
One person – public relations specialist was not foreseen in the application, but it was needed to ensure dissemination of project results for the public.

AC: foreseen rates of personnel are below the actual incurred salary rates. However in the application there were only 2 functions foreseen: Senior project manager and senior herpetologist. The unforeseen personnel: field experts (3 persons) who performed work in the field ; local accountant and financial manager, who supported the overall management of the project.

DNP: part of foreseen rates of personnel are equal or the same or slightly bellow the actual incurred salary rates (local manager Eugenijus Drobelis and local ecologist Vincas Slavickas). Only local ecologist Mindaugas Lapele exceeds the rate because this specialist has higher qualification. Local accountant was not foreseen.

MRP: foreseen rates of personnel are equal or the same or slightly bellow the actual incurred salary rates for the local manager and biologist (ecologist) , but from 2013 the rate of local manager exceeds more than 10 % of foreseen daily rate. This increase is based on better financial situation and increasing salaries in State organisations. Local accountant was not foreseen.

VRP: part of foreseen rates of personnel are equal or the same or slightly bellow the actual incurred salary rates (local ecologist Irma Maciuleviciene). Only local manager Lina Zukauskiene exceeds the rate by 10 % and more. L.Zukauskiene also is a director of the park. When writing the application there was another director of lower qualification and lower salary. Local accountant was not foreseen.

LZS: all rates bellow foreseen except the workers (who did construction of the enclosure) have slightly higher rate; and educologist rate was higher by 28 % (36 € instead of 28 € daily rate) However such increase in LZS is not significant as generally rates of LZS are low; Another reason of higher rate is based of better financial situation in the country (project application was developed during the economic crisis in 2009) therefor all salaries had tendency to increase after the crisis.

General remark:
Local accountants were not foreseen by any of the ABs, but they were needed by every organisation. Increase in salary rates is not significant, occurred only be few personnel. The reason of higher rates is based of better financial situation in the country (project application was developed during the economic crisis in 2009) therefor all salaries had tendency to increase after the crisis.

2 % rule

According to common provisions, the 2% rule is applied to all public bodies and their permanent staff. The ABs: DNP, MRP, VRP and LZS are public bodies, and thus, subject for the rule. Salaries of ABs' permanent staff, contribution per AB and total sums against 2% rule are listed in the table bellow. Total contribution of ABs exceeds by 36% of the permanent staff salaries, charged to the project.

Table. salaries of permanent employees against 2% rule.

Beneficiary	**Permanent**	**Contribution to the project, €**	**% of the contribution vs. permanent staff**
DNP	33428,42	34792,22	104,08%
MRP	23856,34	23423,76	98,19%
VRP	10086,01	7977,86	79,10%
LZS	1465,12	27489,95	1876,29%
total	**68835,89**	**93683,79**	**136,10%**

All personnel were specifically seconded for the project by appropriate ABs' orders and permissions to work for the project. The orders indicate how much time must be dedicated to the project per employee. If not the project, the work wouldn't be undertaken. An

example of employment documentation of employee Vincas Slaviskas (DNP) is attached in annex Fin – 2, which indicates, that:

- Request of 29 07 2011 by Vincas Slavickas to work for the project;
- Order by the director of DNP 29 07 2011 No.I-p.-8 (6.16) to employ Vincas Slavickas to work 10.5 hours per month for the project
- Work contract for LiFe of 29 07 2011 No.411;
- Work tasks description

Specific explanation concerns LZS since almost all their staffs is considered to be temporary. LZS' employees work contracts did not begin before the project start date nor finished after the end date of the project. Their contracts specifically mention the LIFE project and meet the following criteria:

1. The specific work contract is in accordance with the normal and well established practice of the beneficiary, as well as with the applicable, national legislation. In Lithuania a person is allowed to have more than one work contract by the same employee (Labour code 149 paragraph 1 part, approved by law no IX-926 of 4 June 2002).
2. The rate is reasonable, i.e. the rate in Life project is bellow the rate of their permanent work contracts. The rates of personnel of LZS are attached in a separate file as Annex Fin - 3 ,which indicates all salaries per employee per year.
3. The specific work contracts clearly specifies:

a. The name of the employee and the person authorizing the specific work contract and both date and sign the contract.
b. A clear reference to the LIFE project and to the project tasks the individual will undertake.
c. The time the employee is supposed to work under the specific work contract.
d. The hourly rate for the contract.

Example of LZS employment documentation including order of the director to work for the project and work contract is attached as Annex Fin - 4 (for Mrs.Jautakiene).

We kindly ask you to accept increased personnel costs, which were necessary for accomplishment of all project tasks.

Travel: 67 153,76 **€ spent,** 83% used,
AC saved 30 000 €; also smaller amounts saved by all other ABs except LFN. LFN paid some expenses under D1 and D3 actions (study trips in foreign countries, workshops) when buying flight tickets for entire group or booking the hotels, renting transport as it gives possibility to negotiate better price in comparison to individual bookings.

Reimbursement of travel costs:

Actual travel costs are reimbursed according to national regulations. In Lithuania travel rules are set by Lithuanian Government act No. 99 of 28-01-2003, which regulate compensation for travel expenses. These rules set the following procedure to be completed by employer:

- Order of appointment before travel.
- Travel sheet to be filled in after the travel, corresponding fuel invoices must be attached;

- Other invoices, documenting incurred costs: accommodation, car rent, bus ticket etc. including proofs of payment;
- Per diem;
- Accountancy sheet, where all expenditures are summed up;
- Other related documentation, e.g. car rent contract.

