LIFE Project Number

LIFE05NAT/LT/000094

2nd PROGRESS REPORT
With payment request
Covering the project activities from 08.01.2005 to 31.12.2008

Reporting Date
22.01.2009

LIFE PROJECT NAME
Protection of *Emys orbicularis* and amphibians in the North European lowlands

Data Project

Project location	LT: Alytus and Lazdijai; PL0A Podlaskie, PL0E Warminsko-Mazurskie, PL0F Wielkopolskie, PL0G Zachodniopomorskie, PL04 Lubuskie; and DE4 Brandenburg
Project start date:	08/01/2005
Project end date:	31/12/2009
Total Project duration (in months)	60 months
Total budget	2,346,185 €
EC contribution:	1,161,373 €
(%) of total costs	49.50 %
(%) of eligible costs	49.50 %

Data Beneficiary

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2nd Progress Report with payment request for the project

LIFE05 NAT/LT/000094

covering the project activities from 08.01.2005 to 31.12.*2008*

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Lists of (i) key-words and (ii) abbreviations

(I) Key-words:

Protection, *Emys orbicularis*, *Bombina bombina*, *Triturus cristatus*, *E. orbicularis*, *B. bombina*, *T. cristatus*, European pond turtle, Fire-bellied toad, Great crested newt, management, pond digging, pond restoration, nesting sites, hibernation sites, turtle breeding programme, land purchase, LIFE-Nature project, midterm-report.

(II) Abbreviations:

1st MtR	First Midt Term Report submitted by 31.05.27
2nd PR	Second Progress Report
Agena	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Natur- und Artenschutz e.V. (Germany)
AGUG	Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany)
BNP	Bialowieza National Park (Poland)
BVVG	Bodenverwertungs- und verwaltungs GmbH, is the office in east-Germany who sells the former publicized property.
IPM	International Project Manger (all countries)
KP	/Klub PrzKlub Przyrodników (Poland)
LAM	Local Assistant Manager (all countries)
LFN	Lithuanian Fund for Nature (Lithuania)
LFV	Landschaftsförderverein Oberes Rhinluch e.V. (Germany)
MRP	Meteliai Regional Park (Lithuania)
NPM	National Project Manager (all countries)
PD	Project Director (all countries)
PR	Progress Report
PTOP	Polnocnopodlaskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Ptakow (Poland)
RPP	Revised Project Proposal
SC	Steering Committee (all countries)
VRP	Veisiejai Regional Park (Lithuania)
ZBR	Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve (Lithuania)

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Project objectives

The main objective of the project is to ensure the favourable conservation status of *Emys orbicularis* in the extreme northern part of the species' range in the North European lowland (Germany, Poland and Lithuania). Further objectives are to ensure favourable conservation status of *Bombina bombina* and *Triturus cristatus* in areas inhabited by *Emys orbicularis*. Additionally, two project sites will demonstrate the protection of *Bombina bombina* in artificial and drained lowland meadows in Germany and in the large natural swamps and fenland in Lithuania.

The main focus is to establish populations of *Emys orbicularis, Bombina bombina* and *Triturus cristatus* with a long-term viability in all project countries. This means for all three species to improve their habitats and to increase the habitat capacity in order to effect population growth in the small and isolated populations, to save them from extinction and to preserve the gene-fund of the species. Additionally, in very small *Emys-orbicularis* populations in Germany, Northwest-Poland and Northeast-Poland the population declines will be prevented with rearing of young turtles from nature. The development and the implementation of an effective population management for *Emys orbicularis* will be based on genetic analyses. Larger populations of *Bombina bombina* and *Triturus cristatus* (> 1000 adults) will be secured.

The experiences on habitat and population management of *Emys orbicularis* and habitat management of *Bombina bombina* and *Triturus cristatus* will intensively be exchanged. Local inhabitants will be educated and involved in species protection and habitat management activities. A best management guide for small and isolated populations of *Emys orbicularis, Bombina bombina* and *Triturus cristatus* will present the importance for the applied species protection. This will be based on the manifold experiences of the participants in the view of the habitat and population management added with the results of the genetic investigations of *Emys orbicularis*.

1.2. List of key deliverables and outputs

An ongoing decline of the European Pond turtle, *Emys orbicularis* and the Fire-bellied toad, *Bombina bombina*, is documented throughout the North European lowlands. Additionally, the decline of the Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* is recognised in Estonia, Finland, Germany and Denmark and is suspected in Poland and Lithuania.

The main objective of the project is to ensure the favourable conservation status of *E. orbicularis* in the North European lowlands. Further the objective is to ensure favourable conservation status for *B. bombina* and *T. cristatus* in the area where they occur together with

E. orbicularis.

The beneficiary Lithuanian Fund for Nature together with the partners: Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve, Veisieai Regional Park, Meteliai Regional Park, The North Podlasian Society for Bird Protection, Bialowieza National Park, Klub Przyrodników, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Natur- und Artenschutz, Landschaftsförderverein Oberes Rhinluch and Georg-August-University of Göttingen works for implementing the project.

The project process has from project start to the midterm reporting day, been a substantial lesson in how different cultural backgrounds influences on nearly all aspects of project working. An important lesson learned in relation to formulation of a project, is that the many actions may have been a little too high, as the partners and beneficiary implementing the actions rather think holistic on the species needs at each project site than on the strict project description of threats and corresponding actions.

Main results up to the reporting date of the 2nd Progress Report are:

–that preparatory actions are in progress :

–A2 – statistical analysis are in evaluation.

–A3 – draft report for favourable conservation status done.

–A5 – draft report of hibernation places done.

–A6 - nesting sites are in evaluation.

–A7 – only 2 plans so far implemented, but common approach found and recovery plan set.

–B1 - 95% of the available land has been purchased.

–C1 - 98% of the planned pond restoration / digging and dam construction (100 %- dam construction and 98% of pond creation) has been made, which is ahead of the planned project progress.

–C2 - that 61% of the planned improvement and creation of nesting areas for turtles has been made, which is a delay compared to the project progress plan.

–C3 - that 76% of the planned creations of hibernation sites for turtles and 81 % of the planned creations of hibernations sites for amphibians has been made.

–C4 - that installment of sustainable grazing regimes has been implemented with 85 % of the planned cattle,

–C5 - that 76% of removal of unwanted vegetation has been implemented, which is in accordance to project plan.

–D1 - that management agreements has been performed according to the project progress plan.

–D2 - that 100 % of the turtle to rear has been reared, which is ahead of the planned project progress.

–D3 - that 50% of foraging grassland managed, but only 15% of the management of moist foraging habitats has been performed, which is a strong delay compared to the project progress plan.

- E1 – 2 study tours implemented, but 1 international workshop delayed.

–E2- 6 turtle days, 11 seminars, 7 amphibian days organised, which is according to the plan.

–E3 – 6 notice boards and 4 information boards erected in 4 sites, which is strong delay

–E4 – 1 folder on project target species and 1 poster published, 2 books in Polish and Lithuanian published, but delayed publishment of folder on pond restoration, currently only in Lithuanian version printed.

–E6 – web page created.

2. Introduction

An ongoing decline of the European Pond turtle, *Emys orbicularis* and the Fire-bellied toad, *Bombina bombina*, is now documented throughout the North European lowlands. Additionally, the decline of the Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* is recognised in Estonia, Finland, Germany and Denmark and is suspected in Poland and Lithuania.

Based on population genetics theories, the long term goal of this project is that each surviving population of the turtles reaches a size of at least 500 adults. However, today very few turtle populations meet this criterion as most of them are between 10 and 50 adults. Thus the short term goal of at least the slow growing turtle populations is 50 to 100 individuals. If the available habitat is restricted (e.g. within intensively-used landscapes), the criterion can only be met by creating new habitats, and in some extremely small populations of *E. orbicularis* in Germany and Poland the only option is to rear and release turtles.

During a terminated *B. bombina* LIFE project (Consolidation of *B. bombina* in Denmark) and in two ongoing LIFE projects (Protection of *T. cristatus* in the eastern Baltic region) and (Management of *B. bombina* in the Baltic region), there is considerable knowledge available for the design and improvement of pond landscapes of high quality for amphibians. With basic experience on turtle conservation existing already in Lithuania, Poland and Germany, there is a solid foundation for the implementation of protective measures on herpetological sites of European interest and to develop a concept of active protection of sites of high herpetological diversity in the North European lowlands.

There will be a transfer of knowledge concerning pond projects for the conservation of amphibians and small genetically eroded amphibian populations from projects in Denmark, Estonia, and Germany to Lithuania and Poland. Furthermore, meta-population concepts and genetic strategies developed for amphibian conservation in Denmark, Estonia and Germany will be applied and modified to turtle conservation in Lithuania, Germany and Poland. Knowledge on the conservation and biology of the European Pond turtle will be transferred between regions in Lithuania, Germany and Poland, and from these 3 countries, which have the largest turtle populations of the north European lowlands, knowledge will be distributed to the edge distribution areas of Latvia and Denmark. The active protection of aquatic habitats of *E. orbicularis, B. bombina* and *T. cristatus* will also support a number of annex IV amphibian species on the same sites.

Actions and means involved:

1)Habitat management for amphibians and reptiles, e.g. pond digging and restoring, improvement and creation of turtle nesting sites, creation of hibernation sites, establishing a grazing management and management of terrestrial and foraging habitats.
2)Population management of *E. orbicularis* populations, supporting small populations with reared animals.
3)Small-scale genetic investigation in order to determine the possibility of inbreeding in small

populations and to calculate the effective population size. Further investigation in order to separate authentic turtle populations from genetically polluted populations. The genetic data will form the basis of future management strategies, e.g. which populations to connect by landscape corridors, which to be used for rearing, and which ones have such a high inbreeding that it will be wise to add other genotypes.

Expected results:

More than 50% of the *E. orbicularis* populations and more than 90% of the individuals in the north European lowlands will benefit from active protection in this project. Active protection measures for *B. bombina* and *T. cristatus* and high diversity of other amphibian species will be demonstrated. This project will establish an experience exchange network about habitat and population management measures between the partners, e.g. turtle conservation, pond digging, managing landscapes with year-round grazing, supportive breeding and rearing on populations. These actions have already been tested in the partner countries in several variations and could be evaluated and used as a best practise for small populations in the project areas in the north European region. In general we expect that this project will serve as a great step towards the goal of safeguarding all surviving genetic lines of *Emys orbicularis* at their northern border, and will show different demonstration sites of various herpetological management methods, and thus the project will provide several models that demonstrate management methods for sites of herpetological interest.

Project activities

Project activities have been divided into 6 categories:

1) Preparatory actions / management plan preparation (action A1 to A8)

2) Land purchase (action B1),

3) Non-recurring biotope management (action C1 to C5),

4) Recurring biotope management (action D1 to D3),

5) Public awareness and dissemination of information (action E1 to E7), and

6) Overall project management (action F1 to F3).

Depending on the occurrence of the targeted species, each of the partners / beneficiary has a specific amount of tasks under the single actions.

3. Progress, Results

For this reporting, we will not only focus on deadlines for deliverable products and milestone as listed in the RPP on page C9/1 to C9/3, but also the timetable as listed in the revised project proposal on page C8. Up to 30.06.2008, the milestones and deliverables reached respectively produced, is shown in table 1.

The reporting period covered by the technical 2nd PR and Financial Report is covered from 08.01.2005 to 30.06.2008. Respectively technical report covers project progress from 30.06.2008 – 31.12.2008. Reporting periods were agreed with during Monitoring mission in Lithuania 13/14 of October 2008.

1. Table: Key deliverables and achievements

Deliverable or Milestone	Number of the associated action	Deadline	completion date	remarks
Project manager nominated	F1	7/1/2005	29/08/2005	
International workshop (Kick off seminar) carried out	E1	30/09/2005	19/03/2006, 07/05/2006	kick off seminar, study tour
20% of unwanted vegetation removed	C5	31/12/2005	31/12/2006, 31/12/2007	5 % completed, 23 % completed
Management agreements made for 2005	D1	31/12/2005	0.00%	
Project Web Page created	E6	31/12/2005	24/02/2006, 30/11/2006	first version, completed
Monitoring	F2	31/12/2005	31/12/2006	monitoring indicators adjusted 19/03/2006
Folder on project species	E4	30/03/2006	30/05/2006	
Purchase of terrestrial management equipment	D3	30/03/2006	30/05/2007	completed
Monitoring methods elaborated	A1	01/04/06	07/05/2006	
Study tour is carried out	E1	01/09/06	07/05/06	
Purchase of cattle	C4	15/09/2006	01/01/07	
Seminar is carried out in Germany and Poland	E2	30/09/2006	27/06/2006-03/07/2006	1st workshop
Turtle day is carried out in Lithuania and Poland	E2	30/09/2006	14/10/2006	
Grazer exhibition is held	E2	30/09/2006	22/11/2006	2 exhibitions held
Monitoring	F2	15/10/2006	15/10/2006	

Poster on project species	E4	31/10/2006	31/01/2007	
20% of nesting sites created	C2	01/12/06	01/12/2006	26 % terminated
30% of ponds restored/dug	C1	15/12/2006	15/12/2006	25 % ponds amd 90 % dams done, in average 47 % done
25% of hibernation sites created	C3	15/12/2006	15/12/2006	20 % done
Buffer zones established in German and Poland	B1	31/12/2006	31/01/2008	90 % established
40% of unwanted vegetation removed	C5	31/12/2006	31/12/2006, 31/12/2007	23 % completed, 69 % completed
Management agreements made for 2006	D1	31/12/2006	31/12/2006	
Folder on pond ecosystem	E4	30/03/2007	29/04/28	printed in lithuanian
50% of foraging habitats managed	D3	30/06/2007	31/12/2007	9 % on moist area, 26 % on grassland, in average 14 % done
International workshop carried out	E1	30/06/2007	15/09/2007	study tour
Ponds evaluated	A2	01/09/07	31/12/2008	100%%
Seminar is carried out in Germany and Lithuania	E2	30/09/2007	11 – 15.09.2007	study tour
Hardy grazing installed	C4	30/09/2007	31/12/2006	3 farms in 3 sites
Turtle day is carried out in Lithuania and Poland	E2	30/09/2007	15/10/2007	in Lt only
Grazer exhibition is held	E2	15/10/2007	18/09/2007	2 exhibitions held
Monitoring	F2	15/10/2007	15/10/2007	
Poster on pond ecosystem	E4	31/10/2007		*supposed to be a folder*
Postcards published in Germany	E4	31/11/2007	not yet	
Genetic investigation carried out	A8	31/11/2007	not yet	
50% of hibernation sites created	C3	15/12/2007	15/12/2007	49 % done
40% of nesting sites created	C2	01/12/07	01/12/07	38 % done
60% of ponds restored/dug	C1	15/12/2007	15/12/2007	90 % ponds amd 100 % dams done, in average 94 % done
Characteristics/structure of hibernation sites evaluated	A5	31/12/2007	31/12/2008	100%%
60% of unwanted vegetation removed	C5	31/12/2007	31/12/2007	63.00%

Management agreements made for 2007	D1	31/12/2007	31/12/2007	DONE
Final genetic investigation report	A8	31/02/2008	not yet	
Criteria for favourable conservation status elaborated	A3	30/03/2008	31/12/2008	draft report prepared
Local management plans	A7	01/04/08	not yet	2 plan prepared for Lt
Study tour is carried out	E1	01/09/08	15.09.2007	in Pl, Deand Dk
Seminar is carried out in Germany and Poland	E2	30/09/2008	not yet	
Turtle day is carried out in Lithuania and Poland	E2	30/09/2008	04/10/08	only in lt
Grazer exhibition is held	E2	30/09/2008	the action completed	4 exhibitions done
Monitoring	F2	15/10/2008	15/10/2008	
70% of nesting sites created	C2	01/12/08	01/12/08	61 % done
80% of ponds restored/dug	C1	15/12/2008	15/12/2008	98 % ponds amd 100 % dams done, in average 98 % done
75% of hibernation sites created	C3	15/12/2008	15/12/2008	76 % done
Characteristics/structure of nesting sites evaluated	A6	31/09/2008	not yet	
80% of unwanted vegetation removed	C5	31/12/2008	31/12/2008	76 % done
Management agreements made for 2008	D1	31/12/2008	31/12/2008	
National action plans for Lithuania, Germany and Poland	A4	01/04/09	not yet	
100% of foraging habitats managed	D3	30/06/2009	not yet	
International workshop (with final seminar) carried out	E1	30/06/2009	not yet	
Turtles reared in Germany and Poland released in nature	D1	30/09/2009	not yet	
Turtle day is carried out in Lithuania and Poland	E2	30/09/2009	not yet	
Information boards	E3	30/09/2009	not yet	
Nature trail site built	E3	30/09/2009	not yet	
Grazer exhibition is held	E2	30/09/2009	not yet	
Monitoring	F2	15/10/2009	not yet	

Best practice/protection guidelines worked out	E5	15/11/2009	not yet	
100% of nesting sites created	C2	01/12/09	not yet	
100% of ponds restored/dug	C1	15/12/2009	not yet	
100% of hibernation sites created	C3	15/12/2009	not yet	
100% of unwanted vegetation removed	C5	31/12/2009	not yet	
Management agreements made for 2009	D1	31/12/2009	not yet	
Seminar proceedings prepared for publishing	E1	31/12/2009	not yet	
Layman report	E7	31/12/2009	not yet	
"After LIFE conservation plan"	F3	31/12/2009	not yet	

A Preparatory actions/management plan preparation

Action A1: Monitoring methods for turtles and amphibians

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

The common monitoring methodologies for *Emys orbicularis, Bombina bombina and Triturus cristatus* created, that will be applied in the North European Lowlands and also be followed in other European countries.

