



**LIFE09NAT/LT/00581**

**Mid-term Report**

**Covering the project activities from 01-10-2010 to 30-09-2012**

Reporting Date

**01/11/2012**

**ECONAT**

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

Data Project

<b>Project location</b>	Lithuania: Alytus, Lazdijai, Varena districts
<b>Project start date:</b>	01-10-2010
<b>Project end date:</b>	30-09-2014
<b>Total budget</b>	€ 766 260
<b>EC contribution:</b>	€ 381 150
<b>(%) of eligible costs</b>	49.79

Data Beneficiary

<b>Name Beneficiary</b>	Lithuanian Fund for Nature
<b>Contact person</b>	Ms Dalia Bastyte
<b>Postal address</b>	Algirdo g. 22-3, LT-03218 Vilnius
<b>Telephone</b>	+370 5 2310700
<b>Fax:</b>	+370 5 2310441
<b>E-mail</b>	Dalia.b@glis.lt
<b>Project Website</b>	<a href="http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas">www.glis.lt/ekotinklas</a>

1. <i>Table of contents</i>	
2. List of key-words and abbreviations .....	4
3. Executive summary .....	5
3.1. General progress.....	5
3.2. Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable.	5
3.3. Problems encountered .....	7
4. Administrative part.....	7
5. Technical part.....	9
5.1. Actions .....	9
5.1.1 ACTION A1. Development of action plans.....	9
5.1.2. ACTION A2. Rearing methods for <i>Emys orbicularis</i> .....	10
5.1.3. ACTION A3. Determining the favourable conservation status for Annex IV amphibian and reptile species in South Lithuania.....	11
5.1.4. ACTION A.4: Ecological network-development.....	11
5.1.5. ACTION A.5: Establishing new Natura 2000 sites .....	13
5.1.6. ACTION A.6: Preparation for permissions.....	14
5.1.7. ACTION A.7: Farm development.....	14
5.2.1. ACTION C.1: Habitat management for target species in the project area.....	16
5.2.2. ACTION C.2: Renovation of ponds, mitigation of predation on target species .....	19
5.2.3. ACTION C.3: Restoration of wetlands .....	20
5.2.4. ACTION C.4: Habitat and population management in sandpits.....	21
5.2.5. ACTION C.5: Population management of <i>Emys orbicularis</i> and <i>Hyla arborea</i> .....	23
5.3.1. ACTION D.1: Experience exchange workshops .....	26
5.3.2. ACTION D.2.a: Dissemination and cooperation with local players.....	27
5.3.3. ACTION D.2.b: Installation of nature educational trail.....	29
5.3.4. ACTION D.2.c: Guided tours in Meteliai Regional Park .....	30
5.3.5. ACTION D.2.d: Guided tours in Veisiejai Regional Park .....	30
5.3.6. ACTION D.2.e: Installation of notice boards .....	31
5.3.7. ACTION D.3: Study tours .....	31
5.3.8. ACTION D.4: Printed educational material, touring exhibition.....	33
5.3.9. ACTION D.5: Best practice guidelines.....	37
5.3.10. ACTION D.6: Web page.....	37
5.3.11. ACTION D.7: Final project seminar.....	38
5.3.12. ACTION D.8: Layman's report .....	38
5.4.1. ACTION E.1: Project management and accountancy.....	39
5.4.2. ACTION E2: Monitoring of the effect of project .....	40
5.4.3 ACTION E.3: After Life Strategy .....	40
5.4.4. ACTION E4: Networking with other projects .....	41
5.2. Envisaged progress until next report .....	41
5.3. Impact:.....	46
5.4. Outside LIFE .....	46
Financial part.....	47
Financial review by actions.....	47
Comments on Action costs.....	48
General considerations on categories .....	49
Comments per budget categories: .....	49
Personnel. ....	49
Travel. ....	50

External. ....	51
Infrastructure. ....	52
Equipment. ....	52
Consumables. ....	53
Other costs. ....	53
Overhead. ....	53
Financial Issues raised by the Commission.....	53
Co-financing.....	55
Clarifications concerning VAT .....	56
AUDITOR DATA.....	56
List of Annexes .....	57

## 2. List of key-words and abbreviations

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

### 3. Executive summary

#### 3.1. General progress

The project has achieved a remarkable progress in the period from the beginning to the Midterm Report. Majority of A and D actions have significantly progressed, having finished major action A1 development of action plan including all the related field works, having finished other preparatory actions, e.g. A2 turtle rearing methods created, and foreseen number of permissions (A6) already reached, started with the creation of ecological network concept A4, and 1 farm installed A7; remarkable number of ponds under action C1 action created and ponds under action C2 restored, egg laying sites protected against predators and eggs in most unfavourable places collected and successfully reared ex-situ C5; major awareness raising and educational activities D1, D2, D4, D6 and networking with other projects E4 implemented and results achieved; project management having in place E1 and monitoring of projects effects implemented E2.

The thorough investigations of the project area and the target species were carried out. Based on the inventories the area action plans developed (Action A1) and areas for new Natura 2000 areas (Action A5) chosen. Also the criteria for the favourable conservation status started to be developed. Scenario for the ecological network prepared, the amendments to the nature frame legislation suggested to the MoE. One new Natura2000 area is being designated. One extensive grazing farm A7 established in the areas important for the target species.

C1 action in progress: 27 water habitats and 6 egg laying sites created. 17 habitats restored. The places for the other habitat restoration actions chosen. E.o. eggs protected in situ (57 nests protected against predators) and ex situ (12 clutches have hatched in the LZS). E.o. and H.a. successfully reared. Currently 37 turtles are 1 year old and 67 turtles are 2 months old in LZS. 283 young H.a. released in summer 2011 and 1644 in summer 2012. The turtles from Vilkiutinis population are radiotracked.

Kick-off and two experience exchange workshops organised, 3<sup>rd</sup> experience exchange workshop started to organise. 30 meetings with the land owners organised. 10 reportages broadcasted in different television channels, 4 reportages in radio, and at least 68 in the main web portals and newspapers. 1 guided tour in MRP and 3 guided tours in VRP organised. 3 study tours (to Germany, Latvia – Estonia and Denmark) organised. Project folders, posters, t-shirts, educational material for schools prepared, camera in LZS functions, touring exhibition is updated and will be opened on the 30<sup>th</sup> October in Lazdijai. The film is being shoot, yearly turtle days organised, web page constantly updated.

Project management is smooth. Monitoring of the project actions has already started, the target species have colonised some of the newly created habitats. The data base is created. Networking events are being carried out, especially with LIFE Herpeto-Latvia, DRAGONLIFE and LIFE AQUILA.

#### 3.2. Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable.

Overall aim of the project is to create an ecological network in Southern Lithuania by ensuring favourable conservation status for and the saving of threatened populations of

selected Annex II and Annex IV species and simultaneously enhancing the ecological value of the target area. We are on the right direction towards this aim which must be achieved by the end of the project.

Project objectives are:

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

Pond creation and restoration is already implemented by 32 % by restoring habitats and creating new habitats: digging ponds, clearing bushes, creating shallow slopes. Sustainable land use practice is implemented in the demonstration farm.

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

The criteria are set and already some C actions implemented for creating the network.

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

So far we have detected new European pond turtle populations within defined project areas and developed A1 action plan how to help populations survive in newly discovered areas and connect them with each other. E.o. population conservation was carried out by protection of egg clutches in situ and rearing of eggs ex situ. Also new populations of H.a. were discovered and H.a. rearing in situ was carried on.

**To raise awareness of the local population**

There is much done on education of the general public. The press releases broadcasted, which were widely accepted by the wide range of mass media, starting from the main Lithuanian television channels to the local newspapers of Lazdijai district. The numbers of schoolchildren reached by the lessons is much higher than foreseen in the application. 4 guided tours were organized in the project area. Constant meetings with the landowners are being held. The webpage is constantly updated. The web camera is acting on the LZS webpage which can be accessed by anybody. Posters and other dissemination material produced and distributed during different events. Also extra events have been organised outside LIFE which also spread message about LIFE and project.

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

Project team communicates with other LIFE projects and their experts. Several visits were made, also not only life but other projects are involved. Study tours and workshops were organised.

**Work plan:**

Work plan remains as it is defined in application. However some actions due to different deadlines indicated in milestones and deliverables had to be adjusted by defining one deadline, but it does not have major implications on the overall project implementation and time plan.

### 3.3. Problems encountered

There was a delay in the action A1 which required much more field work and collection of data. However this preparatory action did not hinder implementation of other actions since we started C action in the places which were best known.

Scenario for ecological network (action A4) is closely bound to the action plans for the project areas (action A1). Answering to the letter from the Commission received on the 11th of October – the first scenario for the ecological network was prepared in 2011 November, however, it was not a final document, the amphibian data was not there yet and the numbers of the corridors were different than the ones in the application. It is attached as Annex 4. The final scenario is based on the criteria for the ecological network for the target species and our action plans, attached as Annex 5. The delay of this action does not hinder implementation of the other actions.

Aiming to establish a successful model farm for the other farmers to follow resulted in a change in action A.7. Currently it is still under discussion with the Desk Officer of Life + Nature Programme (please refer to Action A.7).

It is rather difficult to carry restoration of wetlands (Action C.3) out in the Lithuanian countryside because of two reasons: melioration ditches are a property of the state and it is strictly forbidden to ruin them; there are some smaller melioration ditches, which do not belong into the general system, but then the landowners do not understand this activity and how it enriches their land. Therefore this action starts later than it was foreseen.