Usage of cars, belonging to company, were documented by the orders of ABs directors on permissions to use cars. Annex Fin-5 is an example of AB order on permission to use Beneficiary's car for the project (order of MRP director).

List of cars used for the project per beneficiary:
MRP: VAZ 21214, registry No.NVY558; VW Cady, No. BES 348
DNP: Suzuky jimny, No.GDS 826, Honda CR-V No. ZAY 126, Mitsubishi L-200 DHB 664;
VRP : tractor John Deere 5070M, Nissan Navara GHU 826, VW CADY BES 363
LZS : NISSAN NAVARA NO. EDG 517
LFN: FORD Fusion , FCU 512, private cars: BMW GCK 803, and rented cars in case company car or private car were not available.
The MRP, VRP, DNP additionally issue an Act of used gasoline. The average gasoline ltr/100 km were calculated on the basis of car average usage of gasoline. Example of documentation per travel is attached as annex Fin-6 (for DNP).
AC did use only rented cars.
Size of per diem and reimbursement rules are set by Lithuanian Government act No. 99 of 28-01-2003 on travel reimbursement.

Thus, in Lithuania only actual incurred costs are reimbursed. In Denmark all travel costs (gasoline, car rent, food, accommodation etc.) are reimbursed for employees while per diem is not paid. However if travelled by private car, reimbursement is calculated on the basis of driving book and the km-rate (fixed by national tax authority).

External: totally spent 205 256 €, 117% of the foreseen costs.
Main deviations occurred in action A7 Farm development, where originally foreseen purchase of cattle as durable goods was paid as a farm development service. That cost 23 701,6 €. Detailed explanation is given under Action A7.
Additionally, C1 pond digging cost more since more ponds were dug than planned to ensure accomplishment of main project goals – ensure ecological connectivity in ecological corridors between the core zones. There were unforeseen services, e.g. author contracts for elaboration of concepts for ecological network setup, and texts for publications and similar services were necessary for the accomplishment of project actions.

Tender procedures

External services were purchased throughout tender procedures, which are represented by Purchasing bodies and Non purchasing bodies. It means that state budget institutions: DNP, VRP, MRP, LZS are purchasing bodies, therefor their tenders are organised according to the Law on public procurement. LFN and AC are non purchasing bodies, which have their own approved public tender rules.
Purchasing bodies: LZS has lowest limit of 10 000 LTL according to the rules of 14 11 2008 order of the LZ director No.V-41 , and later correction of 20 01 2014 order No. V-01,

until which LZS may select contractor orally applying to the contractors. LZS did purchase all services and goods bellow this value.
The same rule – bellow 10 000 LTL is set in the public procurement rules of DNP (public procurement rules approved 01 02 2012 order No.V1-5 (1.4)., adjusted on 02 01 2014), VRP (public procurement rules approved 18 06 2012 order No.31V, adjusted on 13 01 2014) , MRP (public procurement rules approved 01 02 2012 order No.V1-5 (1.4)., adjusted on 02 01 2014when contractor may be selected orally, usually service and/or goods providers are preselected and have long term contracts, e.g. purchase of gasoline, tools for maintenance of environment (trimmers, repairs parts).. It includes order of goods and long term contract with providers. Also, MRP and VRP did purchase below this value of 10 000 LTL, except the DNP, they carried out procurement of educational path, the value of which was above 10 000 LTL.

LFN has approved in 2005 the simplified rules of commercial practice, meaning that it follows negotiated procedure when choosing subcontractor. Under this procedure LFN as the contracting authority selects potential contractors either by oral (up to 20 000 Lt for service and goods and up to 30 000 Lt for works) or written procedure (more than 20 000 Lt for service and goods and more than 30 000 Lt for works). The selection formular is filled in, where winner is indicated. Since 2012 LFN follows the order of minister of MoE for non purchasing organisations, e.g. open tender is required by announcing it in newspaper for goods and services for more than 50 000 Lt and for works more than 500 000 Lt. Biggest tenders were carried out on selection for subcontractors in C actions: C1 and C2: rent of excavator for pond digging (including transportation of excavator to digging areas). The winner was UAB Alytaus melioracija (from 3 participants of the tender) providing excavator from 2012, and later in summer of 2013 additional company UAB Varenos melioracija was hired to help digging in Varena district to accomplish big amounts of digging in time. Totally for digging spent – 116 017 €. We decided to purchase the service as a rent of excavator because it is cheaper than paying for exact number of ponds. The subcontractors were invited to provide prices for digging/renting the machines; as a result the prices for renting were lower for renting the excavator to dig the same amount of ponds. The reason is that ponds are very different, varying in size, local conditions, cover of roots, which need to be pulled out before digging and similar uncertainties, which make hard evaluation of possible digging price for subcontractor. Also, there was all the time somebody standing nearby the machine, who controlled the time, used for digging. Therefor payment for the rent of excavator including driver and all related maintenance of the machine was the most fair and economically efficient way to use external.

Attached tender rules for all ABs as annex Fin-7: 7a – LFN, 7b – DNP, 7 C – VRP, 7D-MRP, 7 E – LZS.

Some external items were reported under consumables, where they have been planed initially. A table in Annex FIN-10 indicates items, foreseen in the budget, which were reported under consumables, even though they are more external according to their nature.

Durable goods:
Infrastructure: 46329,36 € spent, 88 % used. All foreseen in the application infrastructure has been established: instalment of 24 sluices (foreseen 20 sluices), construction of 1 education trail. Dams (sluices) were constructed along with the pond digging by the same excavators renting companies. Dams were placed before or after restoration of the pond; soil excavated in pond places often was used to build a dam.