Deadline 01.04.06

Progress until 30.06.08

Monitoring methods for all three target species created and used in all three project countries.

On project meeting of 18.03.06 and 19.03.06, with participation of LFN, KP, Agena, LFV, AGUG, and external amphibian specialists, monitoring methods for turtles and amphibians were discussed. It was agreed that Agena and external amphibian specialists develop monitoring methods concerning amphibians and that Agena and AGUG develop monitoring methods concerning turtle. The monitoring methods were discussed and final methods approved during International workshop carried out from 06.05.06 to 07.05.06. The monitoring method has been used by partners since 2006. The methods were attached as annex 7 in 1st MtR.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.08

The methods will be compared by project experts to the ones established in other countries (e.g. France, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain). We will send the methods to SEH-European herpetological Society Conservation Committee in order to get feedback for the methods and introduce them into other countries. It is agreed in the project team that methods will be exchanged with other Life projects e.g. in Spain. During E1 action international workshop. —

Action A2: Evaluation of ponds

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Assessment of 50 natural ponds of *Emys orbicularis* in each country Lithuania, Germany, Poland, artificial ponds in Lithuania (7) and no less than 100 pond for amphibians (in total 257 ponds)

Deadline – 01.09.2007

Progress until 30.06.2008

292 ponds were evaluated for European pond turtle and 139 for amphibians (totally 431 ponds), thus, the target number for evaluated ponds reached. The ponds were described by specialists of partner organizations and Amphi Consult.

In order to evaluate ponds, a special form was created in May 2006 using Danish experience (attached in 1st MtR as Annex 19). The forms are a result of 20 years experience in pond restoration and monitoring of amphibians and their habitat in Denmark. The forms have been tested in other international LIFE projects: Protection of *Triturus cristatus* in Eastern Baltic Region (Project no.: LIFE04NAT/EE000070). The results of a similar pond evaluation action were very useful and positive and the preliminary statistical results in this project are very promising in identifying the key habitat characteristics. The forms are almost identical for turtle and amphibian since the aim is to create habitats suitable for all three species.

The form is adjusted for field data. By filling the forms data about characteristics of the pond (size, depth, sediment etc.) and its surroundings are gathered and later used for statistical evaluation of the best suitable pond criteria. These data are used in actions A3, A4 and F2. In some areas it was possible to estimate structures of earlier habitats and design plans to restore them (action A7). The form includes a link to GIS (geographical information system) programme database to be able to make spatial analysis and map the ponds (see attached maps).

In addition, 74 pond forms from Lithuania and Eastern Poland have already analyzed in 2006 and the main habitat requirements of *Triturus cristatus* in this region have been found out. The results of the analysis have been published in “Protection of Great Crested Newt” pp 46-57 in Best Practice Guideline of LIFE project: “Protection of Triturus cristatus in Eastern Baltic Region” (Project no.: LIFE04NAT/EE000070) (not printed yet). These 74 ponds were evaluated again, but for the presence of turtles and toads, thus, the total number appears.

2. Table: A2. Ponds evaluated for the occurrence of Emys orbicularis.

Year/ Country	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized
2005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	25	50	25	0	25	5	75	55
2007	25	25	25	0	25	8	75	33
2008 up to 01/07	0	25	0	28	0	110	0	163
SUM	50	100	50	28	50	123	150	251
2008 from 01/07	0		0	41	0		0	41
SUM	50	100	50	69	50	123	150	292

* Only unique individual ponds numbers were taken into account

3. Table: A2. Ponds evaluated for the occurrence of Bombina bombina and Triturus cristatus.

Year/	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		Denmark		All	
Country	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized
2005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	13	25	13	8	10	10	0	0	36	43
2007	12	15	12	8	15	16	25	0	64	39
2008 up to 01/07	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
SUM	25	40	25	16	25	26	25	0	100	82
2008 from 01/07	0	18	0	9	0		0	30	0	57
SUM	25	58	25	25	25	26	25	30	100	139

** Only unique individual ponds numbers were taken into account*

Lithuania

In Lithuania 7 old dug ponds in Meteliai project site (L04) were evaluated, 3 of them are yet used by turtles despite some negative parameters like absent of shallow zones. Amphibian ponds occupied by Fire-bellied toads mainly were evaluated in ZBR (Project site area L01) because this area differs from other 5 project areas and last turtle observations there were recorded only in beginning of the last century.

In other Lithuanian project sites ponds were evaluated mostly for turtle presence, but 1/4 of them were inhabited by fire-bellied toads and/or great crested newts. Some of the ponds were evaluated during 1st Study tour and have been evaluated again in 2007 for presence of target species. Based on the analysis of the 74 ponds in Lithuania and Poland the habitat features which were exceptional for T. cristatus was the demand for the presence of deciduous forest in the radius of 500m and 25-50% amount of shade on the surface of a pond. Other habitat demands shown by this research were: presence of fish in the pond (Crested newts do not coexist with fish), the amount of submerged vegetation (the more there is submerged vegetation the bigger is abundance of the newt larvae) and the distance to the forest to the breeding pond (the closer any kind of forest is the bigger is abundance of the newt larvae).

Poland

In Bialowieza National Park only 1 turtle was found, therefore focus is on amphibian ponds. Temporary flooded areas and 25 ponds were also localized and examined in view of their suitability for amphibian breeding.

In North - east Poland 41 natural depressions, ponds and lakes and flooded areas, (some of them which were created by installment of dams), were visited and evaluated in Pp01, Pp02. Half of them are rather big water basins of 10.000 m2 and bigger. Turtles were observed in all of those ponds.

In West Poland 28 ponds were evaluated in all 6 project sites, 15 of them were inhabited by turtles, 16 - by fire bellied toads and 10 - by great crested newt.

Germany

123 ponds were evaluated for turtle presence in 5 project sites (Da01-Da05). In Oberes Rhinluch in project site 8 ponds (flooded areas) were evaluated for amphibian's presence.

Denmark

During the study tour in 2007 (action E1) and with follow up actions, 50 amphibian ponds (divided in the age structure 0, 5, 10 respectively 15 years since restoring or new digging) were evaluated .

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

Draft report of pond evaluation is under preparation. All data are collected, and analysis of the material has started. Main important habitat components for each species are described, habitat components, which are common for the 3 species, defined. Recommendations for future habitat management will be prepared.

Comparable analysis is scheduled to be available on the project homepage by 31.01.09. Hereafter the experts have up to 31.03.09 concluded on the analysis and finish the report for every country.

Although the target is reached the collection of data will be carried out in 2009, since the partners know well, how to use the form. Therefore useful data might be collected, especially from the colonized new dug and restored ponds, which could be analyzed and presented in the Best Practice Guideline. The action is linked to F2 monitoring of effects.

Action A3: Defining the favorable conservation status for turtles and amphibians

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Determination of criteria for defining the favorable conservation status of *Emys orbicularis*, *Bombina bombina* and *Triturus cristatus in the North European Lowland.*

Deadline – 30.03.2008

Progress until 30.06.2008

Collection of data in preparatory actions A2, A5 and A6 by monitoring. Evaluation and estimation of criteria in progress.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

Draft report on favourable conservation status based on collected data about specimens per pond in relation to terrestrial habitats, population size, number of ponds and other important criteria is prepared (Annex No. 3).

The turtle and amphibian experts from Amphi Consult, Agena, and AGUG were analyzing collected data about ponds and elaborating the criteria. It is decided to prepare general criteria and additional criteria for every country according to climatic and geomorphologic characteristic. After having evaluated data it is clearly seen, that in Lithuania it is possible to rebuild big meta populations in Lithuania due a quite still existing natural habitats, while in Germany and West Poland turtle populations, affected by intensive agriculture, were pushed almost to extinction. Here every isolated populations is very important to preserve, and will probably remain as isolated populations due to intensive agriculture and roads. We have defined favorable conservations on short term for such populations. In North east Poland the situation to similar to Lithuania, with the exemption that sometimes single turtles have been observed in larger lakes.

For amphibians a general criteria for favorable conservation status is elaborated and there will be notes on specific modifications for each country/region

The description will contain text about needed habitat to maintain a favorable population's size for isolated populations. Also there is described, how many more or less isolated populations (or subpopulations) are and could function in a metapopulations system. Such a meta populations system can caused by fragmentation in the landscape or it can be caused by more natural factors.

Action A4: Action plan

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Preparation of: national action Plan for *Emys orbicularis* in Lithuania, 2 action Plans for turtles *Emys orbicularis* in Northeast-Poland and for *Emys orbicularis* in West-Poland, 1 national Action Plan for *Emys orbicularis* in Germany (Brandenburg).

Preparation of: 3 Action Plans for *Bombina bombina* and *Triturus cristatus* in Lithuania, Northeast-Poland and West-Poland, 1 national action Plan for *Triturus cristatus* in Germany (Brandenburg).

Deadline – 01.04.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008

Drafting of action plans started. In January 2007 LFN submitted European pond turtle draft

action plan for MoE for comments and discussion of definition. It was recommended by MoE that National Action Plans (project) for specially protected species such as European pond turtle should be prepared according to the Order of the Minister of the Ministry of Environment "Structure, Content and Format of the Plans (projects)", Nr. 664 of 21 December 2002. The plan was elaborated and submitted to the Ministry of Environment on 4th of July 2007.

The format of National Action Plans' is recommended to be applied for national action plans for *Bombina bombina* and *Triturus cristatus* because according to the Act on Protected Animal, Plant, Fungi Species and Communities (2001) their conservation must ensure Regulation Document. Since there are no rules for such kind of document, it is could be used format of national action plan.

The action plans for Polish regions and Brandenburg in Germany are at the moment being defined and the table of content agreed upon. Since administrative units in both countries Poland and Germany are rather big ones and project sites represent only small part of the whole region. Plans for turtles should have an also a strategic approach especially towards the connecting the isolated populations in each region and it should include survey for possible unknown populations Also it must include other known populations or new discovered populations of the 3 species. The action plan for amphibians will therefore be based on action for known populations and for survey for unknown populations in Poland.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

Lithuania

On 17 July 2008 Lithuanian Fund for Nature received comments from the Ministry of Environment on the Emys orbicularis plan. Main comment was that actions of the plan should be more detailed. Lithuanian Fund for Nature following the comments submitted a second draft of the plan to the Ministry of Environment on 2 December 2008 (attached in annex No.4). The plan for Bombina bombina and Triturus cristatus are in preparation using the same document format as for turtles.

Poland and Germany

The partners KP, PTOP, Agena and consultants started to work on common approach which must be agreed according to every country´s national legislation. The experience from Lithuanian action plan as well a regional action plan (Action plan for Triturus cristatus in Vejle County made in frame of LIFE project: "Protection of *Triturus cristatus* in Eastern Baltic Region" (Project no.: LIFE04NAT/EE000070) will be used for generating plans for Poland and Germany.

Action A5: Evaluation of the characteristics and structure of turtle hibernation sites

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

In the selected Emys orbicularis project sites 5-10 turtles will be followed to their hibernation sites and radio tracked during the winter.

Data about hibernation conditions will be collected in 3 places in Lithuania, 17 places in Poland and 6 places in Germany

An evaluation report of hibernation sites with a complete list of requirements for the Emys orbicularis hibernation sites.

Deadline – 31.12.2007

Progress until 30.06.2008

37 turtles were followed by transmitters in 13 project sites.

32 hibernation places evaluated.

The methods for identifying the hibernation places were telemetry, captures and also observations of pond turtles in late autumn (before hibernation) and in early spring (just after coming out of hibernation). Telemetry was the main mean to find hibernation places. Usually the hibernation places are located in forest swamps, muddy overgrown areas, which are difficult to observe, even the signal of transmitter is difficult to follow.

4. Table: The number of turtles with transmitters and number of sites investigated.

Country	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Total
Lithuania			15 turtles in 4 sites	15 in 4 sites
Poland	1 in one site	7 in 3 sites	2 in 2 sites	10 in 6 sites
Germany		12 in 3 sites		12 in 3 sites

5. Table: A5. The number of found and evaluated hibernation sites.

Year/ Country	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	expected	realized	expected	realized	expected	realized	expected	realized
2005	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
2006	1	0	5	7	3	4	9	11
2007	2	0	12	8	3	3	17	11
2008 up to 01/07	0	10	0		0	10	0	20
SUM	3	10	17	15	6	17	26	42
2008 from 01/07	0		0		0		0	0
SUM	3	10	17	15	6	17	26	42
2009	0		0		0		0	0
Total	3	10	17	15	6	17	26	42

* Note: Objective is internal. In RPP is only said that in "these" hibernations sites data will be collected. Where "these" are those selected Emys project sites where 5-10 turtles has been followed during winter.

Data loggers were supposed to measure the temperature inside of the hibernation place, but they are inconvenient for such usually muddy and hard to access places, therefore data loggers are used for measurement of temperatures at nesting site grounds. Water levels was monitored only in German and Polish project sites, water temperature, oxygen capacity, nutrients (P, N) were collected throughout 2006-2008 years period in Germany, and started to be collected in Lithuania and Poland in 2007-08.

Foreseen radio telemetry equipment was purchased. 5 of the planned 10 radio receivers was purchased and 49 of the planned 143 transmitters. 30 Data loggers out of 26 planned were bought by Agena in Germany as reasonable price was negotiated.

Lithuania

In Lithuania 15 turtles were fitted with the transmitters and monitored in 4 project sites. Potential hibernation site was found outside the project areas and Natura 2000 borders in Straciunai (L06) and Petroskos (L03) sites, therefore Natura 2000 extension were proposed to ensure protection of valued habitats. Other hibernation sites were known from local people observations and were proofed by telemetry. External herpetologist Jonas Sidaravicius was hired in may 2008 for turtle capture, saliva samples collection and daily telemetry in Petroskos

(L03) site because main turtle area is outside existing Veisiejai Regional Park and Natura 2000 order. In such case employees of the partner do not have right to implement activities outside Park borders.

Poland

In Poland 10 turtles were followed to the hibernation sites in 6 sites. 15 hibernation sites evaluated. Telemetry helped to discover 2 new hibernation places in Drawiny (Pk04) and Drzeckowo (Pk05) project sites. In BNP project site (pb01) only one female turtle was captured in June 2006 and fitted with the transmitter and then followed by telemetry throughout summer of 2006. In September 2006 there was no more contact with the transmitter. Since then no more turtles were observed in the area. 3 potential for hibernation water bodies and wetlands were examined in June 2005.

Two turtle were equipped with telemetric transmitters in Puszcza Napiwodzko-Ramucka and Puszcza Piska.

Germany

In Germany 12 individuals in 3 sites were monitored by telemetry in hibernation sites to proof already known hibernation sites. 17 hibernation sites evaluated.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

The hibernation sites evaluation report is in preparation for every country. The telemetry of turtles with transmitters will be continued in all countries. By March 2009 final document will be compiled and agreed between experts and partners. The turtles with the transmitters will be checked before they leave the hibernation places.

The rest of equipment (receivers and transmitters) will be purchased for further monitoring of use of restored habitats (action F2) before next season in 2009.

Action A6: Finding nesting sites and evaluation of nesting sites.

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Minimum of 50 people interviewed in every country (in Germany the number of interviewees will be smaller).

Between 5 and 10 females of selected project populations depending on population size will be radio tracked during the nesting period.

Prepared report on the investigations.

Deadline – 31.09.2008

Progress until 30.06.2008

60 nesting sites inventoried and described. 32 females were captured by traps and attached with transmitters and followed to nesting sites.

Usually one nesting sites is separated into several suitable parts for egg laying depending upon vegetation cover, background soil, sun exposure and other parameters important for successful egg incubation, but interpreting the application such parts are counted as 1 nesting site. The most important sites, which are used by females nowadays were localized and evaluated. Potential sites or old one nesting sites being in use were by localized by the help of interviews with local people, land owners, foresters, hunters. 134 out of 120 planned people were interviewed: 50 in Lithuania, 50 in Poland and 34 in Germany. Additionally soil temperature was measured by 30 data loggers in 10 project sites because soil temperature is very important for egg incubation. Additionally, photos and GPS-coordinates of nesting sites were taken.