Further problem we see is sand pit management C4. We promised to restore 1 big sand pit as a demonstration example, but the sand pits, which are inside the corridors, still have some resources, and even though they are not used according to the legislation it is not allowed to start restoration activities. A big sand pit, which restoration would be possible from the spring 2013 is 20 km away from the project areas. There are several small sand pits, which are possible to restore according to the needs of the target species.

## 4. Administrative part

- Describe what the project manager and other representatives of the coordinating beneficiary have done to organise/co-ordinate the project: meetings, seminars etc. What the associated beneficiaries have done.

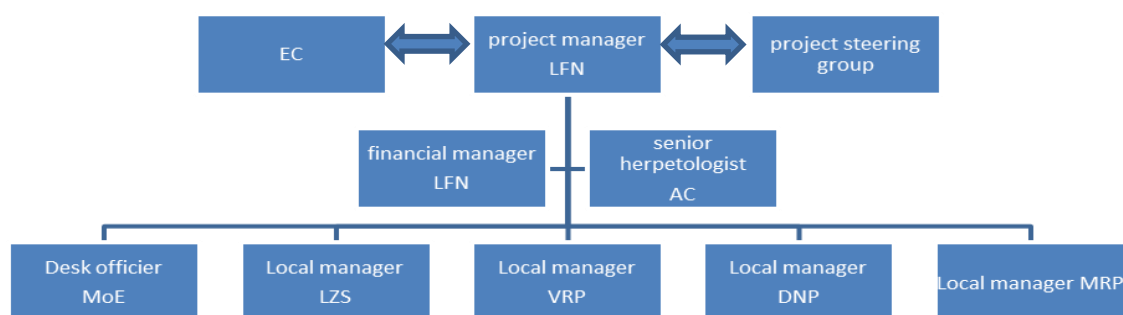
Constant contact (by phone and email at least once per week) is kept between the partners. Periodical meetings of AB with CB are held at least once per two months. The progress of the project actions is being discussed, further actions planned, the methods how to carry out the actions better discussed. Especially such meetings are important when the season changes and a new group of actions start, for example, before the field season the methods for the field inventories, population conservation, and people interviews are discussed. After the field season the results of the previous season are discussed and habitat restorations, workshops, etc are planned.

A meeting of the Steering Committee is organised once per year. So far we did 2 meetings, the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting was reported in the Inception Report, the second one was held in September 2012, the minutes are attached as Annex 30.

- Describe any changes in the project's management structure; partner withdrawn, replaced, etc. Please note that the Commission also must be informed of major modifications in separate notes (cf. CP Art 13).

Generally project management structure does not change except internal management structure. The project's director has been assigned as financial manager, while project manager became the main responsible person. More detailed described under Financial comments.

- A clear informative organigramme of the project team and the project management structure.
- The organigramme has been adopted to changed management structure.



- Mention what reports have been delivered since the start of the project.

The Inception Report was delivered on 12-06-2011.

- Indicate if any extension of the project duration is needed or envisioned (also to be included in the executive summary). Please note that a separate request for prolongation or modification with an extensive justification is required.

The prolongation of the project duration is not envisioned.



## 5. Technical part

### 5.1. Actions

#### **Actions A: Preparatory actions**

##### 5.1.1 ACTION A1. Development of action plans

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

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

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Action plans for the target species developed	01/12/2013	To be started
Produced action plan	01/02/2012	Completed by 30/10/2012

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

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* The action plan is based very much on the inventory of the target species, which can happen only in the warm season (April – September). Therefore, having in mind that the project has started 01-10-2010, the deadline 01/03/2011 for the action plan was not realistic.

As we explained during the last mission of the project monitoring, which was on 2012 May 14, a lot of attention was devoted for the turtles in the field season 2011. We inventoried amphibian habitats more in the year 2012. Currently the action plans are prepared for the all corridors, i.e. LT01 – LT07.

Action plans for the species (prepared action plan for H.a. and updated action plan for E.o.) should not be hastened, because the more knowledge the project team gathers about the species, the better action plan can be prepared. Currently, after the habitat restoration actions H.a. distribution is changing – it has spread more into the north than it was ever observed. Also, according to the people interviews (we have announced it on the mass media (Action D2a)) small E.o. populations are being discovered outside ecological corridors. However, we agree that it should be prepared

earlier, than it was written in the deliverables table. The new date for preparation of Action plans for E.o. and H.a., which is realistic, is 01/12/2013.

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

The action plans for the corridors are attached in Annex 1. The action plans are prepared for each project site, i.e. LT01 – LT07. These plans were prepared according to the species distribution and the landscape. The permissions for each concrete action from the landowners and/or municipality will be achieved (if possible) before starting each concrete habitat restoration action. The action plans were prepared later than foreseen, because the project team needed one more spring-summer season to inventory amphibians. This delay will have no effect on the implementation of the project, because habitat restoration activities were started on time in the places, which where the species distribution was well known.

*Further plans:* The action plans will be updated, according to the progress and continuously growing knowledge and expertise of the stakeholders. National action plan for the target species *Hyla arborea* will be developed and submitted to MoE and update of national plan of *Emys orbicularis* will be prepared and submitted to MoE by 01/12/2013.

#### 5.1.2. ACTION A2. Rearing methods for *Emys orbicularis*

<i>Milestone/deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Elaboration of rearing methods	01/03/2013	In progress

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

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* The rearing methods will be improved until their deadline according to the revised project application, i.e. 01/03/2013. The current version of the methods is attached as Annex 2.

*Results of the action:* The rearing methods are prepared, even though the young turtles hatch and grow really well, LZS still will improve the methods until 01/03/2013. The current version is attached as Annex 2. The method describes how to collect eggs, prepare incubators, hatch the eggs and keep the juveniles for 2-3 years in captivity before releasing to the wild.

The adult turtles, which are kept in LZS for a few decades, laid eggs in 2011. The hatchlings grow well. But since the origin of these turtles are not known (most probably they are brought from the countries from the more southern part of E.o. range and have different haplotype than native Lithuanian turtles) the mating of the adult turtles seems to be not useful for the project – such young turtles cannot be released into the wild populations because of their genetics. The current hatchlings might be used for creation of education centre in MRP and kept in the outdoor enclosure (please refer to the Action D2b).

1 study tour organised for experience exchange with E.o. rearing institutions in Germany, which is already described in the Inception Report. Constant contact by phone and email is kept with a LIFE+ Project LIFE-HerpetoLatvia LIFE09NAT/LV/000239. The staff from our project participated in the workshop – conference, organised by LIFE-HerpetoLatvia, which took place in Daugavpils, 2012 October 8-9. This period of time already belongs to the next report, so it will be described in detail in the next report.

*Further plans:* The rearing methods will be improved until 01/03/2013. We are considering combining the conference about the turtle rearing in LZS with the final seminar of the project. Since LZS has already acquired a lot of experience during the meetings with the German and Latvian E.o. rearing institutions, we would like to waive a plan to make a study tour to Poland.

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

<i>Milestone/deliverables</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Definition of favourable conservation status for Annex IV amphibian and reptile species	01/03/2013	In progress

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

*Results of the action:* The action is in progress, main criteria for the favourable conservation of the amphibian species are being defined, an example with B.c. is attached in Annex 3.

*Further plans:* Evaluation of data will be carried out in 2012 autumn and draft report prepared by 01/12/2012 and final elaboration of status will be made in beginning 2013 to finish it in due time.

#### 5.1.4. ACTION A.4: Ecological network-development

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Scenario and regulation of ecological network prepared	31/12/2012	Completed by 30/09/2012

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Scenario for ecological network development	01/02/2012	Completed by 30/10/2012

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

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* the first scenario for the ecological network was prepared in 2011 November, however, it was not a final document, the amphibian data was not there yet and the numbers of the corridors were different than the ones in the application. It is attached as Annex 4. The final scenario is based on the criteria for the ecological network for the target species and our action plans, attached as Annex 5.

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

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

*Results of the action:* The final scenario is based on the criteria for the ecological network for the target species and our action plans, attached as Annex 5. The amendments to the regulation of the Nature Frame are attached in Annex 6, together with the correspondence with MoE. The part which was suggested by the project experts is marked in blue. It outlines what are the core zones, corridors, renaturalisation and buffer zones of ecological networks and defines spatial parameters of ecological corridors for the species groups. These amendments are still being discussed in MoE. The management regulation for the target species is attached as Annex 7. The demonstration example is created according to the action plans.

*Further plans:* To adopt criteria of the ecological network for the planners, working in the Municipalities. A handbook, according to the plans of Action D4., will be prepared.

#### 5.1.5. ACTION A.5: Establishing new Natura 2000 sites

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
All new Natura 2000 sites proposed	01/06/2014	1 area proposed

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Local plans for new Natura 2000 sites developed	01/08/2014	Not started yet

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

*Results of the action:* A Natura2000 area was proposed for designation extending current “Bestraigiškių kaimo apylinkės“ area, because during the investigations carried out by the project staff was realised, that 90% of the all the population females of E.o lay eggs outside the protected area. The proposal to extend the area and substantiation for its need are included in Annex 8. After the public hearing the area was added as a separate area, because some land owners did not agree that their land would become Natura 2000. The document with the map is included in Annex 8. Currently The Agency for Nature Protection is waiting for a reply from the State Forestry to their request about the change of forest use. This area is in the project locality LT02.