Additionally all set of works were performed to construct a dam: removal of roots in dam place, formation of slopes, instalment of plastic tubes for water overflow, fastening the dam soil and similar works. Preliminary costs and volumes of works and materials were set in the simplified project for dam construction. However separate invoices were issued for the construction; this value of construction was capitalised and appeared on the list of inventory (Annex FIN-8) of durable goods of LFN (24 sluices) and DNP (educational trail). Value of dams 125 466.03 LTL (36337.47 €) has been inventoried as an asset.
The education trail was built close to Merkine in corridor No. LT05. Installed path is 1 km long, it consists of wooden infrastructure, such as 8 directive arrows, 2 informational boards, two wooden benches, 36m length wooden bridge through the wetland with 3.30x2 m viewpoint. The value of the trail – 33 637.5 LTL is capitalised under the inventory of DNP. This value as it is shown in the sheet of 30 11 2014 of long term assets consists of building cost – 31 500 LTL+ technical design 3000 LTL minus depreciation of 3 months 862,5 LTL (annex FIN-8).
Rearing station in LZS was constructed, but it could not be documented as infrastructure due to LZS location, where it is not allowed to construct new buildings, therefore, the enclosures were built instead of the old demolished buildings, special plans were not developed for them and in this case they cannot be considered to be infrastructure. Therefore all the items purchased for the construction, were documented under consumables (see consumables description).

Equipment: 24 567,66 € spent, 32 % used. The savings were made under C3 actions – purchase of mowing equipment. We planned to purchase a new 4WD-tractor with more than 100 kW power, which could be able to run mowing equipment and a hay-bailer reel. However during project implementation beneficiaries: DNP, VRP, MRP received similar type tractors with mowing equipment, which could be used for management of project sites. Further, research on other type of equipment, which could be used in C3 areas (flooded places), was performed, however, no appropriate equipment was found.
A table comparing the foreseen equipment in the project proposal and the actually purchased (each item) is attached as Annex FIN-9. The foreseen and the actual price for each item is indicated there. Justifications and approvals of EC letters if such were approved, is indicated for the equipment items originally not foreseen in the project proposal .

There are unforeseen items listed as equipment: creation of movie. Since movie is a long term asset it is listed under durable goods, while 1000 DVD copies are listed under consumables as planned. Totally movie with 1000 DVDs cost 13554,21, which is 7854,21 € more. we informed in Inception report , that DVD creation will cost more, and the difference will be covered by savings, in the beginning we thought to sue savings in the external, but at the end we had savings under equipment. That was noted by EC letter of 22 09 2011 that increase movie costs might be covered by savings.

Consumables: 50 200,00 € spent, **used** 152 %, increase by 17 423.34 €.
The increase was caused by LZS due to shifted items from infrastructure into consumables. Totally LZS spent 25 912 € on consumables instead of planed 10 000 € . It consist of food used to feed reared turtles (11 930 € n comparison to foreseen 10 000 €); goods used for laboratory installation (8788,65 € unforseen); installation of enclosure for turtles (4 002,88 € unforeseen) and other goods (1200 €). There were small expense up to 1000 € incurred

by MRP and VRP on fuel and oil sued for tractors and trimmers to cut bushes and mow overgrowing the nesting sites and slopes of the ponds.
LFN spent 306 € on items to collect hyla arborea eggs, and facilities to maintain their development in plastic buckets, therefor termometres, air compressor were purchased; later keeping them outside in the pond covered by sieves from the predators. These rearing equipment were foreseen under equipment (8000 €), but no one item was capitalized due to low value (bellow 1000 LTL items are not capitalized).
The items purchased by ABs: LFN, LZS, VRP, and MRP will be used for project purposes and not for other daily needs. Part of items already consumed , e.g. oil for machines, painting items for children events and similar staff, while long lasting items , e.g. roll-up boards about project, booklets, and other deliverables are used in other events presenting outcomes of the project. LZS purchased huge variety of items for instalment of laboratory and rearing enclosure, however all the items were needed to ensure successful breeding of sensitive species like emys. Electric goods (cables, sockets, switches etc.) were purchased because old electric instalment did not perform sufficiently to ensure proper electricity supply for turtle rearing in the laboratory. A lot of lamps were purchased because they are used all the time for heating for every aquarium or box with turtles, therefor they need be exchanged regularly. Entire laboratory now is used for turtle rearing.
Medical goods: cat toilet is used for keeping the juveniles, because there are no specific boxes available for such purpose. Cotton buds are used for taking care about juveniles turtles, e.g. when they hit each other, the buds are used to disinfect the wounds. Office goods: scissors are used to cut the food for juveniles into small pieces. Paper towels are used for regular cleaning the carapax of the turtles when changing water or before weighing. Cleaning brushes, sponges and other cleaning goods are used for terrarium cleaning. Painting role is used for writing the notes and gluing them on the boxes and aquariums.
Other goods like hose is used for water filling into aquariums, filters and pumps are used for water maintenance etc. Projectors are used to check the turtles during the hibernation. Foam (Porolone) is used to install basking sites (places above water) in aquariums. Shelves are used to store the goods. Calliper is used for measurement of turtles for monitoring purposes, this tool is kept only in laboratory.
All purchased goods are used further for the project objectives because turtle rearing will be on-going further according to the After life plan.

All consumables are listed in annex FIN-10 with comparison of foreseen and unforeseen items.

Other costs: initially unforeseen, 1130,71 € spent on conference fee for networking with other other projects and rent of translation service for 4th seminar.