6. Table: A6. The number of the interviews of local people for finding nesting sites

Year/ Country	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized
2008 up to 01/07	50	50	50	50	20	34	120	134
2008 from 01/07	0		0		0		0	0
SUM	50	50	50	50	20	36	120	134

Lithuania

3 project sites were investigated by Martina Meeske (AGUG). 11 females with attached transmitters were radio tracked, however visual control provided more results for identification of new nesting sites as radio tracking not always works. 20 nesting sites described 12 data loggers placed into soil in site L03, L04, L05. High vegetation, unknown paths of females and risk of disturbance of females prevents good radio tracking as the signal can be easily lost. 50 interviews were done during visits of project sites; also local pupils of 2 schools did interviewed older people and made a study about historical distribution of turtles.

Poland

In West Poland 9 females were attached with transmitters and followed to nesting sites. 1 female turtle lost in Bialowieza Park in 2006, no more signals were cached in this area and

turtle wasn't any more observed. However 1 potential nesting site localized for further management. Mariusz Rybacki is leading the investigations in West Poland; in Eastern part Mr. Majcher and Mr. Gorecki was implementing the research. M. Meeske advice PTOP in 2008 on researches and genetic sample collection. It was combined with telemetry and observations 20 nesting sites found and together with 6 potential sites evaluated. 12 data loggers put in 3 project sites: Pk01, Pk02, and Pk04

Germany

Selected nesting sites in 4 project sites were monitored by 6 data loggers. The investigations are led by Dr. N. Schneeweiss. 12 females were radio tracked, with the help of visual observation and predated nests 13 nesting sites found and evaluated.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

Nesting sites evaluation draft report is in progress, the draft will be done 28.02.09.Iin March 2009 the final report will be compiled summing up all three countries. Comparison between successful nests, soil temperature will be done. The knowledge from the report will be incorporated into the management plans for areas.

Action A7: Local management plans

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Management plans will be drawn up for a total of 7 areas in Lithuania, 3 areas in Northeast Poland, 6 areas in West-Poland and 5 areas in Germany (Brandenburg)

Deadline – 31.03.2008

Progress until 30.06.2008

So far 2 out of 21 management plan has been approved. 4 plans for polish sites are prepared, but not approved yet.

The local management plans must contain conservation plan for target species and be submitted to competent authorities for their agreement and approval that these pans will be regarded when writing management plan for whole area . Local management plan must contain detailed list of management actions needed to improve the sites and reach favourable conservation status of priority species: European pond turtles, Fire-bellied toads and Great crested newts including ponds and terrestrial habitats for foraging and hibernation. However these management activities must be agreed between MoE and other responsible institutions in order not to cause damage to other nature values, species and other protected objects within borders of *Natura2000* sites.

7. Table: A7 the number of local management plans

Year/ Country	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized
2005	0		0		0		0	0
2006	0	1	0		0		0	1
2007	0	1	0	2	0		0	3
2008 up to 01/07	7	0	9	2	1	0	13	2
SUM	7	2	9	4	5	0	21	6
2008 from 01/07	0		0		0		0	0

Lithuania

There are two types of management plans in Lithuania. According Lithuanian legislation there are 2 types of management plans in protected areas, including Natura 2000. The law on territorial (spatial) planning determinate rules and procedures on preparing of management planes and management schemes. Decisions of the plan regulate activities and foreseen main activities on protection and management in the area. Preparation and adoption of the territorial management plan or scheme is long procedure, lasting 2-3 years. Plans are prepared for 10 and longer years, and it is complicated mechanism to review and evaluate implementation and update.
Second type of management plans is strategic management plans, which is followed the Law on protected areas. This type of management plan is adaptive and procedure of reviewing, evaluation and updating are shorter and more simplified. Majority of plans for Natura 2000 sites are or going to be prepared by this type of plan. Both type of plans are legally bounded and used for management of protected areas in Lithuania. Meanwhile there now definition of local management plan in Lithuania as it is described in project application.

Up to now 2 plans are completed: Management plan (under the law of territorial planning) for Zuvintas biosphere reserve (project site L01) has been prepared in the period 2005 – 2006 (Annex 5) the plan been approved by the Ministry of Environment in 2006, by Minister Order Nr. D1 – 310 of 23 June, 2006. Management plan (under law on protected areas) of Straciunai herpetological reserve (project site L06) has been approved by the Ministry of Environment by Minister Order Nr. D1 – 16 of 9 January 2007 (Annex 6) . Staff of the project partner Meteliai Regional Park and Lithuanian Fund for Nature took part in preparation of the management plan.

The other 2 project sites: Meteliai (L04) and Petroskos (L03) which are parts of Regional parks will be covered also by Management schemes.

Management schemes have very strict regulation for specified areas. For I.e. areas important for turtle conservation are not allowed to be plugged or water regime changed.

Project site (L05) is not covered yet by any of management schemes, but it has itself status of national herpetological reserve and appropriate restrictions.

4 project sites are proposed for establishment (Bestraigiske L07) and extension (L03, L05, L06) of Natura 2000 borders (annex No.7) management recommendations after approval of new borders expected to happen in beginning 2009) will be submitted for MoE.

Poland

Each year plan of actions is set for the Bialowieza National Park, and accepted by the authorities of the Park. The plans are reviewed by the Scientific Council of the BNP. A special local management plan will be made for European Pond turtle and amphibians and finished by deadline set in the Recovery plan.

A Local management plans for two nature reserves in project sites Ostoja Napiwodzko-Ramucka was initiated in 2006, by enlarging the borderlines of the reserves so they include the most important turtle nesting sites. Further description is to be found under action D1. The Plan for European Pond turtles and Amphibians in Ostoja Napiwodzko-Ramucka and Ostoja Piska will be made by the deadline set in the Recovery Plan. In western Poland 4 Local management plans (Torfowisko Mlodno (Pk02), Ujscie Ilanki (Pk03), Uroczyska Puszczy Drawskiej (Pk04) and Zachodnie Pojezierze Krzywinskie (Pk05) are prepared for best studied areas where hibernation, nesting sites are known. All plans are to be approved yet by Voivodship conservation manager (Regional Conservation office), which is responsible for Natura 2000 site management outside national parks.

6 plans are made/under preparation. The other three plans will be prepared in draft by 31.30.2009.

Germany

In Germany 1 local management plan is prepared (Da02), but not approved yet. Management plan for amphibians, especially for the target amphibian species of the project, covering the central parts of the Upper Rhinluch was ordered in the beginning of October 2008. Info lacking for 4 plans or does the central part of the Upper Rhinluch covers 5 project sites.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

Lithuania: several meetings were held in MoE and oral agreements made, that management recommendations prepared by LFN for all project sites, will be respected and included when writing management plans. Now we wait for approval of new borders.

New date for submission of plans is set and for approval a new date March 2009, and approval by competent authorities in 2009.

Action A8: Genetic investigations

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

2 to 15 samples is planned to be collected from 23 populations. Genetic analysis will be lead, and report based on analysis will be produced with recommendations of strategies of to the management of turtle populations.

Deadline – 31.02.2008

Progress until 30.06.2008

64 genetic samples were collected from 10 populations in 2006 – 2008.

8. Table: A8. The number of investigated genetic samples

Year/ Country	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized	planned	realized
2005	0		0		0		0	0
2006	10-75	12	8-60	0	5-35	12	23-170	24
2007	10-75		8-60	4	5-40		23-175	4
2008 up to 01/07		18		15		3	0	36
SUM	20-150	30	16-120	19	10-75	15	46-345	64
2008 from 01/07	0		0		0		0	0
SUM	20-150	30	16-120	19	10-75	15	45-345	64

Lithuania

30 samples taken from 5 populations. For capture of turtles 35 traps were produced in Lithuania, 5 of them in 2008 were given to PTOP, and 3 to BNP. The traps were produced in 2007 by local farmer -former metal worker, who had previous experience to reconstruct old traps. However first 20 traps produced in 2007 were installed within roost not resisting hanger , therefore they had to be improved and in 2008 better quality metal was used for trap production.

Poland

In west Poland - 15 samples from 4 project sites (5-6 metapopulations) and in north eastern Poland – 5 (2 metapopulations), 1 sample from Bialowieza were collected.

Germany

15 samples were taken from 5 populations.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

It was agreed by experts which methods for DNA analysis to use. It was decided to analysis mitochondrial DNA, to define the haplotype. Market study was done for search of reasonable price for investigations. Different institutions in Poland and Germany, which are familiar with techniques and methods extracting DNA, were questioned. Institute in Dresden proposed the lowest price. In 2009 the samples probably will be driven to Dresden laboratory for researches.

The sampling of the turtles was not done in the first field season of 2005 due to problems to get started effectively with the fieldwork, but already in 2006 12 samples was taken in Germany and Lithuania. The Turtle experts Martina Meeske and Norbert Schneeweiss did transfer their knowledge in fieldwork with turtles to Polish partners in 2006 and in 2007 and 2008 also Poland got a fair number of genetic samples.

It was not possible to get samples from all populations, especially in west Poland and Germany, where there is several sites, where turtles have not been seen since 2005 or before and were only Bombina bombina or Triturus cristatus still can be found for sure, and where there is just the hope that a turtle again will be found. The purpose of the study is to find out if all the populations we work to preserve are fully local populations and not introduced or with introduced genetic material from other countries or continents. The purpose is also to secure in future (and in action plans) to work for the local genetic material in both habitat restoration and breeding programs. The delay of this action is the reason for delay of other actions.

B Land purchase

Action B1: Buffer zones and compensations

In Poland: Compensation for 1 fish pond
In Germany: Purchase of 125.59 ha of which 2.0 ha is forest, 31.0 ha is cultivated farmland (meadow) and 92.59 ha is lake. The result for Germany is updated due to request in 1st PR and agreed by EC letter of 24/07/2006.

Deadline – following 1st PR it was agreed with the Commission to update the deadline to 75% termination by 31.12.2006 and 100% termination by 31.12.2007.

Clarifying action details: At the time where table B.1 in the RPP was developed, it would not be possible to give exact numbers of ha for the partitioned land parcels to be purchased, because in the partitioning procedures adjustments from the expected partitioning almost always occur. In the 1st PR we asked the Commission to consider the table renamed to: "*Details of land parcels to be partitioned in Germany. After partition a total of 125, 59 ha are foreseen to be purchased during the project*". This was agreed by the EC letter of 24.07.2006.

Further, when writing the 1st PR we were aware about that the text in the RPP under expected results, Germany (page C3/3) was not clear enough. In the 1st PR we asked the Commission to consider the formulation updated to: "*Land acquisition to protect the turtle areas: 3 nesting sites of a total of app. 4 ha, 4 lake areas of app. 17 ha, 13 ha, 20 ha respectively 65 ha, and 5 buffer zones of app. 1 ha each, gives a total of 125.59 ha which will be established in intensive agricultural areas. Of this 22 ha is located in the Upper Rhinluch.*". This was agreed by the EC letter of 24.07.2006. Correspondingly, the budget task for partner no 8 was increased from 91 ha lake to 92, 59 ha lake without altering the total costs of the action in budget form F9.

In the RPP, page B2/19, B2/21, B2/22, B2/23 and B2/24 the NATURA 2000 Site codes and corresponding Site names are not complete and it is not clear which Site codes belongs to which sites. To avoid further unclearness, maps with updated NATURA 2000 Site codes were attached the 1st PR. In the EC letter of 24.07.2006 the Commission took note of the updated NATURA 2000 site codes and found the update not to represent a substantial modification of the project.

Progress until 30.06.2008
Poland:

The partner KP has not completed lease of land in up to 30/06/2008. The owner is interested in the management for Emys orbicularis, and contract is planned to be made by end October. Preliminary agreement signed (annex 8).

9. Table:. Size of areas to purchase in Germany before partitioning according to the RPP, area size after partitioning (=ha foreseen in 1st PR), and purchase status by 30.06.2008

All area size in Ha		Area size before partitioning according to project proposal	Change because of writing mistake	Corrected area size before partitioning	Change because of partitioning	**Area size after partitioning (Ha foreseen in 1st PR)**	Rejection of purchase	Replacement area	Adjustment of size after partitioning	**Purchase status by 30.06.08**	Division in ha		
Site	Natura code										forest	meadow	lake
Da01	DE 2950-301	1,40		1,40		**1,40**	-1,40			**0,00**			
Da02	DE 3450-301			0,00		**0,00**		3,38		**3,38**		3,38	
Da02	DE 3450-320	77,30		77,30		**77,30**			1,82	**79,12**			79,12
Da02	DE 3450-301					**0,00**		6,01		**6,01**			6,01
Da03	DE 2848-305	17,76	15,98	1,78		**1,78**				**1,78**			1,78
Da03	DE 2948-304	90,00		90,00	-84,22	**5,78**				**5,78**	1,74	2,20	1,84
Da04	DE 2847-303	0,13		0,13		**0,13**	-0,13			**0,00**			
Da05	DE 3050-301	17,20		17,20		**17,20**	-17,20			**0,00**			
Da05	DE 3149-303			0,00		**0,00**	-2,00	2,00		**0,00**			
Dl01	DE 3243-301	26,00		26,00	-4,00	**22,00**			1,29	**1,32**		1,32	
										4,04		4,04	
										6,45		6,45	
										11,48		11,48	
SUM		**229,79**	**15,98**	**213,81**	**-88,22**	**125,59**	**-20,73**	**11,39**	**3,11**	**119,36**	1,74	28,87	88,75

Germany:
The German partners have up to 30/06/2008 purchased 119.36 ha (see table 9). Since the MtR of 31/05/2007 was submitted 6.01 ha in DE 3450-301 and 11.48 ha in DE 3243-301 has been purchased (purchase contracts to be found as annex No.21).

In the contract with Silvo Müller (Da02 – DE 3450-301 – 6.01 ha lake) the guarantee for the definite assignment of land purchased to nature conservation purpose will be secured through later nature conservation clause to be written into the land registry document.

In the contract with Cornelia von Zezschwitz (Dl01 – DE 3243-301 – 11,48 ha meadow) the guarantee for the definite assignment of land purchased to nature conservation purpose is secured by the formulations in the purchase contracts is described in: § 4a.2.a, where the following formulation must be included in the land register document: “Massnahmen, durch die Gestalt oder Nutzung des Grundbesitzes verändert wird, insbesondere Veränderungen der Erdoberfläche, des Wasserhaushaltes oder des wildwachsenden Pflanzen- und wildlebenden Tierbestandes, dürfen vom jeweiligen Eigentümer nicht vorgenommen oder zugelassen werden. Ausgenommen sind Massnahmen, die im Interesse des Naturschutzes und der Landschaftspflege durchgeführt werden.” – “No measures by which figure or use of the property is changed, in particular changes of the earth surface, the water household or of wild-growing plant and wild-living animal population, may be carried out or be admitted by the respective owner. Excluded are measures carried out in the interest of the nature conservation and the landscape conservation”.

Of these land parcels, the one in DE 3450-301 is situated just outside the border of the project area but still within the Natura 2000 area. We are preparing a request for an additional clause, in which we will ask for that this area can be included into the project area.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.08

No progress has occurred in the 2nd half of 2008. Lacking for purchase in the remaining project period is only 6.24 ha. The document needed for the “free transfer of land” cannot be completed before the end of this project, and therefore the 7.6 ha will not be considered. At the moment no relevant land is available at BVVG. As new land parcels can be opened for bid rather suddenly, it is difficult to assess the degree of likelihood of finding the remaining 6.24 ha during the remaining project period.

For all land parcels purchased, we propose the formulation as given above in the contract with Cornelia von Zezschwitz to be used as a nature conservation clause to be written into the land registry documents in order to fulfil article 32.2. of the Common Provisions.

C Non-recurring biotope management

Action C1: Pond restoring / digging

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

In Lithuania: 54 ponds should be restored or new dug in 7 localities.

In Poland: 10 ponds should be restored or new dug in 6 localities, 4200 m of dams in 3 localities. The expected result for Poland is updated due to request in MtR of 31/05/2007 and agreed by EC letter of 13/09/2007.

In Germany the expected results are unclear. According to the application text 29 ponds must be restored or new dug in 6 localities in Germany and 3 dams constructed in 2 localities, but in budget only 19 ponds are foreseen plus construction of 3 pipes with sluices.

Clarifying action objectives:

10. Table: Objectives for action C1 as written in RPP text respectively budget, changes requested in MtR of 31.05.2007 and resulting revised objectives.

No. object/ Country	In RPP text			In RPP budget			Request in MtR of 31.05.2007			Revised objectives		
	Ponds	Pipes with sluices	Dams	Ponds	Pipes with sluices	Meter dams	Ponds	Pipes with sluices	Meter dams	Ponds	Pipes with sluices	Meter dams
Lithuania	54			**54**						**54**	**0**	**0**
Poland	10		42	**10**		**4.200**				**10**	**0**	**4.200**
Germany	29		3	**19**	**3**		2	-2		**19**	**3**	**0**
SUM	**93**	**0**	**45**	**83**	**3**	**4.200**				**83**	**3**	**4.200**

For Poland clarifying action objectives are done, however still documentation of meter of ditches to be filled instead of meter of dams must be provided.

For Germany (similar to earlier done for Poland) we will ask for that the objectives listed in the budget are those to be used.

This gives overall objective of 83 ponds to be restored or new dug, 3 pipes with sluices to be constructed and 4.200 meter of dams to be made.