According to the data of the inventories the following areas are planned to be proposed as Natura 2000:

<b>Project locality</b>	<b>Coordinates (WGS)</b>	<b>For which species</b>
LT05	54.126689, 24.035288	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>
LT04	54.089456, 24.009221	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>
LT06	54.101671, 23.592602	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>
LT03	54.218898, 23.93013	<i>Bombina bombina</i>
LT01	54.183971, 23.697669	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>
LT01	54.152681, 23.665808	<i>Bombina bombina</i>

*Further plans:* The places, which are planned to be proposed as amphibian Natura 2000, have to be monitored more because of natural amphibian populations dynamics resulting in the number fluctuations. In all the areas the landowners have to be convinced to agree with designation of Natura 2000. These areas will be proposed in 2013, management plans will be prepared after their proposal.

### 5.1.6. ACTION A.6: Preparation for permissions

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
50% of permissions achieved	01/03/2012	Completed by 01/03/2012
100% of permissions achieved	01/03/2014	In progress

*Expected results:* 40 permissions for management.

*Results of the action:* The permissions were achieved for the habitat management from the private landowners and from the state institutions in the cases when the land is owned by the state. We have achieved 22 permissions from the private owners to work on their land and permission to dig 13 ponds on the state land from the state institutions.

*Further plans:* Currently the meetings with the landowners are ongoing for the habitat restoration autumn 2012 / spring 2013. We have foreseen 24 places for the actions C1 and C2, 10 places for the action C3 and 6 places for the action C4, for which we need to get the permissions. The form of agreement and its translation into English is included in the Annex 9. If the land is state owned the agreement includes an official letter note, which explains the project actions, map of the locality and technical drawing of the planned action. The National Land agency and the Municipality issues permission for the work on the state owned land in the form of official notes. The documents from Paveisiejai locality are attached in Annex 9.

### 5.1.7. ACTION A.7: Farm development

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Ecological development of 2 farms carried out	31/12/2012 (originally it was 01/06/2014)	In progress

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

*Results of the action:* Establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> farm has started.

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* The farmer was chosen according to the criteria foreseen in the application: "Main selection criteria of potential farmers will be the presence of egg laying sites of *E. orbicularis*, slopes for *L. agilis* and breeding ponds, where Annex 2 and Annex 4 amphibians and dragonflies still exist. This will secure the continued reproduction in the isolated populations of the target species. Second priority will be given to the farmers who have overgrown egg laying sites, slopes and degraded environment around the ponds which can be restored by grazing."

Requirements during the choosing process were as follows:

1. lowest price;
2. registered as a farmer;
3. working farmland within a Natura 2000 area, designated for the target species of the project, i.e. *Emys orbicularis*, *Bombina bombina* or *Triturus cristatus*, not less than 5 ha, including ponds and slopes;
4. agrees to keep extensive meat cattle, i.e. either Galloway, or Aberdeen Angus, or Hereford, or Lithuanian traditional breeds inside Natura 2000 area where the habitats in the need for such kind of management are, i.e. overgrown ponds and sandy slopes.

**Table 1. Farmers, who were interviewed**

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

The farmer agrees to establish the infrastructure and to graze the area at least for the period of 10 years. The sum of money, provided for the farmer, is enough for 20 cattle, which is going to graze 1st enclosure. In the next two years the farmer is going to increase the number of cattle up to 50 and start to graze the 2nd and 3rd enclosures. We do not pay for this.

If the farmer breaks the agreement, he returns a proportional amount of the money, each year of implementation the amount is 10%, i.e. if the farmer breaks the agreement after 1st year, he returns 90% of the sum, if he breaks the agreement after the 2nd year, he returns 80% of the sum and so on. When the meadows are not ploughed for 5 years, they are already a semi-natural grassland, which is forbidden to plough in the area of

the Reserve, this way the longevity of the meadows is guaranteed. If the farmer breaks the agreement, LFN uses the money to establish another farm. After 5 years the farmer has to give back 11 cattle of equal sex to the Lithuanian Fund for Nature which is going to be used to establish the other farms for the habitat management of herpetological sites.

We would like to increase the overall budget for this action to establish an exemplary farm, which would be a good example for the other farmers to follow. As our experience from previous project shows, farms having 3 - 5 extensive breed meat cows have not received positive attitudes from their neighbours, because they are too small for a farmer to develop a successful branch in a farm. For this farm we kindly ask to accept the costs of 11 cattle.

The second farm is under negotiations with:

Petras Kurlavičius, who is an agricultural scientist, a professor in the Lithuanian Educological University and has some land in Dzūkija National Park, which is Natura 2000 area. He would like to create a small model farm, with two extensive cows grazing, not seeking to have a profit out of this farm;

Gediminas Jančiulis, who is an agricultural adviser and a farmer in the Project areas. The first *Hyla arborea* in Lithuania were discovered in his land, until now he has a large population of *H. arborea*. Moreover, in the pond dug this spring by the Project, *Bufo calamita* and *Pelobates fuscus* are noticed to have breeding success.

Another step towards establishment of farms was a visit to Estonian and Latvian demo farms to exchange experiences (please refer to Action D.3).

*Further plans:* To find the best way for development of the farms with the help of the Desk Officer of Life + Nature Programme.

### **Actions C: Concrete conservation actions**

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

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
50 % of ponds, hibernation sites and nesting sites established	01/03/2013	In progress
100 % of ponds, hibernation sites and nesting sites established	01/03/2014	In progress

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

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* In the project application it was foreseen to dig ponds in the following 4 areas:

- Juodabale LT01 - 76 ponds
- Bestraigiškė forest LT02 - 8 ponds
- Dainava forest LT05 - 9 ponds
- Petroškai Forest LT06 - 7 ponds

According to the species distribution and landscape spatial resistance the distribution of number of ponds in the corridors should be changed and implemented in 6 sites.



Number of ponds in LT02 remains the same. The changes were made according to the data acquired by species and habitats inventories (Action A.1):

- Juodabale LT01 – 35 ponds – the connections for E.o., B.b, T.c., B.v., B.c., P.f. should be created between Juodabalė and Petroškai and smaller populations.
- Bestraigiškė forest LT02 - 8 ponds – this E.o. population should be connected to the bigger Kučiuliškė population.
- Kučiuliškė LT03 - 10 ponds – small E.o. Krikštonys population should be connected to Kučiuliškė and further on to Margai and Stračiūnai. B.b. and T.c. should have abilities to spread south from Krikštonys.
- Stračiūnai LT04 - 10 ponds – there are three small E.o. populations and isolated populations of B.v. and P.f., which should be connected.
- Dainava forest LT05 – 10 ponds – a small E.o. population was found to live to the north west from Merkinė town, a big E.o. population was found to live to the south west from Merkinė town, these two populations should be connected as much as possible.
- Petroškai Forest LT06 - 15 ponds – a small population of E.o. was found to the west from the main Petroškai turtle population. In between these two populations is a place where a turtle population used to live, but there was no open water left anymore. To reconnect the two extant populations and to restore the habitats for the extinct population, the ponds were dug.
- Baltoji Ančia LT07 - 12 ponds – a corridor for H.a. – a species in a need of shallow, small, clean, not overgrown ponds, which are rare in the landscape, therefore they have to be created.

*Reply to a comment of the monitoring received on 25/10/2012:* based on the revised project application the actions of the project, including C1 and C2, are devoted to the project's target species (not only E.o). The first objective says: "1. To secure the long-term viability of Annex II and Annex IV species populations within the ecological network by implementing direct conservation measures and habitat management actions. Target species are E. orbicularis, B. bombina and T. cristatus (Annex II and Annex IV); L. agilis, B. calamita, B. viridis, H. arborea, P. fuscus, R. arvalis and R. lessonae (Annex IV). Conservation and habitat management actions include: digging of suitable ponds, improving existing terrestrial and aquatic habitats and implementing favourable land-use techniques." Action C1 says: "Expected results (quantitative information when possible): In the whole project area there will be restored 100 ponds (average size of 800m<sup>2</sup>). These ponds will have a considerable impact on the density of water bodies in the area, which during the last decades has been considerably thinned out. Therefore the spatial resistance of the corridors will decrease." The project summary: "E. orbicularis, B. bombina and H. arborea are the projects umbrella species. Creating habitats for them will have a positive effect on all other target species of the project."

*Results of the action:*

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

<b>Project site</b>	<i>Foreseen number of ponds (total surface m<sup>2</sup>) according to the revised targets</i>	Number of ponds (total surface m <sup>2</sup> ) Implemented until 15/04/2012
Juodabale LT01	35 (28000)	1 (1300)
Bestraigiškė forest LT02	8 (6400)	0
Kučiuliškė LT03	10 (8000)	0
Stračiūnai LT04	10 (8000)	0
Dainava forest LT05	10 (8000)	0
Petroškai Forest LT06	15 (12000)	15 (12000)
Baltoji Ančia LT07	12 (4200)	12 (4200)

In 2011 December 12 water habitats for H.a. were created in the project area LT07. The places were chosen so, that it would connect as much as possible the H.a. population on the border with Belorussia with a population around Kapčiamiestis and further on to the south to the population which is near Veisiejai. The ponds for H.a. are shallow, open to the sunshine, surrounded by sandy hills. They have to dry out in some years to reduce the number of predators of H.a. tadpoles. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats attached as Annex 11. Some of the pictures are taken right after digging and the ponds are still dry, but later on, when the snow was melting all the ponds were with the water.

The ponds for H.a. are very important for this species, which is the rarest Lithuanian amphibian. Its distribution and abundance in Lithuania is restricted by the lack of suitable habitats – small, sunny, shallow, clean ponds. After restoration of the habitats the spread of H.a. was noticed the next year after restoration. The small populations around Bugieda, Kapčiamiestis and Veisiejai were connected by the corridor LT07, H.a. population was noticed to spread its distribution range to the north.