Overheads: flat rate applied – not more than 7% of the whole budget. However some ABs used more overheads due to high office maintenance costs, therefor their financial statements bear error of the formula, which does not allow usage of more than 7% of overheads. But at the final stage, other ABs used less overhead.

6.2. Accounting system

All project beneficiaries use accounting systems which allow identification project costs. Description of accounting systems of each beneficiary presented bellow:
LFN: The accounting systém is based on the rules for Financial Statements of non profit Entities approved by the Ministry of Finances by 22 11 2004 (order No.1K-372), which is enforce since 2005. All project expenses are registered at the book keeping. Every project has a unique account, under which the expenses of the project are registered once. Print outs of the account allows tracking of the expenses, e.g. ECONAT project account has a number 342232. Expenses incurred from other sources (co-financing) are registered under different accounts. The list of accounts and print of accounts is presented in the table

No. Of the account	Project	Source of financing	Year
342232	ECONAT LIFE09NAT/LT/000581	EU	2010-2014
342233	MEATBALL Demonstracinių ūkių steigimas /	World Wide Fund for Nature/ WWF Pasaulio gamtos fondas/ (Švedija)	2011-2013
342230	Baltijos jūros ekoregiono programa/ BEP Eutrophication campaign	World Wide Fund for Nature/ WWF Pasaulio gamtos fondas/ (Švedija)	2011
342221	Vidinės lėšos/ Internal amounts	2 proc. Aukos/ Donations from Lithuanian physical persons 2 %	2010
34220	Vidinės lėšos/ Internal amounts	Iš Komercinių pajamų/ Income from commercial activities	2011
342231	Tausus ūkininkavimas/ Nordic Responsible farming	Šiaurės šalių ministrų taryba/ Nordic ministers Council (non EU)	2011

AC: from 2008 specific project cost- centre system was put in place and from then expenses started to be book kept on account of individual projects. ECONAT identification in the cost centre has the number 581.
DNP, VRP and MRP: all three institutions are public bodies, therefore the accounting systém is based on the Accounting Law (approved by the Parliament of the LR, 18-12-2003 No.IX-574), Law on Accountability of Public Sector (approved by the Parliament of the LR, 06-06-2007 , No.77-3046), using standard accountability procedures. Internally the accountability is based on the rules and orders of the directors. Beneficiaries use accounting softwares. DNP used "STEK" in 2011-2012, from 2013 onwards they use "Profit-W ®SQL". ECONAT expenditures are registered under individual programme called "Projektai", financing source No.30 (EU financed). VRP and MRP use accounting software "EDRANA". MRP registered ECONAT expenses under programme called "Life projektas" financing source No.30 (EU financed). VRP registered ECONAT expenses under programme called "LIFE projektas" financing source No.30 (EU financed).

LZS: the accounting systém is based on the Law of Budgetary Institutions (approved by the Parliament of the LR, 04-11-2004, No.I-113); Law on the Accountability of Public Sector (approved by the Parliament of the LR, 06-06-2007, No.77-3046), using standard accountability procedures. Internally the accountability is based on the rules and orders of the directors. In 2011 LZS used accounting software "PARAMA", where ECONAT

expenses were registered under programme called “LIFE+". From 2012 LZS uses accounting software "Profit-W Finansų apskaita”, where ECONAT expenses were registered under programme called “LIFE+".

- **Brief presentation of the procedure of approving costs**

LFN: project manager checks and approves all expenditures after consultation with projects financial manager. Approved costs are delivered to the executive director of LFN for final approval. Approved costs are submitted to the accountant who assigns the right account number and performs payment. Director again controls and confirms the payment.

DNP, VRP, MRP: local project manager collects the invoices/or they are delivered by local specialists. Local project manager approves them and delivers to the director of organisation. Director approves and delivers them to the accountant, who assigns them to the right programme in the accounting software and performs payment.

LZS: invoice local project manager collects the invoices/or they are delivered by local specialists. Local project manager approves them and delivers to the chief manager of the financial department, who assigns them to the ECONAT programme and delivers for the payment.

AC: All invoices related to the project are checked by desk officers responsible for an order. They are confirming payment of invoices as well as assigning invoices to the right project cost-centre.

- **the type of time recording system used, i.e. electronic or manually completed timesheets**
- Time worked on the LIFE ECONAT project was identified and noted on the project time sheets, prepared specifically for the recording working time on the ECONAT project. The excel sheets were filled in by staff member in excel sheet digitally, then printed and signed.

- **Brief presentation of the registration, submission and approval procedure/routines of the time registration system**

Daily devotion of the time on tasks related to the different projects was registered on daily basis by a worker. In case of absence, i.e. travel, sickness etc. staff member next working day filled in the time sheet. The working hours were typed into the LIFE ECONAT project time sheet. Since 2012 LFN and AC registered working time in one LIFE projects time sheet, where all LIFE projects are listed. At the end of the month the time sheet was printed and signed by staff member and submitted to the local project manager/the director of organisation for approval. The approval was made the same or next working day in case of absence. This procedure was used by every beneficiary.

- **Brief explanation how it is ensured that invoices contain a clear reference to the LIFE+ project showing how invoices are marked in order to show the link to the LIFE+ project.**

All beneficiaries assure proper allocation of expenses to different projects co-financed by EU following procedures were put in place:

– reference to the Econat project is written on bills/invoices, the stamp indicating ECONAT LIFE09/NAT/LT/000581

– expenses are book- kept on accounts (LFN) or cost- centre (AC, MRP,VRP,DNP,LZS) assigned to the respective project.