Deadline – 15/12/2009

Progress until 30/06/2008
81 ponds out of 83 are installed.

1.715 meter of dams out of 4.200 meter of dams and 4.281 meter of filling ditches realised.

11. Table: CI. Number of dug or restored ponds

Country/ Year	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised
2005	0		0		0		0	0
2006	17	17	0		7	4	24	21
2007	16	35	7	6	4	13	27	54
2008 up to 01/07	0	0	0	4	0		0	4
SUM	33	52	7	10	11	17	51	79
2008 from 01/07	11		1		6	2	18	2
SUM	44	52	8	10	17	19	69	81
2009	2		0		0		2	0
total	54	54	10	10	19	19	83	81

12.Table: C1. Meter and number of installed dams

Country/ Years	Lithuania		Poland, meter of dams		Poland No. of dams	
	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised
2008 up to 01/07	0	0	2400	4249	24	107
2008 from 01/07	0		1000		10	
SUM	0	0	3400	4249	34	107
2009	0		800		8	
total	0	0	4200	4249	42	107

Lithuania

52 dug of 44 ponds planned in 4 sites (site L01, L03, L04 and L05). The action almost finished. 2 ponds were emptied for fish, 18 ponds dug only for amphibian needs in project site Zuvintas L01, 32 ponds were established in 3 sites for turtle needs: small summer ponds and bigger whole year ponds with shallow zones that could be used by amphibians. The 3 sites where Natura 2000 enlargement is to be made will be dug new ponds and/or restored ponds in 2009. 80% of ponds were only restored dug in depressions or former wetlands meliorated in soviet times. 20% dug in new places.

Poland

In west Poland the action has terminated with the digging / restoring of 10 ponds and construction of 400 meter (5 pieces) of dam in 3 sites. In East Poland action have been carried out in all 3 sites.

In east Poland, there have been created 1.715 meter of dams and dikes (in 102 constructions) and 4.281 meter of ditches has been filled in (in 12 constructions of which 5 have been in connection with creation of dams or dikes). We have in the MtR of 31/05/2007 asked for that dams could be substituted by the filling in of ditches, on which EC in letter of 13/09/07 and 11/02/08 request us to provide calculation factor for such substitution. By 03/03/08 we received statement (attached in annex No.9) from civil engineer on the effect of filling in ditches compared to construction of dams.

The statement is based on the project site Ostoja Piska with an initial objective of creation 3.000 meter of damming up devices (thresholds streams, oak-valves and dams). Even the budget objective for Ostoja Piska was 3.400 meter of dams (or damming up devices), it is our hope the statement can serve as basis for substituting dams with filling of ditches. The main conclusion is that completion of 884 meter of damming devices plus filling in of 4.245 meter of ditches correspond to the effect of construction 3.000 meter of damming devices.

13. Table: Translation of civil engineers statement on substituting damming devices with filling ditches based on initial 3.000 m of damming devices to the budget objectives of initial 3.700 m of damming devices.

Planned damming devices	Civil engineer statement	Using the civil engineer statement on whole project objective in east Poland
Original planned damming devices, m	3.000	3.700
Minus constructed damming devices, m	-884	-1.715
Remaining not fulfilled by damming devices, m	2.116	1.985
Can be solved by the filling of ditches, m	4.245	3.982
“translation” factor	2,01	

We assume that “translation factor” from the civil engineer’s statement can be accepted used on the whole objective in east Poland. If so, the target on 3.700 meter damming devices can be reached by building 1.715 meter damming devices and filling in of 3.982 meter ditches.

The realized no of m damming device is then: 400 m in west Poland plus for east Poland: 4.281 m ditch filled in / 2, 01 = 2.134 m damming device plus 1.715 meter damming device = 4.249 meter damming device.

Germany:

In Germany the pond digging has terminated with the digging / restoring of 19 ponds in 3 sites. Remaining is the 3 planned overflow pipes with sluices. These were planned to be built between the 3 of the ponds and the ditch in the vicinity. The function of the overflow pipe was to secure that the water table of the ponds during humid weather conditions would not increase to a level where it could eventually overflow land parcels not belonging to partner LFV. However the nature conservation authorities was concerned that Stickleback (fish) from the ditch could swim upstream through the pipes and settle a population in the ponds, where they could constitute a threat to eggs and tadpoles of Fire-bellied toad, on which the Stickleback forage. It is important to underline that only the planned ponds will contribute to better breeding conditions for Fire-bellied toad. The pipes were “only” technical solutions that should convene parcels owner of neighbouring parcels that the pond digging should be allowed. It is not as suggested in the MtR technically possible to make more ponds in the project sites if LFV, so even the overflow pipes has not been created, the action must be seen as terminated.

Action C2: Improvement and creation of nesting areas for turtles

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):
In Lithuania 26 nesting sites will be improved in 6 turtle localities.
In Poland 30 nesting sites in 7 localities, in Germany 10 nesting sites in 5 localities.

Deadline 01.12.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008

40 out of 66 planned nesting sites improved and created. The delay occurs since all nesting sites are not known yet. We still work to find more nesting sites or potential ones that we can improve in 2009 Improvement were done on known sites. In general improvement is to remove shadowing trees and bushes and remove organic matter and plant turf from the nesting sites.

14.Table: C2. Number of created nesting sites

	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
Country/ Year	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised
2005	0		0	4	0		0	4
2006	6	10	6		2	3	14	13
2007	5	4	6		2	4	13	8
2008 up to 01/07	0	4				3	0	7
SUM	11	18	12	4	4	10	27	32
2008 from 01/07	8		10	8	3		21	8
SUM	19	18	22	12	7	10	48	40
2009	8		18		0		26	0
total	26	18	30	12	10	10	66	40

Lithuania:

Management work: removal of vegetation, upper layer of ground and organic matter. Also the of putting protection gitter on the nests were done in 18 places. The action was implemented in 4 project sites: L03, L04, L05, and L06 in Lithuania. External assistance was hired by farmers for grazing the nesting areas and mowing. The pond digging company was asked to clean the nesting sites therefore no separate invoice is attached. Also the work was done by project personnel by clearing the vegetation by hand, or removing the organic soil away. Also pupils were involved in cleaning the sites and improving nesting sites. Trees cutting is foreseen but not implemented yet due to strict regulation in nature reserves.

Poland:
2 of 30 planned nesting sites improved. An improvement of 5 project areas by removal of trees and scrub vegetation was implemented in October and November 2008. Trees and shrubs were removed from total area in 6 sites. (BNP, PK-02, 03, 04, 05).

Germany:
10 nesting sites improved out of 10 planned. Creating of a new nesting site by cutting of shrubs and trees in a hedge on a south exposed slope in site (Da05), protection of 2 nesting sites in summer by covering with fence material in 1 site (Da03), protection of 2 nesting sites in winter by covering with shrubs in Da03

Progress in 2008 from 01/07/08

In Poland 8 nesting sites in all 5 project sites created by mowing of vegetation and opening up to sun exposure: 1 in Mlodno (Pk02), 1 in Rybocice (Pk03), 4 in Uroczyska Puszczy Drawskiej (Pk04), 1 in Drzeczkowo (Pk05), 1 in Mysla-Kosa / Gogolice-Kosa (Pk06).

Action C3: Creating hibernation sites for turtles and amphibians

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

30 hibernation sites for turtles and 21 for amphibians created.

In Lithuania 8 larger water bodies will be created in 6 localities for turtles and 7 for amphibians in 6 localities

In Poland 12 larger water bodies will be created in 1 locality for turtles and 7 for amphibians in 4 localities

In Germany 10 larger water bodies will be created in 4 localities for turtles and 7 for amphibians in 5 localities

Deadline – 15.12.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008

15 of planned 30 hibernation sites for turtles implemented. The methods creating the hibernation sites for turtles were deepening of muddy ponds, instalment of dead wood, improving water level.

17 of 21 hibernation sites for amphibians created by planting of 280 m hedgerows, creating shrub and soil piles.

Table hibernation sites for turtles

15. Table: Number of created hibernation sites for turtles

Country/	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
Year	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised
2005							0	0
2006	2	3	3	4	3	0	8	7
2007	2	2	3		2	6	7	8

2008 up to 01/07	2						2	0
SUM	6	5	6	4	5	6	17	15
2008 from 01/07	0		3	4	4	3	7	7
SUM	6	5	9	8	9	9	24	22
2009	3		4		1		8	0
total	8	5	12	8	10	9	30	22

16. Table: Number of created hibernation sites for amphibians

Country/ Year	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised
2005							0	0
2006		3		0	3	0	3	3
2007	2	4	3		0	3	5	7
2008 up to 01/07							0	0
SUM	2	7	3	0	3	3	8	10
2008 from 01/07	2		2	4	3	3	7	7
SUM	4	7	5	4	6	6	15	17
2009	0		3		1		4	0
total	7	7	7	4	7	6	21	17

Lithuania

5 bigger water bodies created in 3 project sites.

The means involved were creation of deeper place in bottom of the pond during pond digging. For amphibians in every project site 2-3 piles with brushwood and soil created.

Poland:

8 of 9 turtle hibernation sites implemented. The hibernation sites are created by deepening old river bed, channels and ponds near existing hibernation sites.

Amphibians – 7 out of 4 hibernation places done by creating shrub piles.

Germany:

6 of 5 planned done in 5 project sites for amphibians. Preparing of shrub walls and brushwood heaps from removed shrubs and trees in Da03 to provide hibernation places for amphibians.

Creating of new hibernation places rich of dead wood for Emys by improving of the water level of 5 ponds. in Da03 planting of an hedgerow (200m) into an existing shrub wall as hibernation place for amphibians and in Da04 preparing of shrub walls and brushwood heaps from removed shrubs and trees to provide hibernation places for amphibians.

Hedgerows for amphibians hibernation planted by LFV 2800 m out of 2800 completed when and where? Instead of creating hibernation sites in 2006 and 2008 hibernation sites were created in 2007.

The plantations for hibernation site in in DI01 were implemented in 21/02 up to 23/05/07. But planting of trees and shrubs repeated in spring 2008, because some of the planted trees and shrubs hadn't survived. Planting action has to be carried out for the second time at some sites and specific measurements (protection walls around stamps) were carried out in order to save the planted trees and shrubs from herbivores. Beside, the created rice piles were restored.

Progress in 2008 from 01/07/08

Additional 7 hibernation sites made, totally 22 for turtles.
In Poland in November 2008 4 hibernation sites for turtles were created in 3 project sites, in Germany 3 sites created. The care of planted trees and shrubs for hibernation sites is taken continuously and will proceeded in 2009.

Action C4: Installing a sustainable grazing regime with a hardy grazer

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

3 hardy grazer's farms installed for maintenance of open water bodies and surrounding ha. On 3 farms the hardy grazers were installed for maintenance of open shorelines on water bodies and keeping surrounding habitats low.

Deadline – 30.09.2007

Progress until 30.06.2008

3 farms were installed with by November 2006 in L05 and L03, and by December 2006. The action was foreseen only for Lithuania.

22 cattle instead of 26 bought, but due to increase in flock it will be possible to manage

foreseen area. The breed for grazing was chosen Hereford for area L01, and Galloway's for L03 and L05. The argument to choose different breeds was that in L01 Zuvintas biosphere reserve the farmers, who were contractors, wanted Hereford, since they considered theses cattle type more suitable to the conditions on larger meadows.

Sixteen hard grazers HEREFORD breed (15 cows and 1 bull) have been installed in Zuvintas biosphere reserve in 2006. The aim is to manage suitable habitats for *Bombina bombina*. Managing of habitats by Hereford cattle is going to reach aims identified in project proposal for *Bombina bombina*.

Keeping and grazing of Hereford cattle is organised by trilateral joint agreement (Nature Heritage Fund, Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve and Zuvintas Club) Nr. 08 – 06.12.05 of 27.12.2006. Taking care of cattle is under responsibility of local farmers. Job of local farmers is compensated by paying partly in kind young calves and partly from Zuvintas club. After termination of the project Zuvintas biosphere reserve as owner of cattle will take care on grazing in project sites.

Six hardy grazers of GALLOWAYS breed (4 cows and 2 bulls) have been installed in Meteliai and Veisiejai regional parks (project sites L05 and L03) in 2006. They were split between the 2 sites as follows: 4 cattle (3 cows and 1 bull) have been installed in Kuciuliskes herpetological reserve L05, Meteliai Regional Park and 2 cattle (1 cow and 1 bull) in Petroskos L03, Veisiejai Regional Park.

Lithuanian Fund for Nature contracted two farmers (1 in Kuciuliskes, 1 in Petroskos) for keeping and taking care on Galloway's cattle. According the contract farmers should take care of cattle which are grazing *Emys orbicularis* nesting sites and around the ponds lasting whole year. According the contract Lithuanian Fund for Nature is obligated to compensate for the farmers work. It is agreed that Lithuanian Fund for Nature partly compensate in kind by giving calves and partly by payments. Young calves should be kept in the area and used for managing territory in spite of private ownership. By the termination of the project 6 Galloway's could be owned by farmers but should be used for grazing at least five years after termination of the project in the defined area. Managing of habitats by Galloway's cattle is going to reach aims identified in project proposal for *Emys orbicularis*. The agreements with farmers were attached in 1st MtR annex No.11.

There is built mixed wooden and wire fences around all grazing area and shelters inside. Mobile electricity fence allows controlling size of grazing territory. The building of fences was not foreseen in project proposal. Due to not profitable activity farmers are not able to buy material for building of fences. In order to fulfil objectives of the action it was necessary to reallocate financial resources for acquisition of material for building fences.

17. Table: C4. Number of cattle's *purchases*

Country/ Year	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised

2005							0	0
2006	26	22					26	22
2007							0	0
2008 up to 01/07							0	0
SUM	26	22	0	0	0	0	26	22
2008 from 01/07							0	0
SUM	26	22	0	0	0	0	26	22
2009							0	0
total	26	22	0	0	0	0	26	22

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.08

Continuous grazing of 5 ha area in turtle habitats in L03 and L05 (nesting site and pond area).

Action C5: Removal of unwanted vegetation

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

74 ponds cleaned from shrubs: in Lithuania 40 water bodies in 7 localities, in Poland 23 water bodies in 3 localities, in Germany 11 water bodies in 4 localities

Deadline – 31/12/2009

Progress until 30/06/2008

In most areas the places for pond digging and cleaning of shrubs overlap. The area was pond is to be dug must be cleared first from unwanted vegetation. Also a minimum of 10 m to southeast and west sides of the planned pond digging area had to be cleaned for unwanted vegetation in order to secure sunlight on the pond in future. The clearing of unwanted vegetation happens must often in winter, when there is frozen underground and the people can walk and drive on the swampy underground. After clearing the unwanted vegetation the pond will be dug. This happens most often in a time when the ground water level is low

In several cases the unwanted vegetation is removed from south shoreline of existing ponds in order to create sunlight on the pond.

18. Table: C5. Number of area with removed unwanted vegetation

Country/ Year	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised
2005				4			0	4
2006	16	6	9		5	7	30	13
2007	8	31	6		2	3	16	34
2008 up to 01/07							0	0
SUM	24	37	15	4	7	10	46	51
2008 from 01/07	8		4	4	2	1	14	5
SUM	32	37	19	8	9	11	60	56
2009	8		4		2		14	0
total	40	37	23	8	11	11	74	56

Lithuania

37 removal of unwanted vegetation mad? In 4 sites (site L01, L03, L04 and L05)

Poland

8 ponds were removed of unwanted vegetation in 3 sites (site Pp01, Pp02, Pb01)

Germany

11 removal of unwanted vegetation mad in 4 sites (site Da01, Da02, da03, Da04)

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.08

in Lithuania after implementation of preparatory actions it is foreseen to clear important ponds for turtles, which are overgrown by bushes and trees which evaporate water. Cutting will help to hold water level and keep the population. This is important especially in areas where pond number is minimal like in Bestraigiske L07. The only pond in forest is under threat of extinction.

The rest of ponds will be cleared from vegetation in West Poland.

Action terminated in Germany.

D Recurring biotope management

Action D1: Management agreements

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Contracts with landowners for pond management, creation and restoration and for terrestrial habitat management for all 7 areas. Permissions from authorities for habitat management.

Deadline – every year 31/12

Progress until 30.06.2008

40 verbal agreements.

30 signed permissions and management schemes from local authorities.

10 written agreements.

1 official forest plan agreed with forest owners.

1 leasing contract .

The agreements were designed in a way, that owner gives permission for pond digging and other turtle and amphibians related action. Activity like use of fertilizers in and around pond is prohibited while the owner can take water, also it is recommended to keep the shoreline managed. The agreements in all countries are set in force at least for 5 years period.

Lithuania:

The agreements in Lithuania are of 3 types: 1. management agreements and pond construction schemes in protected areas, 2.Management agreements are written and oral with private landowners, 3. Special permissions for management have to be agreed for state owned land with state institutions.

Pond construction schemes have to be made for every pond digging in protected area according to national regulation. Such schemes were made and agreed with responsible institutions for project area L01, L03, L04, L05 (two of which have been attached the reply to the Commission's letter of 13/09/2007 as annex F).