15 ponds for E.o. were dug 2012 March and April in the project area LT06. 1 pond for E.o. was dug 2012 April in the project area LT01. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats are attached as Annex 12. The ponds for E.o. are up to 2 m deep, have large shallow zones (0-30cm deep), have structures for the turtles to sun bask. Some ponds are shallow (up to 0,7m deep), especially near the egg laying sites, for the young turtles. E.o. is an umbrella species, its habitats are suitable also for B.b., T.c., P.f., R.a., R.l., in some cases also for B.c. and B.v.

6 egg laying sites restored for E.o. 2012 April in the project area LT06. The egg laying sites were created scrapping the upper layer of the soil, in some cases cutting the pine trees, on a south facing sandy slopes. The size of the restored egg laying sites ranges from 2m<sup>2</sup> in the places where the turtles are currently laying eggs and 100m<sup>2</sup> where the new egg laying sites were created. The photos and a table with coordinates of the restored egg laying sites are attached as Annex 13.

2 hibernation places for amphibians created in the project area LT07 in December 2011 (nearby ponds 13, 16b described in Annex 11).

8 hibernation places for amphibians created in the project area LT06 in March 2012 (ponds 602, 608, 614, 616, 617a, 617b, 623a, 623b described in Annex 12).

*Further plans:* The habitat restoration activities are being negotiated with the landowners in the project areas LT02, LT03, LT04, LT05. The habitat creation actions are planned to start December 2012, have a break during the coldest months (January, February) and continue second half of March - first half of April 2013. 4 ponds are planned to be restored in the project area LT02, 10 ponds in LT03, 10 in LT04, 10 in LT05 until 15/04/2013.

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

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
50 % of ponds renovated	01/03/2013	In progress
100 % of ponds renovated	01/03/2014	In progress

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

*Results of the action:* In 2011 December 10 water habitats mainly for H.a. were renovated in the project area LT07. In 2012 April 1 water habitat for B.b. 2 water habitats for E.o and 1 slope for E.o. were renovated in the project area LT01, 2 water habitats for E.o. and 1 slope for E.o. were renovated in the project area LT03. These renovated habitats complement newly dug ponds and reduce spatial resistance of the corridors. The photos and a table with coordinates of the restored habitats are attached as Annex 14.

The official notes were sent to the hunters' circles which are responsible for the project's areas asking to reduce the number of predators of the E.o. eggs, i.e. foxes and racoon dogs, in the areas where it is acute. The meeting with local hunters club was organised on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012 to discuss about possibilities to purchase and install live traps for foxes and racoon dogs. Such traps are widely used in Germany. It has been agreed to bring such trap and test it in one of the areas, which still must be decided.

*Further plans:* The habitat renovation activities are being negotiated with the landowners in the project areas LT02, LT03, LT04, LT05. The restoration actions are planned to start December 2012, have a break during the coldest months (January, February) and continue second half of March first half of April 2013. The predators (foxes and racoon dogs) are planned to be eradicated by special traps which have to be transported from Germany and as experimental activity installed in Juodabalė Herpetological Reserve.

### 5.2.3. ACTION C.3: Restoration of wetlands

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
50 % of wetlands restored	01/03/2013	Agreements for the action are being collected
100 % of wetlands restored	01/03/2014	

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

*Clarification:* This action is very suitable for the nature conservation, because it creates shallow water bodies, which are vital for the survival of a number rare species. However it is rather difficult to carry it out in the Lithuanian countryside because of two reasons: melioration ditches are a property of the state and it is strictly forbidden to ruin them; there are some smaller melioration ditches, which do not belong into the general system, but then the landowners do not understand this activity and how it enriches their land. Therefore this action starts later than it was foreseen.

*Results of the action:* Two persons from the project's management team, namely Dalia Bastytė and Nerijus Zableckis, participated in WWF Finland organised workshop "Active Wetlands Project" 22-23 May, where Finnish experience in damming of ditches was presented in detail (please refer to Action E.4). The broad range of knowledge from convincing of the landowners to dam construction will be used for successful implementation of this action. The places for damming are chosen.

*Further plans:* The negotiations with the landowners are still being carried on. The coordinates for the places currently considered for damming autumn 2012 are (WGS):

LT02:

- 54.19828, 23.792368 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch to a nearby lake Seirijis. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 1.45 ha;
- 54.213487, 23.824235 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch to a nearby lake Seirijis. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0.26 ha;
- 54.188261, 23.74411 is a ditch head in the fields. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0.02 ha;
- 54.171923, 23.812599 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0,51 ha;
- 54.187596, 23.86012 is a ditch head in the fields. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0.23 ha.

LT03:

- 54.20629, 23.917498 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0,73 ha;
- 54.199082, 23.912058 is a ditch head in the fields. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0.08 ha;

LT04:

- 54.12368, 23.955373 is a ditch head in the fields. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0.05 ha;
- 54.108381, 23.945777 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 4,84 ha;
- 54.13737, 24.016619 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0,59 ha;
- 54.100129, 23.970983 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0,63 ha;
- 54.097172, 24.011698 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0,41 ha.

LT05:

- 54.178726, 24.153469 is a wetland, which is drained by a ditch. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0,8 ha;
- 54.137704, 24.100078 is a ditch head in the fields. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0.1 ha;
- 54.137109, 24.099915 is a ditch head in the fields. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 0.08 ha;
- 54.135423, 24.098332 is a ditch head in the fields. After damming the ditch the water level would raise in the wetland creating the surface of 1.74 ha.

These flooded areas will improve the conditions for E.o. migration in the named corridors. They will complement the newly dug and restored habitats, creating small, swampy water habitats or increase the depth of drained and overgrown wetlands. These water habitats are swampy sites, which do not require further maintenance.

The dams in the project site LT01 and LT06 will be installed 2013 autumn. The shrubs and trees will be cut before damming. Damming of these ditches will create shallow wetlands, in some cases it will raise the water level in already existing wetlands.

After discussions with the staff from the protected areas is defined that the mowing equipment is the most necessary in Natura 2000 area “Stankūnų kaimo apylinkės“ the project area LT01. It is a shallow lake, which is being overgrown by *Typha* sp. This equipment must be acquired in summer 2013. VRP will manage the equipment.

#### 5.2.4. ACTION C.4: Habitat and population management in sandpits

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Habitat management actions in 50 % sandpits done	01/03/2013	Not started yet
Habitat management actions in 100 % sandpits done	01/03/2014	

*Expected results:* 30 sites with 1500 m<sup>2</sup> water installed; 100 m<sup>2</sup> of nesting sites per site; b.c and b.v. supported by captive breeding and release of 3000 animals (if needed); 1 exploited sand pit re-cultivated as demonstration site.

*Clarification:* As we have explained in the Inception Report we have noticed that because of sandy soils most of the exploited sandpits in the southern Lithuania do not

hold water. Therefore, majority of them can be restored so, that they would suit the needs for terrestrial habitat of the target species, especially in those sites, where water habitats already exist. Sandpits can be reconstructed into egg laying slopes for turtles, e.g. on the basis of the sand pit in Vilkiautinis one turtle nest was found, but the slopes of the sandpit are too steep for the turtles, therefore we consider to make them more inclined. Also the exploited sandpits can be made into a perfect habitat for sunbasking of *Lacerta agilis* and digging for *Pelobates fuscus*.

The Geology Service stated that a big Vainiūnai sand pit (near Kučiuliškė Natura 2000), which is not used for the last 20 years, still has some resources and cannot be given for restoration.

After the detailed inventories of the project areas it is visible that it is not possible to install 30 sites with 1500 m<sup>2</sup> water. The objectives of this action could be reached by restoring and creating new water habitats in the overgrown natural depressions, and creating egg laying sites for E.o and slopes for L.a., i.e. increasing the scope of Action C1. Such actions would be very important in the landscape of the project area, where majority of natural depressions and sandy slopes are overgrown.

We ask for reduction of target to decrease restoration of sand pits from 30 to 5 and increase action C1 accordingly. Action C1 should be increased by 17 ponds, which would be dug in the project areas:

LT03 – 2 ponds

LT04 – 10 ponds

LT05 – 5 ponds.

*Results of the action:* Changes to the Methodology for Reclamation of Damaged Lands submitted to the MoE, attached as Annex 15. Exploited sand and gravel pits in the project areas inventoried. A study tour to Denmark “Danish Experience In Amphibian Conservation – Prevention Of Road Mortality And Restoration Of Exploited Gravel Pits” was carried out 2012 April 17 – 20 (please refer to Action D.3).

*Further plans:* Currently the sand and gravel pits considered for restoration in autumn 2012 are (WGS):

LT03:

54.148595, 23.925153 – a small exploited sand pit (area 0,37ha) is nearby a big, still functioning Margai sand pit. There are water bodies, inhabited by B.b. which should be improved.

LT05:

54.24546, 24.05397 – a small illegal sand pit, which does not hold water, but can be a good habitat for L.a.

54.126123, 24.039523 – a small illegal sand pit, which does not hold water. E.o. lays eggs there. The garbage has to be cleaned, the slopes made more inclined. The problem is that local people are still using the pit, hence the agreement with the people has to be found.

LT07:

54.06131, 23.65678 - a small illegal sand pit, which does not hold water, but can be a good habitat for L.a.

The permissions from the landowners of the sandpits are under the process of negotiation.