– control and approval of invoices and financial reports by responsible staff members to confirm proper allocation of costs;

6.3. Partnership arrangements (if relevant)

Partnership agreements were signed with 6 associated beneficiaries (attached in previous reports). LFN did financial transactions according to the time schedule of the agreement after submission of the payment request/approval of the financial report of the associated beneficiary.
Financial reporting was requested every year. Later after EC remarks on too low frequence of reporting, the agreements were adjusted with more frequent reporting – at least twice a year.
All ABs contributed financially to the project to the extent as indicated in the project original budget. The only partner – MoE did not report costs to the project. They incurred personnel in actions A1 on elaboration of national action plans and A5 setting new *Natura 2000* sites, but since their reporting is complicated due to requirements on confidential information, we decided to cancel our request on reporting. Especially, that it was clear at the end of the project that we have overspent our budget. However MoE contributes significantly to the budget in value of 192 373 €. 95% of this amount (5% still will be transferred after the approval of the final report) was transferred to LFN based on agreement that has been signed by LFN and The Environment Project Management Agency (EPMA), the date of agreement is 30-03-2012 (agreement attached in the annex 36 in MTR). EPMA is part of MoE, but forms different Legal Entity.

6.4. Auditor's report/declaration

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Audit was performed by UAB Audito laikas, Vytauto g. 59, Marijampole, Lithuania. *The* audit report is attached in the annex FIN-12. The audit was performed using the LIFE audit guidelines/model.

6.5 Summary of costs per action

The table bellow presents an allocation of the costs incurred per action. It is presented also in Excel format as Annex FIN-13.

Table. Division of costs according to actions.

Action no.	Short name of action	1. Personnel	2. Travel and subsistence	3. External assistance	4.a Infra-structure	4.b Equip-ment	4.c Prototype	5. Purchase or lease of land	6. Consumables	7. Other costs	TOTAL
A1	**Action plans**	24976,23	4742,27	9317,52	0,00	8172,06	0	0	376,85	0,00	**47584,94**
A2	**Rearing methods**	5893,26	0,00	1179,03	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**7072,29**
A3	**Favourable conservation status**	5185,80	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**5185,80**
A4	**Network-development**	4622,15	181,39	3467,74	0,00	0,00	0	0	8,80	0,00	**8280,07**
A5	**Natura 2000 sites**	7965,75	502,25	5560,70	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**14028,70**
A6	**Permissions**	10204,12	1591,02	1520,58	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**13315,72**
A7	**Farm developement**	7723,74	1255,29	24839,63	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**33818,66**
C1	**Habitat management**	43960,22	10918,51	127577,45	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**182456,19**
C2	**Renovation of ponds**	13836,95	619,02	12755,17	0,00	1451,54	0	0	1268,25	0,00	**29930,93**
C3	**Restoration of wetlands**	7807,04	1299,12	500,74	36337,47	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**45944,37**
C4	**Sandpit management**	373,06	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**373,06**
C5	**Population management**	67220,01	2553,94	11,30	0,00	2676,14	0	0	25450,84	0,00	**97912,23**
D1	**Experience exchange workshops**	17811,87	12182,34	2103,70	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	560,70	**32658,61**
D2a	**Dissemination, cooperation**	6896,74	207,53	490,62	0,00	0,00	0	0	1440,52	0,00	**9035,41**
D2b	**Nature educational trail**	3839,58	327,69	0,00	9991,89	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**14159,16**
D2c	**Guided tours in MRP**	230,80	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**230,80**
D2d	**Guided tours in VRP**	643,55	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**643,55**
D2e	**Notice boards**	1315,88	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**1315,88**
D3	**Study tours**	9844,98	14417,34	0,00	0,00	0,00	0	0	71,14	0,00	**24333,45**
D4	**Educational material**	9685,71	753,38	543,30	0,00	9396,72	0	0	18884,93	0,00	**39264,04**
D5	**Best practice guidelines**	3963,52	0,00	3038,77	0,00	0,00	0	0	1852,43	0,00	**8854,71**
D6	**Web page**	2064,35	0,00	395,18	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**2459,53**

D7	**Final seminar**	2885,88	7698,26	1158,48	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**11742,62**
D8	**Layman´s report**	3128,88	0,00	40,54	0,00	0,00	0	0	718,40	0,00	**3887,82**
E1	**Project management**	50728,48	4352,19	3504,40	0,00	2871,20	0	0	127,85	0,00	**61584,13**
E2	**Monitoring**	5668,04	1330,86	7251,15	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**14250,06**
E3	**After Life strategy**	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	0,00	**0,00**
E4	**Networking**	3404,21	2221,35	0,00	0,00	0,00	0	0	0,00	570,00	**6195,56**
Over-heads											**49420,81**
	TOTAL	**321880,8**	**67153,75**	**205256,00**	**46329,36**	**24567,66**	**0**	**0**	**50200,01**	**1130,7**	**765939,11**