6 permissions for bush and tree cutting were issued by local municipality administration.

A total of 10 written and 15 oral agreements have been made with private landowners. However people especially in countryside are not adopted to sign papers, they give permission to restore habitats when good argumentation is given for nature conservation. The most serious problem is related to fish introduction, because it is very old habitat. Therefore seminar for prevention of pollution of ponds was held in L03 (see action E2).

Since land reform is ongoing many parcels of the land belongs to state. For such land management is allowed via written letters and signatures on pond construction schemes from county administration.

Poland:

In July 2006 the 50 management agreements were replaced by entering the regulation into the official forest plans. Besides being less expensive, this solution gives a better guarantee that the objectives is respected, because the control authority is moved from partner PTOP to the forest district which have their daily work in the area concerned.

Germany:

In 2006 concluded 17 verbal agreements with private land owners and with state land owners for 5 project sites. An agreement with Wasserbodenverband for pond revitalisation signed in 2007. In 2008 8 verbal agreements with local authorities for project site Da02.

In Project area “Potsdamer Platz”: management according to the project goals is secured by a leasing contract signed on 02/02/07. Project area “Rhinbogen”: management according to the project goals was secured in 2007 by contracts between the state of Brandenburg and the lease holder In order to secure such a management for the future negotiations with the lease holder has been carried out.

Progress in 2008 from 01/07/08

Lithuania

Regular contact with private landowners is kept during monitoring of areas and informing institutions about performer management on state land.

Poland

Regular contact with private landowners is kept during monitoring of areas and informing institutions about performer management on state land.

Germany

Necessary permits for digging ponds in Da02 done.

Action D2: Rearing of turtles

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Germany: Rearing 40 juveniles Emys orbicularis per year during their first two or three years of life.
Poland: Rearing 60 juveniles Emys orbicularis per year during the first 9 month of their life.

Deadline

Progress until 30/06/2008

Poland:

In west Poland 15 turtles were reared and released in x/2008. The turtles were located and released in U. Iljanki. Another 30 turtles are in captivity and will be released in spring 2009.
The rearing was considered not needed in eastern Poland. The monitoring of Emys orbicularis has shown a much broader distributed population than foreseen in the RPP. It is therefore not best value for money to carry through the planned rearing programme in PTOP's project area. The projects experts have evaluated that digging of additional a number of ponds will secure the biological effect initial intended by the rearing. We are currently preparing an additional clause, in which we in details will explain and ask for transferring (a part of) the related budget to other actions.

Germany:

In Germany more than 100 turtles were released in 5 localities.
The turtles were kept in breeding station before release.
Progress:
2005:
37 released turtles: DA03 (21 number X59), DA04 (16 number X60) rearing station (DA01 number X72)
2006
26 released turtles: DA04 (5 number X61), DA03 (21 number X62)
Rearing station (DA01 number X73) summer was warm and relative dry, so it was decided that leaving some of the nests to natural incubation would be preferable. Later evaluation of the natural breeding success did show, that the natural incubation succeeded this year.
2007
Rearing station (DA01 number X74)
Rearing station: rearing of all young turtles from artificial incubated eggs for 2 years (number Y158)
Releasing 21 turtles (10 of them into a nearby population, 11 into Da03 and Da04) (number Y160)

Rearing station: removing of vegetation in a small pond (30m²) to over winter the plants of the outdoor Emys cages
2008
Rearing station: rearing of all young turtles from artificial incubated eggs for 2 year. Releasing 20 turtles into a new prepared area of an extinct population in Mecklenburg. All purchased equipment is used solely only for project needs

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

The target reached, but ongoing in project sites, since more turtles are reared and prepared for releasing.

Action D3: Management of foraging habitats

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):
650 ha of moist area and 206 ha of semi-natural grasslands will be mowed:
In Lithuania 650 ha of moist area and 180 ha of grasslands. In Germany – 26 ha of grassland. Areas will be mowed in BNP (this is directly from RPP).

Deadline 30.06.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008
180 ha of grasslands and 50 ha of moist area (reed bed) is cut

19. Table: D3. Hectare of managed moist areas (foraging habitats)

Country/ Year	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised
2005						0.0	0.0	0.0
2006	160.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	160.0	20.0
2007	165.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	165.0	40.0
2008 up to 01/07	160.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	160.0	0.0
SUM	485.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	485.0	60.0
2008 from 01/07		40.0					0.0	40.0
SUM	485.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	485.0	100.0
2009	550.0	0.0	0.0		0.0		550.0	0.0
total	650.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	650.0	100.0

20. Table: D3. Hectare of managed grasslands (foraging habitats)

Country/ Year	Lithuania		Poland		Germany		All	
	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised	planned	realised
2005						9.4	0.0	9.4
2006	45.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	8.9	61.0	18.9
2007	45.0	15.0	7.0	10.0	8.0	7.9	60.0	32.9
2008 up to 01/07	45.0	0.0	7.0		6.0	36.7	58.0	36.7
SUM	135.0	15.0	24.0	20.0	20.0	62.9	179.0	97.9
2008 from 01/07		20.0					0.0	20.0
SUM	135.0	35.0	24.0	20.0	20.0	62.9	179.0	117.9
2009	145.0	0.0	7.0		6.0		158.0	0.0
total	180.0	35.0	31.0	20.0	26.0	62.9	237.0	117.9

Lithuania

The aim of action D3 in to secure a large amount of open moist and wet habitats that can serve a resting and foraging ground for Bombina bombina.

These areas of foraging waters should be as close as possible to the breeding ponds, and the area between breeding ponds and foraging waters should be as open as possibly. This is an advantage since *Bombina bombina* needs sun and the water habitat needs sun to be productive with insect larva from which *Bombina bombina* feeds on.

There were almost no breeding ponds left for *Bombina bombina* in Zuvintas and very small populations with single callers and up to 10 males in best pond before the project. We have created the necessary amount of fish free breeding ponds needed to provide breeding success to create of a large population of 1000 adults of *Bombina bombina*. The best possibilities to create the core areas of such ponds were both east and west of the Zuvintas natural history museum. 4 clusters of ponds were created in areas where last Bombina bombina males were observed. 2 of these clusters are close to nature education trail are the most important Bombina bombina breeding sites. The reason is that there was very good clay in the underground of the wet meadows. Clay holds the water better and its more productive and better underground substrate for Bombina bombina than turf, which were dominant further west from the museum.

So it would be preferable to create the large Bombina bombina feeding areas close to the 2 best clusters of ponds. The planned areas to manage for feeding waters for Bombina bombina was several kilometers away from the best breeding ponds and it did not make sense to make the best breeding ponds in one corner of the park and the feeding areas to far away. The feeding areas should be within migrations distance of Bombina juveniles and thus maximum 500-1000 m away and there cannot be west amounts of unsuitable habitats

(reedbird, high Carex sp., and willow shrub) in between the breeding ponds and the feeding waters. The area in between must be open and managed.
We know from our exercise on favourable conservation status (action A3) that in natural areas and area of 250.000 square meters (25 ha) of optimal foraging wet and moist areas are needed.
In Zuvintas we have the possibility to create 25 ha of optimal foraging habitat right next to the 2 best pond clusters, since we have a very large productive lake with wast areas of shallow water and mosaic reed beed with Phragmites australis, Typha latifolia, and Typha angustifolia and Scirpus sp. The reed beds are however getting to dense due to eutrophication and its needed to cut, not necessary all away but to make a mosaic of open water and reedbird of these Phragmites, typha and scirpus species. Such mosaic reed beds would form a very good foraging ground for Bombina bombina.

By 2008 35 ha of grasslands were managed, in Zuvintas Biosphere reserve around ponds dug for fire-bellied toads. 100 ha of moist area within shallow zone of lake were managed thus creating 100 ha of suitable mosaic habitat for fire-bellied toad.

The equipment for management by ZBR was purchased . Because of the rather swampy ground on the areas to be managed and the need to cut the reed in the shallow edges of the lake, technical investigations concluded, that the planned purchase of a tractor with mowing equipment would not be appropriate. . It was instead concluded, that a special track-laying vehicle would fit the purpose. The machine is however much more expensive that the budgeted € 33,829, as it has a value of € 64,546. The explanation of independent expert is attached in annex No. 10.

This type of machinery for managing wet shallow parts of the lake is not available in Lithuania for neither rent nor buying; this machine was specially constructed in Sweden.

The truxor DM 4700 is the best available machine to managed such wet areas and make a mosaic in them. The areas from the bombina bombina foraging areas and towards the new Bombina bombina ponds were overgrown with willow shrub, reedbird and Carex sp. and since the underground is hard and consist of clay it’s possible to drive and cut bushes and hay with tractor common in the area and its possible for the cattle bought for Zuvintas to open the area in between the breeding ponds and the foraging waters 35 ha of such meadows were managed in Zuvintas.
To secure Bombina bombina enough foraging waters to grow to populations of 1000 adults it is enough to cut 25 ha of good quality mosaic water habitats and maintain these minimum of 25 ha of water habitats. This type of mosaic water habitats does secure a number of other rare and endangered species (especially birds) living on the edge of the lake and in the shallow waters of the now almost overgrown shallow part of the lake. Until 2008 ZBR did create 100 ha of mosaic water habitat and therefore it was not needed to mow the originally planned 620 ha, since they were several kilometers away from any breeding pond cluster and 5-10 km away from the best constructed breeding pond cluster situated close to the education trail and the buildings of ZBR.

Poland
Semi-natural grasslands of 20 ha are mowed around amphibian habitats in Bialowieza National Park.

Germany
In 2005 9, 4 ha mowed in 4 sites, in 2006 8,9ha mowed in 4 sites,
2007 mowing of 7,9 ha 3 sites (Da03, Da04, Da05 1,5 ha).
2008 organisation of extensive grazing regime together with biosphere reserve Schorfheide Chorin (5, 5 ha) to remove too dense and too high vegetation in Da01 part2.
mowing of 7,9 ha in 3 sites (Da03 3,6 ha, Da04 2,8 ha, Da05 1,5 ha)

Grassland is mown by equipment purchased in project. The mowing machine original planned purchased by the partner Agena would suit the requirements for efficient mowing of the habitats very well, but it could not be transported between the project sites with defensible expenses and a new solution has been found. Agena has negotiated with the manufacturer concerning which machine would be the best suitable taking also the transport conditions between project sites into consideration. By 12.09.2006 Agena purchased the mowing machine inclusive trailer for its transportation on public road. The moving was before delivery equipped with engine and fuel adoption enables it to drive on vegetable oil in order to minimise the risk of environmental and to nature dangerous oil spill when operating in protected nature areas near fresh waters including turtle hibernation sites. In January 2007, Agena ordered a new developed type of mowing schedule. A 4x4 Ford Ranger was bought to transport the mowing machine. It was building 14/05/07 to 20/05/07. For more explanation please look at MtR page 44. It was ordered in January 2007, invoiced 27/07/07 with inv. no. 710/103932. It was bought at Ford Lukat.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.08

The management of reed bed was continued from July 1- to September 30 cutting of 40 ha of mosaic lake area.

The project will try to make a LIFE after LIFE agreement about management for 10 years period in Zuvintas, where Zuvintas promise to continue to cut the reed bed and mow/graze the meadows in this project and enlarge the reed bed cutting as well as the meadow management.

E PUBLIC AWARENESS AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

Action E1: International education of experts / workshops, study tours, final seminar

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

International education of local experts and managers via 3 international workshops, education of project partners via 1 study tour to Germany/Denmark, and 1 to Lithuania/Poland organised. Final international seminar for share of experience about protection of target species across their northern distribution.

Deadline 31.12.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008

Kick-off meeting (this is more like part of action F1 as it was not a workshop)

Kick-off-meeting was held in Glambecker Mühle, one of Agena's project sites18.03.2006 to 19.03.2006 with participation of LFN, KP, Agena, LFV, AGUG, and external amphibian specialist. Main objective on the meeting was introduction of the project, planning and communication among the project partners. Give program list of attendants (should include people external of the project, not involved in project implementation!!!)

Study tours

1st Study tour was held in one of Agena's project sites 06 to 07.05.2006 with participation of LFN, KP, Agena, LFV, and AGUG. An important part of the meeting was in practice demonstration of trapping equipment and radio tracking equipment, on which use Agena has many years of experience. Together the meeting of Steering Committee was organised. Subjects discussed during SC meeting: Status on purchase of equipment, communication in the project, monitoring methods, local management plans, genetic investigation, web page, monitoring of effects of project actions, constitution of the SC, evaluation of planned project progress until next reporting date of the project.

2d Study tour took place by 11 – 15.09.2007 in West Poland, Germany and Denmark with participation of LFN, BNP, KP, Agena, LFV, AUGUG and external amphibian expert and IPM. The participant visited project sites Zachodnie Pojezierze Krzywinskie and Ujscie Ilanki (West Poland), in Brandenburg (Germany) and Fyn island (Denmark). Participants shared knowledge and experience in management of habitats and creation of new habitats, evaluation and monitoring of ponds.

International workshops

1st workshop was organised from 27.06.2006 to 03.07.2006. The international workshop took place in Lithuania and north-east Poland with participation of local managers of LFN, ZBR, MRP, VRP, Agena, AGUG, external amphibian expert and IPM. The participants visited project sites in Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve, Meteliai- and Veisiejai Regional Parks, Straciunai- and Kuciuliskes Herpetological Reserve (Lithuania) and Bialowieza National Park (Poland). During seminar practical testing of monitoring methods was applied. Whole range of ponds was evaluated and actions for improvement discussed. Good habitat indicators were defined by evaluating habitat and reproduction parameters. Lists of participants attached (Annex No.11)

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

2nd international workshop will be organised by German partners in Germany, in Brandenburg. The date is set – middle April 2009. The topic will be nature conservation, and the seminar will involve foreign researchers.

Final seminar (conference) as part of last international workshop is planned to be organised in Lithuania in October, 2009. The subjects of seminar will be presentations from partners and other Life project participants (Spain, Germany) with visits of project sites and implemented actions.

Action E2: Education of local community

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

In Lithuania turtle day for local people (kids) will be held yearly on 2 selected sites; four grazer exhibitions will be held in Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve. 1 educational seminar in Zuvintas.
In Poland 4 “turtle days” and 4 amphibian days will be organised for local people, especially children. Three 2-day seminars will be organised to promote the environmental education of the local authorities, foresters, farmers and local people.
In Germany 4 amphibian days will be organised for local people, especially children. Three 2-day seminars will be organised to promote the environmental education of the local authorities, foresters, farmers and local people.

Deadline 30.09.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008
6 turtle days, 11 seminars, 7 amphibian days organised.

21.Table. List of implemented education events.

Actions	Planned	Implemented
Turtle days total	***8***	***6***
Lithuania	4	5
Poland	4	1

Germany	-	-
Education seminars total	***7***	***15***
Lithuania	1	3
Poland	3	3
Germany	3	9
Amphibian days total	***8***	***7***
Lithuania	-	-
Poland	4	3
Germany	4	4
Grazer exhibitions total	***4***	***4***
Lithuania	4	4

Lithuania

Turtle days

2006:
In project site L03 turtle day was organised on 13th October 2006. Before that day pupils have been regularly been involved with activities. In spring 2006 a 300 m long fence with amphibian traps was built along the road that crosses amphibian migratory routes from the lowlands to Slavantai Lake. Together with staff from VRP pupils collected amphibians and carried them to the other side of the road. Also 4 lectures were held in the school and movie about turtle demonstrated. The paint competition was organised. 300 pupils took part in the events. The local newspaper “Lazdiju zvaigzde” and the national newspaper “The Green World” printed articles about the turtle day.
In project site L05 excursion was held on 12th October for local school of Krikstonys. The children visited ponds for
Another turtle day was extra organised to educate local people about pond ecosystems and conservation. The main idea was to educate people not to introduce fish in dug ponds for turtle near to nesting sites. 15 participants took part; more than 30 local owners of land were educated by personal meetings.

2007:
Turtle day was organized in Zuvintas biosphere reserve L01 on 28th September 2007. Up to 25 school pupils participated in the event from the neighbourhood schools. The 2 lectures on protection of Pond turtle and rare amphibian were given during event. In additional 1 lecture was given on habitat management and role of grazing in conservation of turtles and amphibians, 2 movies (1 on Pond turtle, 1 on biodiversity of Zuvintas biosphere reserve) were performed. Turtle day was organized by Zuvintas club in cooperation with Lithuanian Fund for Nature and Zuvintas biosphere reserve.
In Kuciuliskes L05 turtle day with help action was organised on 27th of November. 30 participants: volunteers, students and pupils from local school took part in this event.

Up to 10 lectures were given to pupils in schools by visits of park ecologists. About 200 pupils educated about protection of target species.

Seminars

On 7 December 2007 seminar “Protection of pond turtle and amphibians” was organized in Zuvintas biosphere reserve L01 by following excursions in Meteliai and Veisiejai regional parks and other project sites. Around 30 participants took part in the seminar. The audience of the seminar was land owners, foresters, and staff of local and regional municipalities, protected areas stuff. 1 lecture and 3 excursions were performed.