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

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

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

#### *Clarification*

*The action has these sub-activities:*

- Nest protection
- Instalment of enclosures and laboratory
- Rearing of e.o.
- Radiotracking
- Rearing of tree frog

#### *Results of the action:*

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

Staff from all the project partners, excluding LZS, was on duty in the egg laying sites in the evenings and at nights during the egg laying period in 2011. 26 nests were protected in 2011:

3 in LT01  
1 in LT02  
9 in LT03  
8 in LT05  
5 in LT06

It is a common knowledge that many E.o hatchlings are predated on the way from their nest to a water body by birds and other vertebrates. Another threat was discovered when the young turtles are coming out of the nests in April, it was noticed that the hatchlings from two nests were predated by *Formica rufa* ants. Therefore the hatchlings from the other nests were dug out and released directly to the water bodies:  
LT05 – 1 clutch

LT06 – 21 hatchling

It appeared that there were not enough people, therefore 2 local volunteers and 6 students from Vilnius University were invited to help in the year 2012. Still there was found 1 predated nest in Kučiuliškė Reserve. 31 clutch was covered by a metal net after the turtles laid it in 2012, namely:

LT01 – 5

LT02 – 3

LT03 - 16

LT05 – 2

LT06 - 5

These egg clutches have not hatched yet.

Also the egg clutches laid on the roads were collected and brought to the LZS. 47 eggs were collected in the year 2011. 40 turtles hatched, 6 eggs were not fertilized, one embryo died. Reportage about hatching turtles was shown on the main Lithuanian TV channel (Please refer to the Action D2a). 3 of these hatchlings did not survive during the adaptation to the outdoor enclosure. Today in LZS are 37 turtles of 1 year old.

74 eggs were collected in the year 2012. 67 turtles hatched in August, all survived until now.

**Instalment of enclosures and laboratory** (in application referred as turtle rearing place) **and rearing of E.o.** – the laboratory was started in the spring 2011, two incubators were bought, and when more eggs were collected one more incubator was bought in 2012. R COM JURAGON PRO PX-20RD (Professional) and R COM JURAGON PRO PX-20R (Standart) incubators are used for E.o. eggs. Aquariums for the hatchlings prepared in 2011, also 2012. Each clutch is grown separately; each young turtle is identified according to the pattern of plastron. To photograph and print the turtle data camera and printer acquired. Computer for the laboratory was acquired. Each turtle is being measured once a month, their behaviour is being observed. A refrigerator for the turtle hibernation is acquired. In autumn 2012 a special room for the turtle hibernation is planned to be installed. A biology student Dovydas Vičius from Vytautas Magnus University writes a bachelor thesis about the development of these turtles. His course work is attached as Annex 16.

Two enclosures are installed in the LZS spring 2012. The area of each enclosure is 20m<sup>2</sup>. One of the enclosures is planned to be divided into two in the year 2013. So it will be three enclosures. The photos of the enclosures are attached as Annex 17. These enclosures are built on the old foundation. Therefore they have no detailed plan of a building and the expenses for building them are included as many smaller items, like wires, nets, etc.

A camera for the direct translation to internet is installed in the enclosure (please refer to the Action D.4). It can be seen here: <http://zoosodas.lt/c/gyvos-transliacijos/transliacijos/>

**Radiotracking** – The radio tracking has been described in the application without indication of results and budget for equipment. The radio tracking helps to get more data about population: spatial distribution and disperse, find nesting and hibernation sites. Therefore turtles are equipped with radio transmitters and followed by radio receiver with antenna. However rearing methodology (which will be finished until 01/03/2013) (Action A.2) advises not to disturb released juveniles. Even the radio



transmitters might be disturbing young animals, therefore radio tracking will be applied to adult turtles. The sites where nesting sites are unknown will be of most importance to radiotrack. The turtles must be caught using Servan type catching boxes where beef heart meat is used for attraction. Boxes cause no damage for animals. Box is checked twice a day. Transmitter is glued on carapace of caught animal and immediately released back. Later monitoring is performed by checking the location of animal by radio receiver. The frequency of monitoring depends upon the aim of investigation. More frequently – 1 time per day – location must be checked if egg laying places must be found, less frequently – location of summer or hibernation places.

6 turtles from Vilkiautinis turtle population (LT05) are radiotrapped. It was started in spring 2011, the same transmitters still work.

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* The reason to radiotrack the turtles from this population is to gather more data about newly discovered, but one of the biggest E.o populations in Lithuania. Information about the movements of the individuals in this population is very valuable to plan restoration and protection of the habitat. The data gathered so far shows that turtles from this newly discovered population hibernate in the same pond and lay eggs on the slopes, roads and arable fields not far away from the pond. It defines the size of new Natura 2000 area, which should be designated.

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

Eggs were collected from the same pond and also from the ponds near to the Belorussia border (in Bugieda) year 2012. 1644 young H.a. were reared and released. 10% of the reared froglets were released in the mother populations and 90 % to the nearby ponds – three new ponds, which were created by the project (1a, 2 and 2a – pond numbers, described in Annex 11), so the young ones had good conditions. Rearing methodology is attached as Annex 18. This activity was carried out in the project area LT07.

*Further plans:* It is planned to protect the turtle nests next egg laying period, collect E.o eggs from the roads (simultaneously creating egg laying sites, that the turtles would not lay the eggs on the roads), install traps for the predators in Juodabale Reserve, rear the turtles, install hibernation room in LZS, divide 1 outdoor enclosure into two, release the first young turtles in 2014, rear H.a and release them the same year.

## **Actions D: Public awareness and dissemination of results**

### 5.3.1. ACTION D.1: Experience exchange workshops

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
First experience exchange workshop organised	01/12/2010	Completed by 28/02/2011
second experience exchange workshop organised	01/06/2011	Completed by 31/05/2011
Third experience exchange workshop organised	01/11/2012	In progress
Forth experience exchange workshop organised	01/11/2013	

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

*Results of the action:* 2 workshops and 1 kick off meeting organised; regional LIFE kick-off meeting attended. Kick-off the project was organised on 19th November 2010. During the seminar the project was presented, and each AB introduced to their tasks. Representatives from each AB attended the seminar, and also introduced to each other. The programme and list of participants was attached as Annex 12 to the Inception Report.

Later on 13th January Project director Nerijus Zableckis and project manager Dalia Bastyte attended the regional kick –off in Helsinki.

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

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

some data about the species distribution in the project area, but also sharing their experiences. Programme and list of participants of the workshop are attached as Annex14.

The preparations for the 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop have already started. It will be a workshop for the specialists of the Regional Environmental Departments (REDs), responsible for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in the area of biodiversity as foreseen in the application. Currently EIA for biodiversity is done in only the protected areas and mainly without carrying out the field investigations. Specialists of the REDs complain that they lack basic knowledge how to evaluate the biodiversity part of EIA (usually it is written that the planned activities will have no impact on biodiversity and because of lack of competence from the responsible RED specialists such projects are approved). The requests asking what kind of information the REDs specialists lack are sent to the REDs. With the experts from Latvia and Poland agreed about giving presentations in the workshop. The audience will also listen to the presentations about the project target species and their needs, habitat restoration and arising impacts, their mitigation.

*Further plans:* The activity will be implemented as foreseen in the work plan. 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop to be organised in December 2012 and 4<sup>th</sup> workshop in autumn 2013.

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

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Instalment of 7 notice boards	01/12/2010	3 notice boards installed
50 % of meetings implemented	01/11/2012	Completed by 01/12/2011
100 % of meetings implemented	31/03/2014	It was not set, this is a new date proposed

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

*Clarification:* 7 notice boards are described in action D2e. The information boards are included under this action. According to the regulations of the Regional Parks, all the information boards, which are erected in the area of the Parks, have to comply to the certain standards. According to the experience of the project partners DNP, VRP and MRP, when they carry out the procedures of public procurement, such information board costs around 1000 EUR. It took some time for the project team to find a cheaper version, which would not exceed our foreseen budget for the information boards. Currently wooden parts of 3 boards are already made, they are planned to be installed in the project sites LT07 and LT06.

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

*Results of the action:* Even though this action was foreseen to be started from the autumn 2011 it has already started in the spring 2011. 33 meetings with the landowners so far carried out. Some landowners were convinced to carry out habitat restoration actions, the others were not. Some were only informed that rare species live on their land and about the requirements of the species. A list of the meetings and an illustration of a meeting with the landowners in Sventijanskas village is included in Annex 20.

Under this action we prepare big (1x0,7m text space) information boards with detailed descriptions of the project actions, target species and their habitats. Three types of information boards are prepared: one is a general information board about the project (actions, target species and habitats), one with more emphasis on H.a., which will be erected in the project area LT07, where are the only places where this species is found in Lithuania and one which is erected in LZS, attached as Annex 25.

Project publicity – we have not ordered professional monitoring of the mass media after our press releases, which is an expensive service, therefore the numbers are only of those broadcasts, which we have found. In reality the project was mentioned more times.

A press release about protection of turtle eggs in situ. Two video reportages prepared, was taken at least to 3 web portals and 1 article in a newspaper.

A press release about turtle rearing and the Turtle Day in the LZS 10 June 2011. Was taken at least to 8 web portals.

A reportage in television was broadcasted about H.a. rearing 21 June 2011:

<http://www.lrytas.lt/-13086459891307805041-%C5%ABkininkas-medvarli%C5%B3-buo%C5%BEgalvius-augina-kibiruose-nuotraukos-video.htm>

<http://infodiena.lt/Ukininkas-kibiruose-augina-egzotiskuju-medvarliu-buozgalvius-Pramogos-443999rss.html>

A press release about E.o. population protection rearing the eggs 15 September 2012. Was taken to at least 7 web portals, 3 reportage broadcasted in different radio stations and one 4 reportage broadcasted in different television channels.

Press release „Ecological network in southern Lithuania“ 19 September 2011. Taken at least to 2 web portals.