Comments on discrepancies between actions

We have indicated some changes in the actions.
A1 – overspent by 17 000 € due to much higher demand for personnel (11 700 €), travel (2875 €) and external assistance (5070 €) on elaboration of project action plan, especially finding and establishing concept of ecological corridors and setting them in practice by selecting right places for ponds, nesting sites etc. Elaboration of national action plans for E.o. and H.a. was less demanding, about 20% of the incurred costs.
A2 – 2869 € spent less than estimated. Less travel used.
A3 – no changes
A4- 10 081 € saved. Less personnel, travel and external required.
A5 no changes
A6 – spent more 5203 € due to bigger demand in personnel on obtainment of agreements (finding landowners, visits and meetings)
A7 – overspent by 20 541 € due to purchased bigger amount of cattle: 21 cow instead of 10, which is 24840 in external , but 10 000 ot used in equipment, then more expertise and personnel involved (4924 more) in elaboration and supervision of farm development (fencing, right grazing).
C1 – overspent by 53 260 € due to bigger number of ponds dug – 163 instead of 117. This resulted in bigger consumption of personnel (12 265 €), and external (41 197 €).
As we wrote in MTR and other communication to EC, we asked for permission to shift unused for sandpit restoration C4 amount to this action. It results that we ask you to accept translocation of C4 - 32 406 € to C1 by adding extra 20 ponds to this action.
C2 - 6919 € spent more since 52 ponds restored instead of 40 ponds.
C3 – 46 278 € underspent. Technically action was implemented but underspent due to unused equipment – 40 000 € and unused external – 17 032 € .
C4 – spent only 373 €, saved – 32 406 . 2 sandpits restored along with the digging of ponds.
C5 – 10 591 € saved, mainly in equipment purchase (12 797 €) and construction of infrastructure (12 468 €). Even though technically all foreseen equipment was purchased it could ne be treated as equipment due too low value; the items were not capitalised therefore they were reported as consumables; infrastructure (enclosures were built) but they could not be capitalized due to missing detailed planning documents.
D1-D2 – used as planned with small deviations.

D3 – saved 11 136 € , not all travel money used, no external spent.
D4 – overspent by 13 300 €. Personnel exceeded by 4316 € and equipment by 9397 € . Equipment was not foreseen, but the movie was capitalized as non material long term asset according to national legislation.
D5 – 4520 € spent less, mainly due to lower personnel usage.
D6, D8 – as planned.
D7 – saved 3034 € because foreseen external service for organising the seminar was not purchased. Seminar was organised by project team.
E1 – 7252 € spent less than planned due to unused external by Amphi Consult. Instead these money were used by AC personnel for C actions.
E2 total consumption as planned (only external experts were used to monitor the effectiveness of the project instead of personnel).
E3, E4 as planned.

EC letters:

EC's request in the letter of 22 09 2011

Personnel costs
I understand that the coordinating beneficiary has currently established two project management positions: the project manager (with 100% workload for the project) and the project director (with 20% - 40% workload for the project). According to the information provided in the Inception report, the project manager is responsible for smooth implementation of actions and targets, general accountancy and compiling financial and technical reports, while the project director performs supervision of the project, controls general performance and helps with reporting. The workload of the project director seems to be rather high compared to his duties and an involvement of a maximum of 20% of his time to the project is considered sufficient. Please explain and justify the involvement of the director in the implementation of the project in detail in the next reports.

Answer: The positions of managers of CB have been changed from project director into financial manager (for Nerijus Zableckis). His involvement to the project did not exceed 20% of his total time. Financial manager performed activities for A7 (Farm development), also A5 (setting new Natura 2000 sites), and all financial management of entire project, financial reporting and similar tasks.

You also report that more experts than initially foreseen have been employed by the coordinating and some of the associated beneficiaries. I note that this is expected to lead to an increase of the project personnel costs. Please be reminded that, in order for the costs to be considered eligible, all changes to the foreseen project budget have to be justified as necessary for the implementation of the project and may not cause substantial budget modifications as defined in Art. 15 of the Common Provisions, i.e. any increase of expenditure may not exceed 30.000 € and 10% per budget category.

Even though more experts have been employed, the personnel increased at the end, but the threshold of 10% and 30 000 was not exceeded.

Additional equipment items

I understand that you have purchased some equipment items not foreseen in the approved project proposal, i.e. 1 photo camera, 3 GPS tools, 1 bush cutter (trimmer) and 10 radio transmitters. Additionally, you plan to buy 1 radio receiver and 10 more radio transmitters, necessary for radio tracking of *Emys orbicularis* (action C.5). Based on the information provided with the Inception report and your assurances that these pieces of equipment are necessary for the good implementation of the project, I consider these additional purchases provisionally acceptable on the condition that the total equipment costs remain within 10% or 30.000 € of the budget in that cost category.

Answer: the equipment was purchased, no threshold exceeded.

Additional External assistance costs for project film production

I take note that there are no costs foreseen under External assistance for the DVD movie production planned under action D.4. I understand that these costs will be paid from savings under this budget category. With the next report please provide more detailed information on the necessary additional external assistance costs needed/contracted for the project film production and on the planned savings under this budget category.

answer: The information on additional costs on movie creation and a division of the costs to consumables and equipment was provided in next reports, but no further comments from EC were received. Therefor we assume that it did not cause further questions.

Civil servants/permanent employees

You reported that after having evaluated more precisely the installation costs of 3 rearing enclosures for turtles (action C.5), the related costs have been divided into materials which will be needed for construction and work, which will be performed by the associated beneficiary Lithuanian Zoological Garden's own staff. You also stated that all these expenditures will result in the establishment of long term infrastructure and thus

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will be threaded as infrastructure costs. Please note that the costs incurred for the beneficiary's staff have to be treated as personnel costs. I also draw your attention to the fact that, according to Art. 25.2, 3rd paragraph, of the Common Provisions, civil servants and permanent staff of public bodies must be specifically seconded to the project, i.e. their contracts or personnel files should include an instruction to work for the project for a certain time, in absolute or relative terms. Please also note that such an instruction does not exempt the employees in question from the obligation to register the actual time they wok for the project in timesheets.

answer: It seems that we had wrong information on the available planning documentation in the garden. As it is explained in the report, the LZS is not able to capitalise any new buildings before appropriate plans are prepared and approved by the Municipality of Kaunas. Therefor al items for enclosure and laboratory are treated as consumables.