Cattle (grazer) exhibitions

4 cattle exhibition days held:

On 20th May 2006 grazer exhibition was held in farm in Alytus district near to Zuvintas biosphere reserve. Around 30 farmers from projects sites and others from districts of the region had opportunity to learn on keeping and grazing of “Angus” breed of beef cattle. In following week on 27th April 2006 seminar was held in Veisiejai Regional Park. An expert Tomas Tukaciauskas from State Protected Areas service introduced keeping and using meat cattle, and explained on different breeds of meat cattle as well as applying in agri-environmental schemes. 23 farmers took part in the event.

On 22 November 2006 grazer exhibition was held in Krikstonis, Kuciuliskes project site, Meteliai Regional Park. Galloway’s cattle were introduced to local farmers. Around 10 participants took part in the presentation.

On 15 June 2007 cattle exhibition was organized in Zuvintas biosphere reserve. The aim of exhibition was to introduce heavy grazers in meadow management. Around 60 farmers, foresters, staff from regional and local authorities, protected areas administrations as well as from Ministry of Environment, State Protected Areas Service took part in the event. Excursion to Zuvintas project site grazed by Hereford breed was part of the event.

On 18 September 2007 cattle day was organized in Zuvintas biosphere reserve. The aim of the exhibition was to share experience on managing of cattle in meadows. 20 participants representing farmers from surrounding areas, students of agricultural school, stuff of local authority took part in the event.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

Turtle day

On October 4, 2008 one turtle day was organised in Meteliai regional park L04. 47 school

pupils and teachers from Seirijai gymnasium, Veisiejai and Meteliai schools took part in the event. The turtle day was dedicated to Word Animal day. The biggest constructed metallic turtle could place all event participants. The event followed by lecture on turtle protection. The event was organised by Meteliai regional park, Lithuanian Fund for Nature and Zuvintas club.

Poland

Turtle days
1st turtle day was held on 7 – 9 June 2006 in Bialowieza national park. The target group was students of the "Common University". The aim of the event was to introduce protection and management measures to the students.

Amphibian days
Amphibian days are organised yearly in Bialowieza national park in 2005-2008. Regularly in March – May staff of the park jointly with pupils and volunteers installed fences around the roads and were regularly checking the traps for amphibians trying to cross the road and releasing out the dangerous areas. Training and lectures followed events. Around 400 participants took part in the amphibian rescue days. In total about 200 field days were used in the period.

Seminars
1st seminar: On 9 March 2007 KP organized seminar in Lagow. The aim of the seminar was to discuss conservation problems of Pond turtle in west Poland. Around 30 representatives from local forest management departments, from three Voivodship nature conservation offices and land owners participated in the seminar.

2d and 3d seminar: On 21 – 23 March and 24 April 2007 Bialowieza national park organized seminar in its education centre on protection of Pond turtle and amphibians. Around 50 participants from different field of interest took part in 2 seminars.

Germany

Seminars
7 seminars organised:
In the period from 31 March to 4 April 2006 Agena organized 5 local seminars on the protection of Pond turtle: 2 in site Da02, 1 in Da04, 1 in D101 and 1 general in Berlin. The participants (land owners, staff of local authorities and nature conservation bodies, as experts) took part in the seminars.

On 19 – 21 April 2007 seminar was held in Hainholz. Nature conservation specialists with some of representatives from land authorities took part in the discussion on conservation of Pond turtle and amphibians.

On 26 March 2008 was held meeting in Markische Schweitz Nature Park (project site Da02). Nature reserve manager, foresters, nature conservation authorities, farmers and NGO took

part in the seminar.

On 18 – 20 April 2008 seminar was held in Senftenberg. Nature conservation specialists with some of representatives from land authorities took part in the discussion on conservation of Pond turtle and amphibians.

Amphibian days
4 amphibian days organised:
On 12 August 2006 LFV organized an amphibian day. General public and pupils took part in the event in the Oberes Rhinluch camp.

On 26 – 27 October 2007 LFV organized amphibian day in Linum for general public.

On 25 May 2008 bicycle excursion to the project sites at the Upper Rhinluch took place. The new created ponds and hibernation sites were shown, monitoring methods and results were demonstrated for participants. The discussions on protection of amphibian followed excursion.

On 18 May 2008 Agena organized open amphibian and turtle day in conservation station, Brandenburg area. Mainly general public visited exhibition in the station and learn about protection of rare species.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.08

Seminar
On 15 July 2008 Agena organized conference on predator management in Berlin. The participants from research institutions, nature conservation and land authorities discussed measures on predator management. Special attention was given on Pond turtle predators.
The inte

Turtle day
On 26 – 27 October 2007 LFV organized amphibian day in Linum for general public.

On 23 August 2008 Agena organized in Feldberg – Lychen Nature Park. The minister of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg lands took part in the event as well as representatives from nature conservation and regional authorities. During the event young turtle were released to wild.

Action E3: On site education

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):
Lithuania: nature education trail (1 km) on local nature landscapes, habitats and species will be set up at the Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve. Information board will be placed to seven project areas.
Poland: 3 nature trails (1 km) will be built to 3 West-Polish project sites. 14 information boards

will be placed to 8 project sites.
Germany: 15 information boards will be placed to project sites.

Deadline 30/09/2009

Progress until 30/06/2008

6 Notice boards erected in 4 project sites. 4 information boards designed and erected in 4 sites. Nature trail of 700 m length installed.

22.Table. Implemented information boards and nature trails

Actions	**Planned**	**Implemented**
Information boards total	**36**	**4**
Lithuania	7	4
Poland	14	Designed
Germany	15	Designed
Nature trails total	**4**	**1**
Lithuania	1	1
Poland	3	0

Lithuania

Notice boards were placed in 4 project sites in spring 2007 in 3 sites L03, L04, L05 when management started to be implemented. Later in spring 2008 notice boards were changed into information boards in sites L03, L04, L05, and L01. The information boards contain information about the target species, their importance, threats and management measures. The information boards and notice boards attached in pictures (Annex 2).

Nature trail has been built in Zuvintas biosphere reserve in 2007. The nature trail is installed on shoreline 200 m away from dug ponds. It is equipped with information's boards and it is used for education general people from the different regions and countries.

Poland

Not noticed yet.

Germany

Notice boards erected in 1 site.

Progress in 2008 from 01/07/08

Lithuania

LFN will produce common layout of notice board for all countries and distribute among partners.

The rest of 3 information boards are planned to be installed before 31.03.2009. The rest of planned education trail of 200 m will be installed in L01 in 2009.

Poland

Planning to install missing 9 notice boards in every site by 31 January 2009. Planning of 3 educational trails in West Poland.

Germany

The construction installed, and information shield prepared but not erected yet.

Action E4: Printed educational materials

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Folder on Emys orbicularis ant its habitats protection (Lithuanian, Polish, Germany, English), Folder on pond restoration (Lithuanian, Polish, Germany), Poster on Emys orbicularis and its habitats (Lithuanian, Polish, Germany)

Deadline 31.11.2007

Progress until 30.06.2008

Planned publishments printed and distributed. 4000 copies of leaflet about target species printed in three languages and distributed among partners, authorities, landowners, local people, kids and other interested persons and institutions.
1500 copies of poster about European pond turtle is printed and distribute more widely to schools, organizations, institutions who are not so directly involved in the project and do not know very much about our activity.
The folder on pond restoration is printed in 1000 copies and distributed among land owners, farmers and other stakeholders.
1 book about project target species in 500 exemplary and 1 cd in 100 exemplary published in Lithuanian (attached in annex No. 12).

23.Table: E4-1. Planned and implemented actions

Actions	Planned	Implemented	Comments
Folder on Emys orbicularis and its habitats	***4***	***4***	Folders distributed by partners during different events (turtle days, amphibian days, seminars, excursions) and in different information centres, protected areas administrations, regional and local municipalities, schools
Lithuanian version	1	1 (500 copies)	
Polish version	1	1 (2000 copies)	Attached annex 12
Germany version	1	1 (1000 copies)	
English version	1	1 (500 copies)	
Folder on habitat restoration	***3***	***1***	Distributed among land owners, farmers, specialists for conservation
Lithuanian	1	1 (1000 copies)	Attached annex 12
Polish	1		
Germany	1		
Poster on Emys orbicularis	***3***	***3***	Printing of posters is completed, but instead of Polish version is printed English version. Poster is distributed by partners to different information centres, protected areas administrations, regional and local municipalities, schools
Lithuanian	1	1 (500 copies)	
Polish	1		
Germany	1	1 (500 copies)	
English		1 (500 copies)*	

* - English version was printed instead of polish because of representation purposes Eu wide.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

Poland

Folder on Emys orbicularis and its habitats with the questionary about observations of wildlife

printed by Bialowieza National Park (2000 copies).

The folder on pond restoration in German and polish is in preparation, the draft version will be finished by 31.03.2009 and printed by 31.05.2009.

Action E5: Best practice guideline / protection guideline*15.11.2009*

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Best practice guidelines on the management of habitats of emys orbicularis published in English.

Deadline 15.11.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008

The work has according to the timetable not started yet.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

The preparation started. The draft version will be started to discuss by 31.03.2009

Action E6: Web page

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):
Constantly updated homepage in the internet under www.glis.lt

Deadline 15.11.2009

Progress until 30/.06.2008

Beneficiary: The English web page version was launched on 24.02.2006 on www.glis.lt/life . Later the web page was re-launched with improved graphic design and translated into Lithuanian on www.glis.lt/emys. The Lithuanian version differs slightly from the English version as the Lithuanian version provides the general public with educational material, while the English version serves as international project web site.

Lithuania:
ZBR (www.zuvintas.lt/en/index.php): Still has to link to the main project site,

VRP(www.travel.lt/turizmas/selectPage.do?docLocator=78DED75A89A511DA8602746164617373&inlanguage=lt): Still has to link to the main project site

MRP (www.meteliuparkas.lt/): Has link to the main project site.

Poland:
BNP (www.bpn.com.pl/): Has a link to the main project site

PTOP (www.ptop.org.pl/): Hasn't a link

KP (http://kp.org.pl/life_zolw/index.php?go=news) LIFE project on their homepage inclusive a link to the main project site

Germany:
Agena (www.herpetopia.de/): Has description of the project and link to main project site,

LFV (www.oberes-rhinluch.de): Has description of the project and clear link to the main project site.

AGUG (www.user.gwdg.de/~ubns/): Hasn't link

The link between partner's project sites and main project site is clearly an area, where improvements have to be done during 2008.

The main web-site is updated at least quarterly with news from the project.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

Action E7: Layman's report

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Layman report produced in Lithuanian, German, polish and English version.

Deadline 31.12.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008

The work has according to the timetable not started yet.

PROGRESS IN 2008 FROM 01.07.2008

F OVERALL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Action F1: Project management and accountancy

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Project results achieved and delivered at a level of high quality, taking into account the interests of stakeholders.

Deadline – no deadline

Progress until 30.06.2008

The management of the project is set by organigram (framework).The first organigram was set in project application and later changed with several adjustments. The main administration units for the project are Project management team and Steering committee.
The project management team consist of Project Director, International Project Manager, external consultants and representatives of 9 partner organisations.
Project Director, International Project Manager is nominated by the Beneficiary.
Every partner is represented by Local project manager.
The Steering committee was represented by the same person from partner organisations.

Pranas Mierauskas has been appointed as PD and chairman of SC on 08.07.2005 by the LFN board.

The IPM, Lars Christian Adrados was nominated 29.08.2005 by PD Pranas Mierauskas,

Heidrun Beckmann from Agena and Martina Meeske from AGUG (also representing LFV) was nominated to the SC by 06.06.2006,

Arunas Pranaitis from ZBR (also representing VRP and MRP) was nominated to the SC by 29.11.206,

Mariusz Rybacki from KP was preliminary nominated to the SC by 14.06.2006,

Iwona Mirowska-Ibron from PTOP (also representing BNP) was preliminary nominated to the SC by 31.01.2007.

The beneficiary, Lithuanian Fund for Nature, carries out bigger part of management in Lithuania. The Lithuanian partners ZBR, VRP, MRP carry out preparatory actions for management of project sites. PTOP, BNP, KP, Agena, and LFV carry out major part of the project management in their project areas. The partner AGUG carries out monitoring and management consultancy of the partners and beneficiary in Lithuania (LFN, ZBR, VRP, and MRP) and the partners in Poland (PTOP, BNP and KP).

The personnel working for the project was increased twice comparing to what was foreseen.

Such increase was needed to ensure proper management.

Project Team meetings:

Since the start of the project, the kick off meeting was held and two follow up meetings were held in Germany in spring and summer 2006. more than 30 administrative meeting were held by partner organisations mainly for the agreements, discussions on main issues, purchase of equipment etc. later such meetings were substituted by Skype meetings.

Deadlines for submitting the reports are either quarterly report is 30.04.2007, 31.07.2007, 31.10.2007, respectively 31.01.2008, half year or yearly. Partners can choose which period to report.

However following problems in the management of the project occurred:

- Beneficiary was not controlling the project processes, and lost its' control on the management.
- Lack of communication between project partners and Beneficiary. As a consequence not all information and corresponding documents were present in LFN office.
- Regular delays in reporting to Commissions' requests.
- The consultants' role was not clear.

Progress in 2008 from 01.07.2008

The organigram of the project was improved corresponding to remarks by EC as illustrated in 1 figure. Due to insufficient management the PD was changed by the board of beneficiary organisation by 27/11/2008. The new director Nerijus Zableckis, who since 01/04/2008 is an executive director of LFN, was nominated a new PD.
Further the roles were reviewed and stated:
–PD ensures proper management of the project with the help of external experts, reports to Commission, collects related financial and technical information and documents in office.
–IPM responsible for financial accountancy and crosschecking with technical progress, informs and advices PD,
-Amphibian expert Lars Briggs and turtle expert Martina Meeske are responsible for evaluation of technical information and secures prompt and correct achievement of results according to deadline, inform and advice PD.

Additionally information agent’s information agents for every country were selected:
-Heidrun Beckmann for Germany
-Lars Briggs for Poland
-Pranas Mierauskas for Lithuania

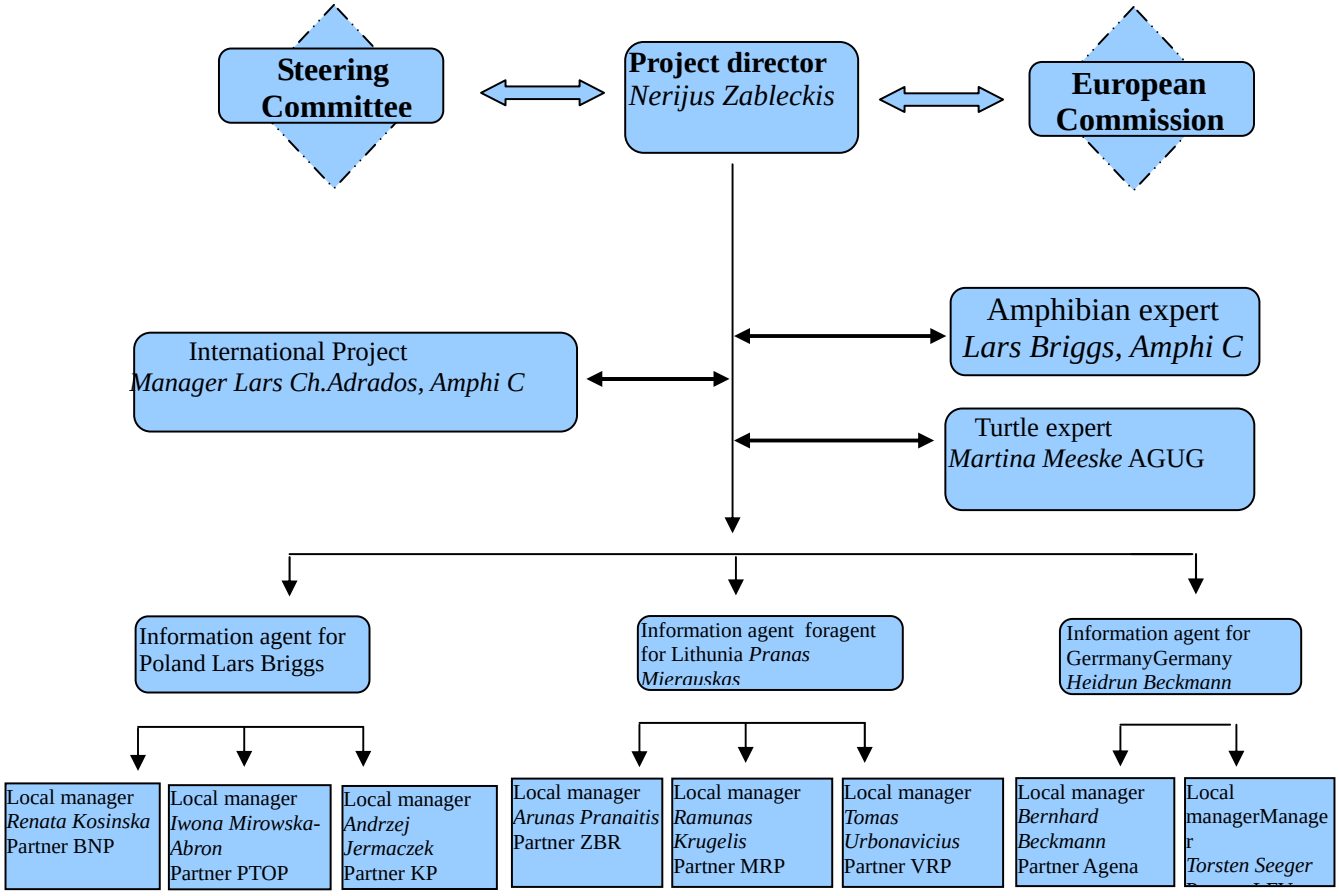
The role of agents is to collect information from local mangers and keep PD updated. Local managers are nominated representatives of every partner organisation, usually directors or chairman’s. Every first month Monday 11:00 CET Skype call will help to control agents and update information. It was agreed that partners with technical and relevant questions apply

directly to PD within copy to IPM (via emails) while financial questions must be applied to IPM within copy too PD.