Press release about restoration of H.a. habitats taken at least into 4 web portals and 2 local newspapers of Lazdijai district.

An article about the lessons carried out in schools on the topics developed by the project team 23 December 2011 in a local newspaper.

Press release about invasive turtles 5 March 2012. Taken into at least 5 web portals.

Press release about amphibian migrations 10 April 2012. Taken at least into 4 web portals.

Press release about the 20<sup>th</sup> LIFE anniversary 9 May 2012. Taken into at least 4 webportals and two reportages in television shown.

Press release asking for information about turtles noticed in the nature 19 June 2012. Taken into at least 9 web portals, several newspapers and a reportage in radio broadcasted.

Press release about an excursion organised by VRP 23 August 2012. Taken into at least into 10 web portals and 1 local newspaper.

Press release about photography contest for a photography exhibition 5 September 2012. Taken into at least 6 web portals.

Press release about the turtle rearing activities 14 September 2012. Taken into at least 5 webportals and a reportage in television shown.

The list of the articles and broadcasts attached as Annex 34.

Two events for the LIFE 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary were organised. The first one was organised together with the LIFE project “Bombina in the Baltic Region - Management of fire-bellied toads in the Baltic region” LIFE04 NAT/DE/000028. It was called “Bombina song contest”, where one week before Eurovision choirs of the red-bellied toads competed live from 5 countries: Denmark, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania and Germany. The winner was chosen by people voting in LIFE-Bombina project website. Lithuanian Bombina choir won the competition.

The event was organised in the cooperation of Trakų Vokė Cultural Centre in Trakų Vokė town 11 May 2012. 120 people and 5 journalists from the different televisions and web portals participated in the event. The event was widely broadcasted in the mass media (Please refer to the project publicity). More detailed description, programme and pictures are included as Annex 21.

The second one was organised together with three other Lithuanian LIFE projects (LIFE05/NAT/D/000152 (LFN is AB in this project); LIFE07/NAT/LT/000531 and LIFE09 NAT/LT/000235) in a shopping centre Panorama in Vilnius 12 May 2012. The event was attended by 5.000 people. The poster, invitation, programme, invitation for the pictures competition and photos from the event are attached as Annex 22.

*Further actions:* The meetings with the landowners happen all the time, when inventorying the habitats and getting ready for the habitat restoration. They will continue to happen.

3 information boards already made, they will erected in the project areas LT07 and LT06 winter 2012. They are planned to be erected in Kapčiamiestis town, which is surrounded by the habitats restored for H.a. (project area LT07), Veisiejai town, where LT06 and LT07 come together and on a roadside close to a cluster of restored habitats in the project area LT06. 1 board is already erected in LZS.

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

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Educational trail established	01/09/2014	Not started

*Expected results:* 1 km long education trail

*Results of the action:* While planning the project the educational trail was planned to be established in the project area LT05, near Merkinė town, by Ilgabalė wetland. This wetland was state owned. It was bought by a private person in 2012. According to Lithuania's legislation free state owned land situated in protected areas (including national parks) can be sold to private owners. Only strict nature reserves are entirely state owned. Currently we are trying to get an agreement from the owner for the

habitat restoration works. If the owner does not agree (currently he wants a lake instead of the wetland, which is not suitable for the target species), then the other place for the educational trail has to be chosen. Two other places are being considered, both in the project area LT01: Juodabalė Herpetological Reserve, where a lot of restoration work was carried out; MRP direction (Direction of Meteliai Regional Park, please see the list of abbreviations), project area LT01, where an outdoor enclosure with 4 young E.o., which hatched out of the eggs laid by the local E.o. kept in the LZS with unknown origin (please refer to the Action A2) could be installed. The best possible option will be found during the year 2013.

*Further actions:* During summer 2013 the place for this action will be chosen and the action will be carried out in summer 2014.

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

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
5 guided tours implemented	01/07/2014	

*Expected results:* 5 guided tours for 100 people.

*Results of the action:* 1 guided tour was carried out in MRP 31 August 2012. The participants of the guided tour were introduced to the habitats of the target species and restoration works carried out in Juodabalė Herpetological Reserve. 25 people participated in the guided tour. A list of the participants is attached as Annex 23.

*Further actions:* 2 guided tours are planned in spring 2013 and 2 in spring 2014.

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

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
5 guided tours implemented	01/07/2014	In progress

*Expected results:* 5 guided tours for 100 people.

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* The guided tours in VRP started summer 2011. Until now, 3 guided tours are carried out.

*Results of the action:* 3 guided tours were carried out in VRP. The 1<sup>st</sup> was a bicycle orientation competition "Do not be slow as a turtle" organised on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2011. It was a competition for the teams with bicycles to find certain objects in the Regional Park, for example, informational board in Petroškai and to write which species are protected. 29 people participated in this guided tour. A list of the participants is attached as Annex 24.

2<sup>nd</sup> guided tour was for the schoolchildren from Veisiejai Gymnasium. It was about amphibians in Veisiejai town on 25 April 2012, 20 children participated. A picture is attached in Annex 24.

3<sup>rd</sup> guided tour was also organised as a bicycle orientation competition. This time it was devoted for H.a. and called “with bikes where the tree frogs jump”. 43 people participated, it was 25 August 2012. The list of teams and their scores in the competition attached in Annex 24.

*Further actions:* A guided tour is planned in spring 2013 and one more in spring 2014.

#### 5.3.6. ACTION D.2.e: Installation of notice boards

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Instalment of 7 notice boards	01/12/2010	In progress

*Expected results:* 7 notice boards

*Results of the action:* 3 small notice boards installed nearby restored habitats. The problem for installing the notice boards is that the habitats in the most cases are in very remote places and not visible to the public. They are installed in the most visible places nearby restored water habitats. 7 big and with detailed descriptions about the project information boards are being developed (please refer to the Action D2a).

*Further actions:* The 4 left notice boards will be installed this autumn after the habitat restoration in some more visible to the public places will happen.

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* transitional boards explaining what is expected to be done will be installed until 31/12/2012.

#### 5.3.7. ACTION D.3: Study tours

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> study tour organised	01/06/2011	Completed by 03/04/2011
2 <sup>nd</sup> study tour organised	01/05/2012	Completed by 08/04/2011
3 <sup>rd</sup> study tour organised	01/06/2012	Completed by 01/05/2012
4 <sup>th</sup> study tour organised	01/10/2013	

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

*Clarification:* It is mentioned 4 study tours in the project description. Since we have specific subjects, we would like to keep 4 study tours as foreseen in milestone table.

However, the study tours are specialised and a particular study tour cannot be relevant for 30 people, therefore the amount of participants is as many as there are people working with a particular topic. Moreover, there was a discrepancy for this action in the project proposal. In the timetable the action should last till II 2012 only, while in the list of milestones the 4th study tour is to be organised until 01/10/2013. The timetable is adjusted accordingly, i.e. action will be implemented until IV 2013.

*Results of the action:* 2 study tours were organised in spring 2011. 1 study tour aimed for experience exchange by E.o rearing institutions, and another one for farm development. 2 study tours were organised in spring 2011.

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

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

3<sup>rd</sup> study tour was organised to Denmark in 17 – 20 April 2012. It had two aims:

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

The first aim is directly connected with the Action C4. The second aim is directly connected with the general aim of the project – to connect the fragmented populations of the target species. Currently the infrastructure for reducing amphibian road mortality is starting to be built and many mistakes are made. Also no experience in restoration of the exploited sand pits for the reptiles and amphibians exists in Lithuania. Therefore people responsible for these activities (staff from the Lithuanian



Road Directorate, MoE, Alytus Regional Environmental Department and protected areas) were invited to the workshop; 10 participants in total. A list of the participants, the programme and the report of the study tour are attached as Annex 26. The photos are uploaded to the project website:

<http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/galerija/mokomoji-isvyka-i-danija>.

*Further actions:* To be implemented according to time table. The possible topic for the last study tour is a cross border exchange with Belorussia, but due to unstable political situation in Belorussia, we might change this topic.

#### 5.3.8. ACTION D.4: Printed educational material, touring exhibition

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
The folder about the project produced	01/12/2010	Completed by 01/12/2010
Educational material for schools prepared	01/05/2010 Another date in deliverable table is 01/13/2013	Completed by 01/10/2011
All educational material printed	01/05/2014	In progress
The folder about the project (brochure) produced	01/12/2010	Completed by 01/12/2010; the project's informative folder produced in Lithuanian and English; attached to the IncR - annex 18
Posters printed	01/01/2012	Completed by 01/10/2012
T-shirts produced	01/01/2012	Completed by 01/05/2012
Touring exhibition	01/09/2013	In progress
DVD produced	01/09/2014	In progress
Handbook printed	01/08/2014	In progress
Handbook on Natural Frame published	01/08/2014	In progress
<i>Informational material (pocket guide)</i>	31/12/2013	Not started yet

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

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

*Results of the action:*

- a) Informative folders on the main target and umbrella species and the main goals of the project for general distribution were produced in 1000 copies each. Both versions were attached as Annex 18. Distribution details of all dissemination materials attached in Annex 36.
- b) Educational materials for schools – was prepared and distributed in 5 schools (two types of the material: for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades and for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade) in the project area as foreseen in the application. The schools were chosen according to their locality – as we explained in the text of the application, the schoolchildren of the schools, which are in the project area will be taught. Hence, Leipalingio, Kučiūnų, Seirijų, Kapčiamiesčio and Liškiavos schoolchildren were taught. The material is uploaded to the Project website: <http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/parsisiuntimui>

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

The educational material attached as Annex 27. The presentations for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade missed Natura 2000 and LIFE logos, afterwards it was corrected.