EC's request in the letter of 09 10 2012 :

Information boards:
In the next report please ask the regional parks to explain and justify the unit price of 1,000 € for the information boards (compared to 386 € per piece in the budget) in more detail than in your e-mail of 4 June 2012.

Answer:
Clarification: As it was agreed in the letter on 13/06/2013 – 7 notice boards in the Action D2a (with budget 2700) and 7 information boards in the action D2e (with budget 350) are combined into one action and moved into D2e.
The initial price for 7 information boards was 2700 (386 per piece) and for 7 notice boards – 350 .
LFN paid for the construction of the 8 boards including design and prints of the posters cost 1331.67 , which is 166.46 per piece. The wooden part was purchased by local company and reported as external, while layout and design were paid as external. Both companies were selected by questioning at least 3 companies according to LFN tender rules.

All other raises issues were explained in MTR.

EC's request in the letter of 09 04 2013 :

VAT

I take note of your clarifications provided in the report on the VAT issue. However, at this stage you have only provided justification for the eligibility of the VAT costs for the associated beneficiaries Veisiejai Regional Park and Meteliai Regional Park, for which valid VAT certificates are provided. For the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania (MoE) a self-certificate is submitted, which is not acceptable. For the

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Lithuanian Fund for Nature (LFN), Dzūkija National Park (DNP) and Lithuanian Zoological Garden (LZS) there are no VAT certificates provided from tax authorities. Thus the VAT for MoE, LFN, DNP and LZS has not been justified. Furthermore, due to the current format of your financial report, where the costs are not separated per beneficiary, the amount of VAT is not identifiable for each project beneficiary separately. This needs to be corrected for your final report, or all the VAT costs will be considered ineligible.

Answer: the Tax inspectorate of Lithuania issued a certificate on VAT on 22 05 2014 No.(32.39-PVM)-RM7966 (attached as Annex FIN-14), which confirms that all Lithuanian ABs: LFN, LZS, DNP, VRP, VPR cannot recover VAT because none of their LIFE projects (ECONAT and also LIFE Aukstumala) are used for their commercial activities, and which are subject to VAT according to the paragraph 58.1. of the VAT law. Therefore no one of ABs is able to recover VAT of such projects.

EC's request in the letter of 13 06 2013 :

We took note on your remarks on reporting templates and type of reporting by adding more information.

Personnel:

We and other ABs took note on entire remarks on registration of worked time in time sheets and improved registration system by filling and properly signing the time sheets. Also, only one time sheet was used by LFN and AC for all projects.

The Personnel of Mr.Lars Briggs. AC took note on your remark on payment of salary only once per year to Mr.Briggs . Since 2013 the salary is paid on monthly basis. We attach the annual tax statements of Mr.L.Briggs and for the commercial activities of Amphi Consult for 2011 as Annex FIN-15.

Also we attach the personnel costs of Mrs.R. Jautakiene including employment contracts, and detailed calculation of personnel costs as Annex FIN-4.

Travel costs:
It is noted that the costs of fuel incurred in connection with travel activities and reported under travel costs are based on registration in the log book for the individual cars, the average consumption of fuel for the car and the average unit costs of fuel purchased. Please be informed that this method is considered to be a sensible method to calculate the fuel costs. Please remember to include the related distance for the fuel costs in the financial report. Please instruct your associated beneficiaries accordingly.

Answer: The related distance in km in relation to used fuel is reported for all travels of LFN due to remark of EC on the method of calculation of fuel consumption.

It is noted that you during travels provide per diem to your staff, which should cover meals and other sundries during travels. However, during travels outside Lithuania (notably to Denmark and Germany) also some meals are reported which were supposed to be covered by the per diems. Please examine this issue in your next report and explain if there have been costs accounted for twice in this respect.

The question on meals and per diem paid for participants of study trips. I take note, that meals were covered only for guests outside the project while participants from ABs were paid per diem. Lithuanian legislation does not permit to pay any per diem for the persons, not employed by the body. Therefor we had to cover all travel related costs, including catering, of such persons. Lithuanian legal act on compensation volume of tax free incomes has been set by Lithuanian government on 02 12 2003 order No.1515, the paragraph 1.1.2. "when an event is organised in abroad, the compensation for catering per participant shall not exceed the volume of per diem/ per person to be paid for travel in that country" (attached print out of the act as annex Fin-16). Therefor we confirm, that catering costs do not exceed the given burden. As an example we attach the travel costs sheet for the 1st study tour to Denmark as annex Fin-16. There we calculated food costs of 3677.7 LTL for 5 participants, which were from outside organisations and not paid per diem. Totally 4 days spent, therefor food consumption for "non per diem" persons were 3677.7 LTL/5 pers./4 days= 183 LTL per person per day while per diem per day in Denmark is

195.0 LTL. Therefor there is no violation of double payment. We assume that there was a lack of information when summing up the costs, and missing division between “per diem” and “non per diem” persons. We attached marking on participants lists of meeting and other events by adding a note if the person was paid per diem or not, which makes easy to distinguish between the costs.

Generally a lot of small transactions are reported under travel costs, especially for fuel costs and per diems inside Lithuania, which is not very cost efficient. Please examine if subtotals from car log book or similar registry could be used a basis for entering such costs in order to limit the number of low value transactions under travel costs. Please explain in your next report if this is a possibility to limit the number of travel transactions.

Answer: we tried to reduce number of transactions to some extent. The problem is that usually one trip covers several actions, therefor summing up one month is not possible due to reporting costs per action.