In order to better perform and control deadlines and actions of the project the personnel was increased by LFN employing conservation specialist as assistant to Project director Mrs.Migle Simanaviciene (50% of full time). Consultant Lars Briggs employed assistant Mrs.Zuzana Rykowska.

These adjustments should empower better control of project processes and puts processes under double supervision.

Additional clause agreed to prepare for approval of new partners.



1. Figure: F2. Organigram of Project monitoring chain

Action F2: Monitoring of the effects of project actions

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

Updated database reflecting the conditions of turtles and amphibians populations.

Reports after each season must be sent to relevant authorities.

Deadline 15/10/2009

Progress until 30/06/2008

Monitoring table and evaluation (attached to 1st MtR as annex 15) was produced for collection of observation data. This table summarizes results gained through monitoring and investigations in actions A2, A3, A5, and A6. One table summarizes 1 project site or part of it.

The reports are sent to local ministries or regional (scientific) departments responsible for management in area.

General conclusions:

Colonization by turtles lasts about 3 years for new dug ponds.

Restored nesting sites after removal of vegetation or upper soil layer must be adopted in 2-3 years to be like natural. So far there is no data how successful this method was.

Cutting of trees – when nesting site becomes exposed to sun it makes more attractive for emys orbicularis. Not yet evidences collected, that they use it.

The conclusions are done for every site (annex No.13).

Lithuania

Several improved and dug ponds have been used by adult turtles in 3 sites: L05, L04, and L03.

Positive results are registered for bombina bombina and Triturus cristatus in several sites: L05, L04. In L02 Triturus cristatus was observed in several improved ponds for turtles and in L01 Bombina bombina is calling in 8 new created ponds.

After having investigated project site L02 Slavantai it was assumed that this site is not suitable neither for turtles nor for amphibians. The area is mostly forest land, and isolated from nearest surrounding suitable habitats. Therefore as substitution for site L02 another site L03

is proposed for enlargement as project area, also it is proposed as *Natura 2000.* These changes will be included into Additional clause.

Poland

Emys orbicularis did use one of the created hibernation sites inside the Fish pond system in Drawiny in West Poland, which were quite important for that population.

There have been positive results for bombina bombina and Triturus cristatus in several sites

In Eastern Poland a young turtle used one of the new ponds in Napiwodsko and adult turtles were observed in one of the new ponds in Piska site.

Germany

Several turtles have been seen in the ponds improved with increased water level and tree cutting. Also both bombina bombina and Triturus cristatus have been positively affected by the improved ponds. Several managed nesting site have been used for nesting.

Action F3: After-LIFE conservation plan

Expected results (quantitative information when possible):

After life conservation plan.

Deadline – 31.12.2009

Progress until 30.06.2008

The start date is set in Recovery plan to be in March 2009.

4.Evaluation and Conclusions

a The process

The project has been successful in action B and C, with land buying and aquatic and terrestrial habitat restoration. These B and C actions are considered to be the most important actions to secure favourable conservation status for the 3 target species in the Natura 2000 sites selected for the project. Action D2 on running according to plan in Germany and West Poland. Action D3 was a failure in planning as we were too inexperienced in managing larger areas of wetlands with relative rare and new machinery, however also this action has been done in way and amount so it will secure favourable conservation status for its target species bombina bombina. The A actions are in general behind, as they integrate much knowledge from many experts and partners. We should have planned deadline in April 2009 for several of these actions as A2,A3,A4,A5,A6, A7,A8.The delay in A actions will be mostly caught up by April 2009 according to the recovery plan and intense writing, meetings, email and Skype contacts during first quarter of 2009.

Another important lesson learned in relation to formulation of a project, is that the many actions may have been a little too high, as the partners and beneficiary implementing the actions rather think holistic on the species needs at each project site than on the strict project description of threats and corresponding actions. The consequence of this divergence in thinking has in practice resulted in some questions about where to place a certain performed activity. An example of this divergence is seen in the actual performance of action C3 where in timesheets they performed work is reported under action C1 or C2, because the action C3 did take place when majority of effort was made in one project site on action C1 or C2.

bThe project management

As the project was one of 2 first LIFE project in Lithuania and the first one for Lithuanian Fund for Nature, LFN did ask several companies for helping to prepare the LIFE turtle project. Only Amphi Consult responded positively as they also have experience in writing and being assistant manager for governments and NGOs in several LIFE projects. LFN started the project with having only a project director and a young national manager. Amphi Consult has worked and helped to build capacity in LFN for project management as well as LFN staff has learned from themselves and all partner, which has result in that LFN now has a real fully employed international project manager for the project and project assistant in addition to the national manager. The staffs in LFN have switch positions according to skills and time available for the project. The rather complicated international project has build capacity in LFN, so they can run more simple national LIFE project in future, as it is expected that LIFE project in future will be more national based .

c Success and failures

The b actions and c actions has been a great success. The international experience exchange has been absolutely vital to take right decisions on how to do habitat and population management to benefit the species in sites by each partner. It's normal that it takes a country or partner up to 20 years to learn all aspect of successfully implementing active protection of just one difficult species. We are dealing with 2 difficult species (emys orbicularis and Bombina bombina) and one relatively easy species (Triturus cristatus). The project concept with its international experience exchange provides each partner (situated in relatively poor European regions) to take a frog leap in herpetological conservation. The long term international project is needed for this experience exchange in order that all local and international experts gain trust in each other and start freely to exchange data, techniques and information, without risking that one partner take too much advantage of common knowledge for promotion and publications etc.

Success and failures of the methodologies applied in the recurring as non-recurring management will be clearer with the final monitoring in 2009. It must be underlined, that the applied methodologies are known as being successful in other projects for amphibians. However, the documentation of success and failures in a specific project takes years especially for turtles, but we do already have positive effects and expect more positive effects for turtles in 2009.

dComparison against the project-objectives

In relation to the project objectives concerning ensuring the favourable conservation status of Emys orbicularis, and Bombina bombina as Triturus cristatus where they occur together with E. orbicularis, it is still all too early to evaluate the project. The objective can the earliest be accessed when terminating the project and most probably some years after the project’s termination.

In relation to improve the concerned habitats capacity of hosting the targeted species, the performed actions is to our best knowledge believed to fulfil the objective.

In relation to exchange experience with regard to habitat and population management, the performed kick-off-seminars and workshop are important steps to fulfilling the objective.

In relation to education of local inhabitants, the performed actions are important steps to fulfil the objective.

eEnvironmental benefits, polity and legislation implications

The project sites Piska and Napiwodsko-Ramucka will be appointed Natura 2000 sites in

2009 before the project ends. In Lithuania 3 project sites (L-3, L05, L06) were proposed for enlargement and establishment of new site (L07) as important areas fro European pond turtles. The planned announcement date in early 2009.

fInnovation, demonstration value

In Poland and Lithuania, the use of the LIFE-nature scheme is known as being very difficult. The project demonstrates that LIFE-nature projects are an option in Polish and Lithuanian nature conservation. All 3 countries the local or national NGO are the driving organizations in implementing the project as well as taking the habitat directive and management of Natura 2000 species serious. The NGOs are actively implementing the management of Natura 2000 sites and facilitating that the public institutions start to take Natura 2000 serious. An example is that the Polish State forest district wants to become a partner of the project, something that was not possible or likely in 2004, when the project was designed. .

For the first time herpetologist form North European lowland from both western countries and post communist countries work so closely together over so long time to protect herpetological values.

For first time pond restorations on a large scale has been done in Lithuania and West Poland.

For first time in Europe large scale land purchase has been dome for European Pond turtle (Germany)

For the first time the most modern pond turtle conservation techniques are being used in Poland.

For the first time hardy grazers systems with Galloway cattle are introduce in the Lithuania countryside to find a socio economically good way to manage herpetological Natura 2000 sites.

g Socio-economic effects

The marginal areas concerned in this project provide little possible income for local people and large nature values, The local “farmers” in Lithuania in this project has a possibility to try to grow Galloway or Hereford to provides a additional source of income. The cattle “produced” during the project belongs to the farmers and hopefully counter balance the farmers expenditure on keeping the cattle in the long term and provides income on the long term. Hopefully the idea will spread so more area will be nature areas will be managed by the offspring of the cattle in future. Much education in schools with turtle days and other events should make the investment more sustainable in future generations. Hopefully herpetological values will be an interesting conversation aspect for visitors in the bed and breakfast places in the farms in southern Lithuania.

hThe future sustainability

The future sustainability of the project will be described in the “After-LIFE conservation plan”, and an appropriate description must await the final report.

iLong term indicators of the project success

The long term indicators of the project success are the same as the monitoring indicators used for monitoring the effect of the project actions. The target of the long term indicators is the objectives of the project.

5. Planned Project Progress

General project implementation is expected to be performed according to RPP with some corrections. The preparatory actions are in general behind, as they integrate much knowledge from many experts and partners. We should have planned deadline in April 2009 for several of these actions as A2,A3,A4,A5,A6, A7,A8.The delay in A actions will be mostly caught up by April 2009 according to the recovery plan.
Non-recuring actions are implemented according to the project plan and even eing in forward, like in action C1 pond digging.
Non-recuring action D3 is behind, but the objective will be reached via long term agreement.
Education activities are implemented as planned. Partners organised yearly seminars, workshops, the number of which is also sometimes issue of interpretation because of different names of events.

Additional clause will include foreseen changes and submitted once for approval.
Implemented milestones and key deliverables are listed in table No.1.

Delayed actions are foreseen to be implemented within Recovery plan (table No. 24).and better project management (action F2.). The recovery plan is also Amphi-Consult: Lars Briggs and Lars Christian Adrados work plan for the rest of the project.

Abbr:
NZ – Nerijus Zableckis
LB – Lars Briggs
LCA – Lars Christian Adrados
MM – Martina Meeske

24. Table: Recovery plan

Milestone	Action	Deadline in RPP	Completed deadline	NEW DEADLINE	Recovery action	responsible	Controll
Monitoring methods elaborated	A1	01/04/2006	01/06/2006	Completed	The methods will be exchanged with other LIFE projects in other countries	LB.	Nz
Ponds evaluated	a2	01/09/2007	31/12/2008	The collection of pond data completed, but evaluation report is in progress. New deadlines : 28/02/2009 – first report 31/10/2009 – completed report		LB., MM.	NZ
Criteria for favourable conservation status elaborated	A3	30/03/2008	Not done	15/01/2009 – draft proposal 31/03/2009 – final evaluation		LB., MM.	NZ, LCA
National action plans for Lithuania, Germany and Poland	A4	01/04/2009	Not yet	31/01/2009 – clearify what is action plan 31/04/2009 – draft versions 31/10/2009 – approval by comp authorities	LT- 1 plan under negotiation. The definition in other countries must be clearifiefd and the context defined. Species related document.	LB. MM.,	NZ
Characteristics/structure of hibernation sites evaluated	A5	31/12/2007	Not yet	28/02/2009 – draft version 31/03/2009 - final document on hibernation.		LB., MM.	NZ

Milestone	Action	Deadline in RPP	Completed deadline	NEW DEADLINE	Recovery action	responsible	Controll
Characteristics/structure of nesting sites evaluated	A6	31/09/2008	Not yet	28/02/2009 – draft version 31/03/2009 - final document on hibernation.		LB., MM.	NZ
Management Plans	A7	31/03/2008	Not yet	31/03/2009- prepare the text 31/10/2009 – approve by comp authorities	LT- 2 plans completed PL and De under preparation	Every partner	Lars Briggs, NZ
Final genetic investigation report	A8	31/02/2008	Not yet	28/02/2009 – samples must be sent to germany 30/06/2009 – final report	64 samples	Amphi consult	NZ
Buffer zones established in germany and poland	B1	31/12/2006	Not yet	30/10/2009	6 ha remain not purchased, negotiations will be carried out	Agena. LCA ,KP, LB	NZ
100% Pond renovated	C1	15/12/2009	Not yet	15/12/2009	Rest of ponds will be installed after second payment of Eu	Partner organisations in LT, DE	NZ
100 % of nesting sites created	C2	01/12/2009	Not yet	01/12/2009	Rest of sites will be installed after second payment of Eu, in LT, PL	Lars LB., MM.	NZ
100% of hibernation sites created	C3	15/12/2009	Not yet	15/12/2009	Rest of ponds will be installed after second payment of Eu	Lars LB., MM.	NZ
Hardy grazing installment	C4	30/09/2007	15/11/2006	Action terminated	-		
100% of unwanted vegetation removed	C5	31/12/2009	Not yet	31/12/2009	Rest of removal will be done in Lt, Pl after second payment of Eu	LB, MM	NZ
Management agreements	D1	31/12/2008	Not yet	30/03/2009	All necessary permissions will be made		Every partner
Rearing of turtles	D2	30/09/2009	31/12/2008	Action terminated	--		

Milestone	Action	Deadline in RPP	Completed deadline	NEW DEADLINE	Recovery action	responsible	Controll
Management of foraging habitats	D3	30/06/2009	Not yet	30/12/2019	The agreement willbe made with Zbr to continue management or 10 year period	NZ, LB	NZ
International workshop with seminar carried out	E1	30/06/2009	Not yet	15/04/2009	The workshop will be held by agena	Agena	
FINAL CONFERENCE	E1	01/09/2009	Not yet	OCTOBER 2009	The preparation will start by 31.01.2009	LB, LCA, NZ	NZ
Turtle days, seminar,s grazing exhibitions	E2	30/09/2009	Not yet	30/09/2009	Every year deadlines, but they are met, more detailed in description will be given		
Nature trail built	E3	30/09/2009	Not yet		The trail will be made b partner ZBR	ZBR	NZ
Information boards	E3	30/09/2009	Not yet	31/05/2009	In Lt 3 will be installed. Notice boards layouts will be by 31/01/2009 sent for all partners to put them immediately in sites the information boards will be erected by 31/05/2009	NZ all partners	NZ NZ
Folder on project species printed	E4	30/03/2006	30/05/2006	Action terminated			
Poster on project species printed	E4	31/10/2006	31/01/2007	Action terminated			
Folder on pond restoration	E4	31/10/2007	Not yet	30/04/2009	After second payment the publishing will be initiated	Agena, KP,	NZ
Postcards published in germany	E4	31/11/2007	Not yet	30/04/2009	Agena will do after second payment	Agena	NZ
Best practice / protection	E5	15/11/2009	Not yet	15/11/2009		MM, LB,	LCA,

Milestone	Action	Deadline in RPP	Completed deadline	NEW DEADLINE	Recovery action	responsible	Controll
guideline						NS	NZ
Project Web Page created	E6	31/12/2005	30/11/2006	Action terminated			
Layman's report	E7	31/12/2009		31/12/2009	Discussion initiated, next meeting will be further dicussion and preparation for the report	LCA	NZ
Partnership agreements	F1			28/02/2009	Meeting with PTOP presenting a new contract for 2009 to have them fully involved	LCA, NZ	NZ
Audit for external	F1			28/02/2009	Hire independent external auditor to audit the role of Amphi Consult. Deadline: February	NZ	NZ
Additional clause	F1			30/03/2009	Meeting round with all partners to prepare updates of activities to budget or budget to activities for remaining project period, and correspondingly to analyze the need for request for additional clause. Deadline: February. Preparation of additional clause. Deadline March	LCA, NZ	NZ

6.Comments on financial report

The overall consumption during project implementation so far is shown in table 25 and 26. This however reflects big differences among the different partners implementation status of the project comparing to planned budget until 30.06.2008 and total budget (illustrations 1 andd 2).