Also LZS carries out educational lessons called “Does European Pond Turtle live in Lithuania?” for the schoolchildren about the target species, especially E.o., and the project activities. The contents of the lessons and list of schools

where such lessons were carried out are attached in the Annex 27. 9 lessons were in LZS and 10 lessons were in the schools in 2011, 453 listeners in total. 1408 listeners participated in this education activity in their schools and universities and 254 in LZS in 2012.

Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12: The educational material, which was distributed without LIFE logo is replaced with the corrected material.

- c) Posters – two versions of posters (in Lithuanian and in English) are produced (attached as Annex 28). The design of the poster was given to do to LZS, because of their capabilities. Since the project organises a lot of events for the general public, it was decided to produce more posters than foreseen: 200 EN version and 800 LT version. The posters already started to be distributed during the Turtle day in the LZS and International Conference in Daugavpils. The distribution details are in Annex 36.
- d) T-shirts – 200 T-shirts produced. On the front the t-shirts have the project logo and a picture, which was painted by Džiugas Klimašauskas, third grade schoolchild from Leipalingis school. He won the paintings competition, which was organized after the lessons were taught in the schools in the project area (please refer to 5.3.8.b). A photo of Džiugas after he was congratulated as an author of the best picture is attached in the Annex 29. On the back side the t-shirts have LIFE, Natura2000 and all the partners logos in black and white version. A t-shirt is added to the Report. The design of the t-shirts is attached in the Annex 29. The t-shirts are used as prizes during different competitions, for example the events of the LIFE 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, photography competition, bicycle orientation event in VRP and others. They are also used by the project team and volunteers, when the events are happening and the organisers are dressed with the project t-shirts. The distribution details are in Annex 36.
- e) Touring exhibition - an exhibition “Ramsar sites”, described in the Inception Report was decided to be updated. Therefore a photography competition was organised for the general public in September 2012. The competition was for the project's target species and their habitats, it was widely broadcasted in the mass media. There was 51 authors participating and 316 works were received for the competition in total. A professional nature photographer Vytautas Knyva was invited to help choosing the best photos. 23 photos were chosen according to the quality, ideas pictured and also that it would reflect Lithuanian reptile and amphibian species diversity. The exhibition will be opened in the Public Library of Lazdijai Municipality on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October. The authors of the photos, staff from the Municipality, Alytus Regional Environmental Department, MoE, local schools and VRP will be invited to the opening. The authors of the photos will be awarded with the project t-shirts, posters and books “Key Habitats”.

*Reply to the EC's request in the letter of 09/10/12:* The exhibition consists of a wall-up which describes the project, its aims and its importance. The wall-up has LIFE and Natura2000 logos. Another part of the exhibition is 8 photos of the project activities – a series of E.o. and H.a. habitat restoration. Under these photos also is an explanation

of importance of such activities. The third part of the exhibition is 23 photos, which reflect diversity and beauty of Lithuanian reptiles and amphibians and their habitats. The photos of the exhibition are uploaded to the project's website (except wall-up): <http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/ar-is-balos-tas-grazumas>

The exhibition started in Lazdijai Public Library. During its opening the project manager Dalia Bastytė told the background of the exhibition, explained the project activities around Lazdijai and showed a short film about the habitat restoration carried out by the project. The director of Veisiejai Regional Park explained the importance of the project activities. The photos from the exhibition opening can be found in the website of Lithuanian Fund for Nature: [http://www.glis.lt/?pid=1&news\\_id=232](http://www.glis.lt/?pid=1&news_id=232) and on the Facebook profile:

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151153065638246.451808.96101993245&type=1> A short film from the exhibition opening can be found on LFN Facebook profile: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lietuvos-Gamtos-Fondas/96101993245?ref=ts&fref=ts>

The second place where the exhibition was opened is Alytus Regional Department (RED). The project manager Dalia Bastytė and the executive director of LFN Edmundas Greimas explained the importance of herpetofauna, the threats, which have emerged for it, introduced the audience to the project activities and showed short films about the project actions. The director of RED expressed his gratitude for the activities of the project in Alytus region. The photos from the opening are in LFN Facebook profile: <http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151186058168246.456863.96101993245&type=1>

The third place will be visitors' centre of DNP in Merkinė. Here the exhibition will be opened on the 15 January.

All these places are the closest towns from the project areas. Alytus and Lazdijai are the biggest towns in the region, later on the exhibition will move to the smaller towns. Before opening the exhibition the invitations are sent to the MoE, Service for Protected Areas, local municipalities, protected areas, all the schools in the surroundings and the local press.

- f) Camera in LZS – installed in the outdoor enclosure, when the young turtles are moved to the laboratory in the autumn, the camera is moved there. The translation is stopped when the turtles hibernate. The link to the translation is <http://zoosodas.lt/c/gyvos-transliacijos/transliacijos/>  
The young turtles can be observed having VLC player installed. The instructions how to open the view are on the webpage.
- g) DVD film– was started spring 2011 after tender procedure. It is foreseen to show the most interesting moments of life of the target species, habitat restoration actions and events organised by the project. 50% of the film episodes are already filmed. The film scenario attached as Annex 35. The raw filmed material is available upon request.

- h) Handbook – some chapters for the handbook are already started to develop, for example, suggestions for the habitat management of the target species.
- i) We would like to report “Turtle Days” here, which belong to the activities of LZS. To address the attention of the general public a European pond turtle day was organized in the zoological garden. It was organized on the 12th of June by the staff from LZS and LFN. It is estimated that approximately 1000 visitors participated in this event. During the event project director Nerijus Zableckis and local manager Virginija Raudeliuniene presented the project by giving public speech, also all other activities were related to the project: lectures and DVD show about turtles biology, games about turtles, planting the flowers in the shape of turtles etc. The announcement about the Turtle Day was attached as Annex 18 in the Inception Report. The second European pond turtle day was organised during the World Animal Day Care on 7 October 2012, so it belongs already to the next report.

*Further actions:* The lessons in LZS, VRP and MRP will continue. Touring exhibition will continue travelling in the project areas, the next place where the exhibition will be opened will be visitors’ centre of DNP in Merkinė. Here the exhibition will be opened on the 15 January. After the exhibition visits all the towns in the project area it will come to Vilnius. It will be continued to shoot for the DVD. Pocket guide will be prepared in 2013. Handbook will be prepared in 2014. Turtle days are planned to be organised in LZS once per year.

#### 5.3.9. ACTION D.5: Best practice guidelines

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Best practice guidelines published	01/10/2014	In progress

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

*Results of the action:* Some chapters of the Best Practice Guidelines are already prepared, for example, E.o. rearing methodology.

*Further actions:* Best practice guidelines will be published in 2014.

#### 5.3.10. ACTION D.6: Web page

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Web page developed	01/12/2010	Completed by 31/04/2011

*Expected results:* Webpage prepared

*Results of the action:* The main project webpage is created, its address is <http://www.glis.lt/ekotinklas/index.php/lt/>. The webpage is located under the main website of the CB guaranteeing long term support for the domain. Website is available in two languages: Lithuanian and English. Project website is of a good quality and frequently updated both in Lithuanian and English languages. Other AB have the links to the project website:

<http://www.am.lt/VI/index.php#a/11110>

<http://zoosodas.lt/informacija/veikla/projektai/bandomojo-ekologinio-tinklo-rytu-lietuvoje-sukurimas/>

<http://gamta.cepkeliai-dzukija.lt/18735/projektai.html?read=12467>

<http://www.meteliuparkas.lt/index.php?id=127&hh=cHJvamVrdGFp>

<http://www.veisiejuparkas.lt/node/180>

<http://www.amphi-consult.dk/index.php/dk/projekter/life-econat.html>

*Further actions:* The webpage will be continuously updated.

#### 5.3.11. ACTION D.7: Final project seminar

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Final project seminar organised	01/10/2014	Not started yet

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

*Not to be started yet*

*Further actions:* The final project seminar will be organised in the end of the project. It is planned to organise it in the premises of LZS.

#### 5.3.12. ACTION D.8: Layman's report

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Layman report published	01/10/2014	

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

*Not to be started yet*

*Further actions:* The Layman report will be published in the end of the project.

## **Actions E: Overall project operation and monitoring**

### 5.4.1. ACTION E.1: Project management and accountancy

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

*Expected results:* Well running project management established.

*Results of action:* All needed personnel employed and structures set up. There is one local manager in every AB, who delegates project tasks to personnel and ensures proper running of the project. The changes in CB are described under financial comments.

DNP, VRP, MRP, LZS dedicated a bit more personnel to the teams as foreseen in the revised application – accountants of AB were not foreseen in the application. List of project personnel shown in table 3. Higher demand for personnel was raised because of more input needed in the fieldwork.

**Table 3. List of personnel**

Table 3. List of personnel				
Foreseen	Hired			Occupation
	2010	2011	2012	
LFN				
international project manager national manager assistant, and accountant	Project manager Manager's assistant local accountant	Project director  national manager public relations specialist projects accountant local expert	Project director/financial manager Project manager projects accountant	Part time  Full time Part time Part time Part time temporarily
AC				
Senior project manager Senior herpetologist		Senior project manager Senior herpetologist Experts , 2 people	Senior herpetologist	Part time  Part time Part time
DNP				
Local manager Local ecologist		Local manager Biologist Senior biologist accountant	Local manager Biologist Senior biologist accountant	Part time Part time Part time Part time
MRP				
Local manager Biologist		Local manager Ecologist Accountant	Local manager Ecologist Accountant	Part time Part time Part time
VRP				
Local manager Local biologist		Local manager Ecologist Accountant	Local manager Ecologist Accountant	Part time Part time Part time
LZS				
Director Local manager Specialist Veterinarian		Local manager Herpetologist Animal keeper, 3 people	Local manager Herpetologist Animal keeper, 3 people Educologist	Part time Part time Part time Part time

Emys keeper Educational worker Worker		Educologist, 2 people Accountant	Public relations spec. Accountant Technical workers, 2 people	Part time Part time Part time
MoE				
Biological Desk Officer			Biological Desk Officer	Part time

#### 5.4.2. ACTION E2: Monitoring of the effect of project

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
The programme	01/06/2011	Completed by 01/06/2011
Database	28/02/2012 (from the Inception Report)	Completed by 01/02/2012

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

*Results of action:* Online database prepared, 1 report to the Ministry has been sent, the form used as defined in the Methodology for Use of Protected Species, Annex II. The report attached in Annex 37.