EC’s request in the letter of 18 08 2014 :

Invoices

With regard to the invoices collected by the External Monitoring Team during the visit I see that there is still no joint approach for using references to the project on them. In some cases the project number and acronym are correctly included either directly in the invoice (e.g. LFN invoice No 14/026) or in the form of a stamp (e.g. Lithuanian Zoological Garden invoice No 08165102808). In most of the LFN invoices checked during the visit only the stamp "Projektas LIFE09/NAT/LT/000581" without reference to the project name or acronym was used. The reference to the adjusted format of the project number without the reference to the project name or acronym is included in the invoice No 113-13 of the associated beneficiary AmphiConsult. Please be repeatedly reminded of the requirements of the articles 6.2 and 8.5 of the LIFE+ Common Provisions and ensure that all invoices issued by subcontractors bear a clear reference to the LIFE+ project, i.e. number and title or short title.

Answer: we took note on the remark and sent instructions to all partners to change their stamps according to the requirements. All invoices were rechecked and missing reference numbers adjusted.

Timesheets

Concerning the copies of the timesheets collected by the External Monitoring Team during the visit I note that they are mostly filled in, signed and verified properly now. However in the timesheet of Ramūnas Krugelis (Meteliai Regional Park) there are no dates of signature and validation indicated. For Irma Maciulevičiene (Veisiejai Regional Park) there is an error in the rows, where the project IDs should be included. Please carefully check all the timesheets that are submitted by the associated beneficiaries and ensure that their signing and validation dates are clearly indicated and that there are no other mistakes.

Answer: time sheets were rechecked and all errors corrected. We had to correct time sheets of VRP because of this error and mistake in summing all working time. However time used for LIFE did not change since the mistake was in last line in summing LIFE project time and other worked time.

7. Annexes

1. Action plans for the target areas
2. Action plan for Hyla arborea
    a. Approval note
3. Action plan for Emys orbicularis
    a. Approval note
4. Methodology of rearing E.orbicularis in LZS
5. Criteria for the favourable conservation status
6. Note from MoE about acceptance of the criteria for the favourable conservation status
7. Agreement with the landowner of land where Ilgabalės educational path is installed
8. Official note from Dzukija National Park explaining about change of land owner
9. An official note from MoE about the methodology for Creating the Ecological Network
10. Letter of submission of new Natura 2000 sites for MoE; Order of the Minister No. D1-783
11. Maps of newly designated Natura2000
12. Nature management plans
    a. Avižienių
    b. Bestraigiškės
    c. Drapalių
    d. Paveisiejų
    e. Šlavantų
13. Official notes of their acceptance
    a. Official notes about Vilkiautinis site
14. C1 in LT07
15. C1 in LT06
16. C1 in LT05
17. C1 in LT04
18. C1 in LT03
19. C1 in LT02
20. C1 in LT01
21. Egglaying sites
    a. Map with places of created egglaying sites
22. C2
    a. Map of restored ponds
23. Table with information about dams, action C3
    a. Map of dams
24. Technical report of dam building, action C3
25. Photos of restored sand pits
26. A map of grazed area and grazing plan
27. Photos of turtle enclosures in LZS
28. Ha rearing methodology
29. Minutes of Steering committee meeting
30. After LIFE conservation plan in Lithuanian
31. Conference of LIFE Trachemys
32. Map with release places of Eo juveniles
33. Map with release places of Ha juveniles

34. Programme and list of participants of the 4th workshop: “Examples of ecological networks and legal preconditions for their formation in Lithuania”
35. Meetings with the landowners
36. Monitoring report
37. Map of amphibian hibernation places
38. List of the articles and broadcasts
39. Educational path of Ilgabale
40. Guided tours in MRP
41. Guided tours in VRP
42. Informational boards
43. Programme, list of participants and report of the 4th study tour
44. Pictures from the 1st Turtle Day
45. Educational lessons carried out by LZS
46. Pictures from the 2nd Turtle Day
47. Handbook how to strengthen the framework of the nature frame in the relevant habitats and for the targeted Annex IV species
48. Dissemination of publications
49. Final seminar
50. Reports about use of protected species
51. Monitoring programme and amphibian monitoring results
52. Map of C1
53. Detailed maps of C actions
54. Abstract from 9th European Conference on Ecological Restoration in Oulu
55. Programme of 7th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks under the Bern Convention;
56. Programme of “CEEweb Academy on Building Blue-Green Infrastructure. Restoring and protecting wetlands and their ecosystem services”
57. Agreement with the farmer
58. The programmes of field days for the farmers and lists of participants
59. Business plan for the farm

a.1.1.1 Annexes to financial comments:

FIN-1 - The annex 1 taxes and charges for Nerijus Zableckis with salary slips for 2010-2014

FIN-2 Example of employment documentation in DNP

Fin-3 – comparison of LZS salary rates between long term and Life contracts

FIN-4 Example of employment documentation in LZS

Fin 5 - order of MRP director on car usage

Fin 6 – travel documentation of DNP

Fin 7 tender rules : Fin7a LFN, 7b DNP, 7c – VRP, 7 d – MRP, - 7 e -LZS

Fin 8 print outs from inventory of durable goods of DNP and LFN.

FIN-9 table of equipment items.

FIN-10 table of consumables

FIN-11 print out of the act on travel reimbursement and an example of meal and per diem payment calculation.

FIN-12 Audit report

FIN-13 distribution according to actions, excel file.

FIN-14 Certificate on VAT

Fin-15 annual tax statement of Lars Briggs and AC annual tax report of 2011