25. *Table: Project costs incurred until 30/06/2008 compared to total budget. The budget of future partners included in total budget but their costs not included in total costs.*

	Cost category	Total budget according to RPP until **31.12.2009***	Total cost from the start date to **30.06.2008**	%**
1.	Personnel	**637.564 €**	**364.668 €**	**57,2%**
2.	Travel and subsistence	**233.013 €**	**61.938 €**	**26,6%**
3.	External assistance	**702.545 €**	**267.065 €**	**38,0%**
4.	Durables; total cost	**325.476 €**	**157.432 €**	**48,4%**
5.	Land purchase	**244.582 €**	**223.840 €**	**91,5%**
6.	Consumables	**9.000 €**	**7.492 €**	**83,2%**
7.	Other costs	**59.460 €**	**979 €**	**1,6%**
8.	Overheads	**134.544 €**	**57.358 €**	**42,6%**
	SUM TOTAL	**2.346.185 €**	**1. 140.773 €**	**48,6%**

**) or, if there has been an additional clause with budget modification, to the revised budget included in that additional clause*

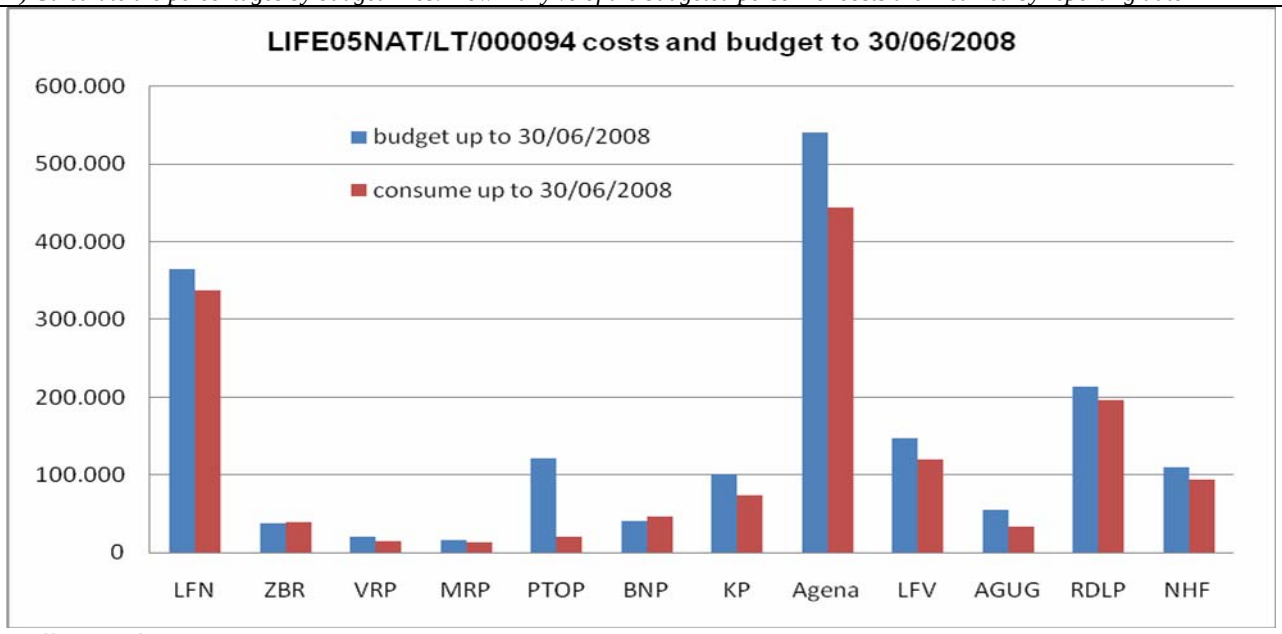
***) Calculate the percentages by budget lines: How many % of the budgeted personnel costs are incurred by reporting date*

26. Table: Project costs incurred until 30/06/2008 compared to internal breakdown of budget until 30/06/2008 (2008 divided by 2). The budget of future partners included in total budget but their costs not included in total costs.

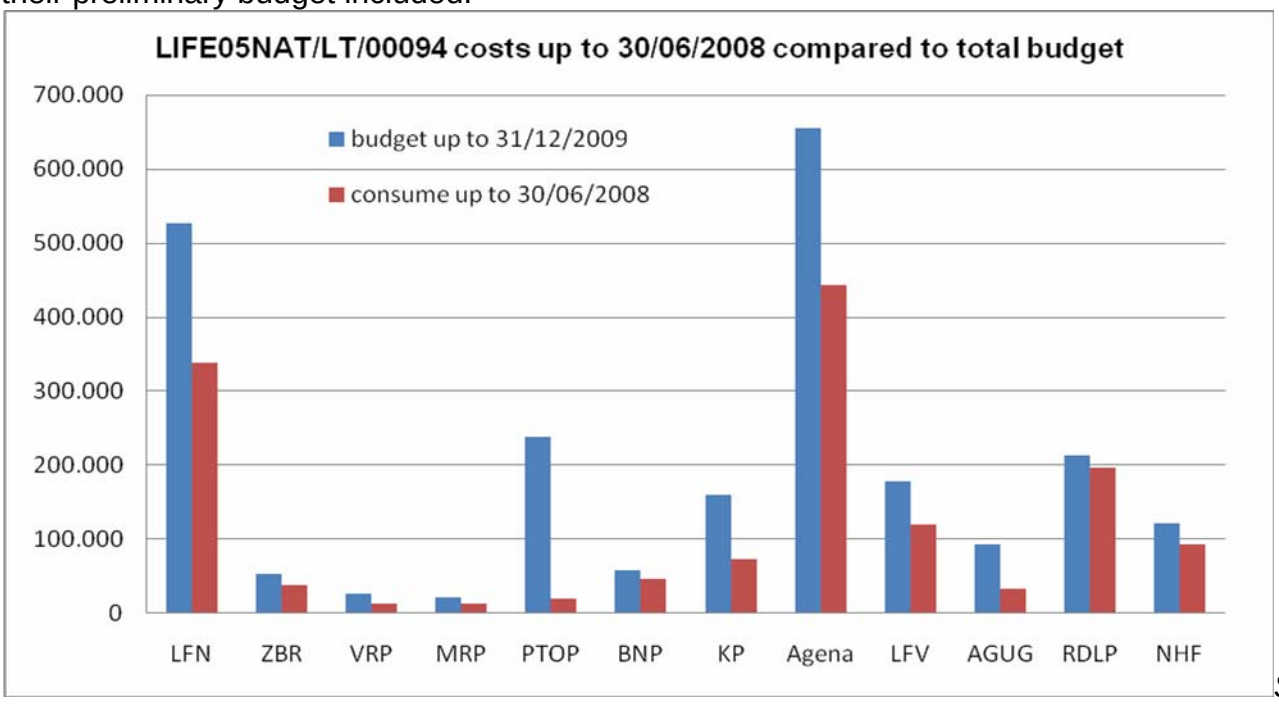
	Cost category	Total budget according to RPP until **30.06.2008***	Total cost from the start date to **30.06.2008**	%
1.	Personnel	**401.809 €**	**364.668 €**	**90,8%**
2.	Travel and subsistence	**139.517 €**	**61.938 €**	**44,4%**
3.	External assistance	**517.037 €**	**267.065 €**	**51,7%**
4.	Durables; total cost	**297.658 €**	**157.432 €**	**52,9%**
5.	Land purchase	**244.582 €**	**223.840 €**	**91,5%**
6.	Consumables	**6.300 €**	**7.492 €**	**118,9%**
7.	Other costs	**36.398 €**	**979 €**	**2,7%**
8.	Overheads	**90.877 €**	**57.358 €**	**63,1%**
	SUM TOTAL	**1.734.178 €**	**1. 140.773 €**	**65,8%**

**) or, if there has been an additional clause with budget modification, to the revised budget included in that additional clause*

***) Calculate the percentages by budget lines: How many % of the budgeted personnel costs are incurred by reporting date*



1 Illustration. Beneficiary and partner's costs incurred until 30/06/2008 compared to internal budget until 30/06/2008. The preliminary cost of possible new partners (RDLP and NHF) and their preliminary budget included.



Str

2 Illustration. Beneficiary and partner's costs incurred until 30/06/2008 compared to internal total budget. The preliminary cost of possible new partners (RDLP and NHF) and their preliminary budget included.

General considerations on the different expenses categories:

Personnel: In Lithuania, the partners ZBR, VRP and MRP did not until 31.12.2005 invoice personnel costs, and the partner PTOP did not invoice personnel costs until 31.12.2006 because of insufficient documenting on timesheets. The use of personnel allocated the project can therefore not be documented for these partners in 2005 respectively 2005 and 2006. Even though the work performed cannot be reported in the financial 2nd PR, the output of the work has been reported in chapter 6.

Travel and subsistence costs: In Lithuania, the partners ZBR, VRP and (with one exception) MRP and in Poland the partner PTOP has until 31.12.2006 not invoiced travel costs because of insufficient documentation on driving sheets. Consequently the use of travel used on the project cannot be documented until 31.12.2006. Further the project management travel has been reduced considerable compared to budget, because of the introduction of new time and travel reducing communication technologies (Skype). In spring 2009, we will apply the Commission to consider additional clause, which include some budget modifications.

External assistance: Is very low mainly because that this financial reporting do not include the costs incurred by possible future partners. The total consume for these partners on external assistance reaches app. EUR 200.000.

Durable goods: Is very low mainly because that this financial reporting do not include the costs incurred by possible future partners. The total consume for these partners on durable goods reaches app. EUR 95.000.

For all partners, the costs incurred until 30/06/2008 is a little less than budgeted. Main reason is the minor consume on travel, and secondly the circumstance that there have been little personnel allocated the conducting of A-actions.

Particular PTOP have incurred costs much lower than budgeted. Main reason is that because of higher abundance of *Emys orbicularis* than expected the very costly rearing programme has not been performed. When applying for additional clause, we will consider relocation of some of the budget.

Comments on financial issues from Commission's letters of 11/02/2008 and 27/11/2008:

<u>In general we are asked to consider the comments of the Commission's report of 27/11/2008 as well as the recommendation of the Commission's of 11/02/2008 for the preparation of our final financial report. To inform about the process, however we will like to comment on the issues raised already by this report:</u>

<u>General:</u>

–The financial report excludes costs of future partners, because we are preparing request of project modification including two new partners: Nature Heritage Fund from Lithuania and RDLP Olsztyn from Poland. (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 1 and 11/02/2008 point 2). Because RDLP Olsztyn will be requested considered as partner point 10 and 11 in the Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 do not need to be addressed concerning RDLP Olsztyn. (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 3).

–We are aware about that our external auditor in their report shall certify that all service contracts and purchase of durable goods were awarded fully complying with the provisions of article 6.4 of the Common Provisions. (Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 1). In particular we are aware about the selection procedure for Amphi Consult. As the certification that the contracts of Amphi Consult comply with the article is crucial for the financial situation of beneficiary, we will prior to the submitting of request for project modification order an audit report from our independent auditor on this specific issue. Depending on the conclusion from the audit report, Amphi Consult will stay as external consultancy or be requested included as partner. (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 2). If the conclusion is that Amphi Consult stays as external consultancy, we will in detail explain the tender procedure employed in the final financial report. (Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 10). If we will request Amphi Consult included as partner, Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 10 do not need to be addressed (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 3).

–Based on Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 2, we take note that issues point 8 and 15 of the Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 do not need to be addressed in the final financial report. As the logic is the same on the Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 12, we hope this issue do also not need to be addressed in the final financial report.

–We take notice of the Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 4 concerning not ear-marked financing received from other sources than the ones listed in the budget of the project.

VAT:

–We take notice on the Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 3 concerning ineligible VAT concerning the partners ZBR and KP until VAT declarations is provided.

Personnel:

–We are thankful for the confidentiality opportunity to submit supporting documentation on personnel costs directly to the financial desk officer in charge.

(Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 5), and will submit the supporting documents concerning the personnel costs reported for Renata Krzysciak-Kosinska (BNP) parallel to this report.

–The supporting documents on personnel costs reported for Bernhard Beckmann (Agena) consist of two parts. First part is the salary without social charge on 8.982,37 EUR and the second part is the document on social charge on 2.003,61 EUR, in total 10.985,98 EUR as reported. The supporting documents are attached as annex 14 (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 6).

–Payslips of Pranas Mierauskas for 2005 was submitted as annex J in our reply to Commission's letter of 13/09/2007. Explanation on how the annual gross salary, the obligatory charge, and time sheets for 2005 and 2006 are provided as annex 15 (Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 4 and 5).

–In Lithuania an individual can have several contracts of employment, one called "working agreement" and one or several called "individual agreements". For the working agreement, the person is not appointed to special tasks, but for the individual agreement the person is appointed directly to work for a special task as a LIFE project. In 2006 Pranas Mierauskas performed specific work on "individual agreement" exclusively as project director of the LIFE project, i.e. working overall with the whole project. The full amount of this contract has been reported as direct project costs. Pranas Mierauskas also performed work in Lithuanian Fund for Nature implementing the project on "working agreement" as executive director for Lithuanian Fund for Nature. Under this agreement, the proportion of the work conducted for the LIFE project is reported as project costs. (Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 6 and 7). The different employment agreement of Pranas Mierauskas is submitted (annex 16). Since Nerijus Zableckis took position as executive director on 1st of April 2008, the board of LFN terminated working agreement with Pranas Mierauskas and by 31.03.2008 signed it with Nerijus Zableckis. To keep an overview of the annual personnel costs on the different types of employment agreements a month by month overview of the contracts for Pranas Mierauskas and Nerijus Zableckis is attached (annex 16). (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 7).

–<u>Travel:</u>

–We take notice that an amount representing the value of an economy class ticket from November 2007 will be considered eligible if duly justified, (Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 9), the justification however will be submitted with the final financial report.

–We are ashamed that we have reported reimbursement of use of own car for transaction 80/2006 for the partner Agena on wrongly 0, 45 EUR/km. In accordance

to the documentation provided in the reply to the Commission's letter of 13/09/2007 the rate should be only 0, 30 EUR/km (BRKG 2005 § 5, point 2 "erhebliches dienstliches Interesse") but not as indicated by Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 8 only 0, 20 EUR/km (BRKG 2005 § 5, point 1 "eine Sachschadenshaftung des Dienstherrn nicht gegeben ist"). In the current financial report the costs relating to this reimbursement has been corrected. Because the text in annex N (from www.juris.de) in the reply to the Commission's letter of 13/09/2007 is possible not clear enough, attached as annex 17 is the same refunding rules however from www.landesrecht.brandenburg.de

- Supporting documents for the invoice 45/2006 was only provided for one (H. Beckmann) out of two persons (Beckman and Schneeweiss), and therefore the invoice is concluded ineligible (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 9). Attached as annex 18 is the missing supporting document. We therefore ask for the exception that you take the time to reconsider your conclusion.

Equipment:

- The cost of transaction 13250 is for the moment paid by the co-financier Nature Heritage Fund and therefore concluded ineligible (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 10). As presented under point 1, we are preparing request for project modification including two new partners, of which the one is Nature Heritage Fund. We therefore ask for that the bill given that our request is accepted can be included in the financial reporting for the new partner. We are aware that sufficient technical justification for the equipment (Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 13) must be provided at the latest with the final financial report.

- The data-loggers purchased by partner Agena for all project participants are in the current financial report, reported with the full purchase cost under partner Agena (Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 14 and letter of 27/11/2008 point 11).

- The equipment covered by invoices 06/107and 06/105 are the IT equipment in MtR requested re-classified from overhead (Commission's letter of 11/02/2008 point 16). However in our reply to the Commission's letter of 13/09/2007 we informed you that because only the value of depreciation could be considered eligible, the partner does not wish to reclassify these items. The invoices are therefore now put back under overhead and the subject does not need to be further addressed.

- We take note that supplier should for future be listed as the shop where the employee bought the products and the receipt from the shop should be kept as accounting document (Commission's letter of 11/02/20087 point 17).

Land purchase:

- Proof of payment of the land purchase reported for 539/2006 where the amount paid, 121.500 EUR is attached as annex No.19 (Commission's letter of 27/11/2008 point 12).

Notes:
* To prevent collection of Emys orbicularis for illegal trade, the maps are not available on the homepage.

ANNEXES

1. Project site maps of overall project progress up to 31.12.2008 *
2.Pictures of Actions C2, D2, E3
3.A3. Favourable conservation status for poject target species: bombina bombina, emys orbicularis, triturus cristatus in the North European lowlands
4.A4. Letters of communication with MoE, national conservation plan of European pond turtles
5.A7. Management scheme for ZBR L01
6.A7. management plan for Straciunai L06
7.A7. Maps of new proposed Natura 2000 borders
8.B1. Preliminary agreement with owner
9.C1. Independent ingeneur opinion about dams
10. D3. Independent cost evaluation for reed cutting machinery in ZBR L01
11. E1. List of participants of workshop
12. E4. Book about species, Cd, pond restoration folder, 2nd polish folder about species.
13. F2. Population status evaluation for all 3 target species in project sites
14. Supporting documents for personnel costs of Agena
15. Supporting documents for personnel costs of LFN
16. Personnel, allocated to LFN
17. Supporting documents for travel reimbursement in Germany
18. Supporting documents for missing travel documentation
19. Proof of payment of land purchase 539/2006
20. Land purchase documents for LFV and Agena