Monitoring programme prepared, attached as Annex 21 to the Inception Report. Presence/absence of the target species was checked in all the created and restored habitats. H.a. is the fastest coloniser, it was found in the following habitats just next spring after creation or restoration (please refer to the Actions C1 and C2): 1a, 13, 14a, 15.1, 13c1, 21 and 601. B.b and T.c. were found in: 13 c1, 14a and 601. B.c. and P.f. were found in 14a.

The data base is created using ARCGIS maps. The target species are marked in the project area and described which year it was observed, who is the observer, notes about the amount of individuals, life stage and their habitat. It can be found: <http://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=37c1143de0a04c3995578a71a0a7d464>  
The data base currently is not a shared version, it can be connected only with one user name: bastyte, password: dalia5.

Further actions: Species data will be transposed to the Ministries official database enabling species protection. This will be done in 2013.

#### 5.4.3 ACTION E.3: After Life Strategy

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
After Life Strategy	01/09/2014	

*Expected results:* After Life conservation plan prepared.

*Not to be started yet.*



#### 5.4.4. ACTION E4: Networking with other projects

<i>Milestone /deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline according to the project</i>	<i>Status 30/09/2012</i>
Networking with other projects	31/12/2013	

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

*Results of the action:* 4 meetings with other projects implemented: 3 of them with other LIFE projects, 1 with non EU financed.

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

The project manager participated in EU Workshop on Amphibian Mortality on Roads in Peterborough, UK, 7-8 March 2012, organised by Froglife. The workshop was organised as a start of the networking between different EU countries solving problems of the connectivity of amphibian populations. The project manager presented the LIFE projects carried out by LFN, namely NELEAP and ECONAT, and the problems of the connectivity of amphibian populations in Lithuania. The programme of the workshop, the presentation of the manager and the workshop book of abstracts is attached as Annex 31.

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

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

*Further actions:* The project staff participated in the international conference organised by LIFE09 NAT/LV/000239 Life-HerpetoLatvia and made 4 presentations there in 8-9 October 2012. This is already next reporting period.

#### 5.2. Envisaged progress until next report

The next report is due on 01/10/2013. Until then the second part of the Action A1 will be coming to an end (Action plans for the species). The Action A2 will be finished, i.e. the turtle rearing methods will be fully developed. The Action A3 will be finished, i.e. the criteria for the favourable conservation status for all the target species will be defined. The Action A4 will be finished, i.e. the criteria for the ecological network will

be prepared in a form, which could be used by the planners in the whole area of Lithuania. The Action A5 will be coming to an end, the new Natura 2000 areas will be proposed. The number of permissions (A6), defined in the application, will be already reached, however, we will be gathering the permissions until the end of the habitat restoration activities. The Action A7 will be finished, i.e. two farms with cattle to graze the important areas of the project installed. Majority of the Action C1 will be carried out, it is already 27 new water habitats and 6 egg laying sites created, we plan to create 30 – 40 water habitats and 10 – 15 egg laying sites autumn/winter 2012 - spring 2013. Majority of the Action C2 will be carried out, it is already 17 habitats renovated, we plan to renovate 15 – 20 habitats autumn/winter 2012 - spring 2013. Majority of the Action C3 will be carried out; the ditches will be dammed, wetlands created, machinery acquired. Majority of the Action C4 will be carried out; all the available sand and gravel pits in the target area will be restored. Majority of the Action C5 will be carried out; E.o. and H.a. rearing will be coming to an end, we might reach the foreseen number, but still we'll use 2014 spring for it. Majority of the Action D1 will be carried out, will be one workshop left. The Action D2a will be surpassed, the amount of the press articles, radio and television broadcasts is already surpassed. The place for the nature educational trail will be chosen (Action D2b). Majority of the Action D2c will be carried out, 4 guided tours in MRP will be organised. Action D2d will be finished, 5 guided tours in VRP will be organised. Action D2e will be finished, all the information boards will be erected. Action D3, if we keep it according to the time table, it is already surpassed, if we keep it according to the application text, we organise one more study tour spring – summer 2013 and until the next report this action is finished. Majority of the Action D4 will be carried out, i.e. folder, posters, t-shirts, educational material for schools, touring exhibition, web camera and Turtle Days in LZS are already done and in numbers have surpassed the goals of the application. Until the next report the touring exhibition will be traveling in the project areas and the film will be continued to shoot. Web page (D6) will be continuously updated. E1 will continue to proceed, at least 1 meeting of the Steering Committee will be organised. E2 will continue to proceed, all newly created ponds will be checked for the presence/absence and breeding success of the target species, the data base will be continuously updated. E4 will be continued if there are any important occasions for the networking.

Tasks/ Activities		2010				2011				2012				2013				2014					
		1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T		
Overall project schedule	Proposed			Start date				Inc.R.				Mid-Term				1 <sup>st</sup> P.R.				End date			
	Actual																						
Action A1 Species inventories and action plans for the project areas	Proposed																						
	Actual																						
Action A1 Action plans for the species	Proposed																						
	Actual																						
Action A2 Rearing methods for Emys orbicularis	Proposed																						
	Actual																						
Action A3 Determining the favourable conservation status	Proposed																						
	Actual																						
Action A4 Ecological network-development	Proposed																						
	Actual																						
Action A5 Establishing new Natura 2000 sites	Proposed																						
	Actual																						

Tasks/ Activities		2010				2011				2012				2013				2014			
		1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T
Action A6 Preparation for permissions	Proposed								■ ■ ■				■ ■ ■				■ ■ ■				
	Actual																				
Action A7 Farm development	Proposed							■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■													
	Actual																				
Action C1 Habitat management	Proposed							■ ■ ■					■ ■ ■				■ ■ ■				
	Actual																				
Action C2 Renovation of ponds, mitigation of predation on target species	Proposed							■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■													
	Actual																				
Action C3 Restoration of wetlands	Proposed							■ ■ ■					■ ■ ■								
	Actual																				
Action C4 Habitat and population management in sandpits	Proposed							■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■													
	Actual																				
Action C5 Population management	Proposed							■ ■													
	Actual																				
Action D1 Experience exchange workshops	Proposed					■ ■		■ ■				■ ■				■ ■					■ ■
	Actual																				
Action D2a Dissemination and cooperation with local players	Proposed						■ ■			■ ■ ■				■ ■ ■			■ ■ ■				
	Actual																				
Action D2b Installation of nature educational trail	Proposed																		■ ■		
	Actual																				
Action D2c Guided tours in Meteliai Regional Park	Proposed							■ ■			■ ■					■ ■					
	Actual																				

Tasks/ Activities		2010				2011				2012				2013				2014			
		1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T	1T	2T	3T	4T
Action D2d Guided tours in Veisiejai Regional Park	Proposed							■	■			■	■			■	■				
	Actual							■	■		■	■				■	■				
Action D2e Installation of notice boards	Proposed					■	■														
	Actual							■	■		■	■	■								
Action D3 Study tours	Proposed						■	■			■	■									
	Actual					■	■	■			■	■									
Action D4 Printed educational material, touring exhibition	Proposed				■	■	■		■	■	■		■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■
	Actual				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Action D5 Best practice guidelines	Proposed																	■	■	■	
	Actual																	■	■	■	
Action D6 Web page	Proposed				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■		■	■	■	
	Actual				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Action D7 Final project seminar	Proposed																	■	■	■	
	Actual																	■	■	■	
Action D8 Layman's report	Proposed																	■	■	■	
	Actual																	■	■	■	
Action E1 Project management and accountancy	Proposed				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Actual				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Action E2 Monitoring the effect of the project actions	Proposed										■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Actual										■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Action E3 After Life Strategy	Proposed																	■	■	■	■
	Actual																	■	■	■	■
Action E4 Networking with other projects	Actual										■	■	■			■	■	■			
	Proposed						■	■		■	■	■									

### 5.3. Impact:

**Nature & Biodiversity:** Indicate as appropriate for each site of the project and overall, the impact of your project so far on the species/habitats targeted, and on the other/species/habitats present on the site(s).

The habitat restoration actions in the project area LT07 increased significantly abundance of H.a. in Lithuania. Before the project it was known in 12 ponds in the project area LT07, which is the main area of distribution of H.a. in Lithuania. Currently it is found in 7 new ponds too.

Also habitat restoration actions in the project area LT06 widened distribution of H.a. in Lithuania towards the north west 5 km further than they were observed before. The other species are also noticed in the restored and created habitats, but they do not spread so fast and the impact for them will be after 2 – 3 years.

Population conservation actions had an undoubtedly strong impact on E.o. breeding success – 44 egg clutches were protected from predators in situ and 12 egg clutches from all the negative impacts ex situ. With the current size of E.o. population in Lithuania it is a significant proportion of offspring saved.

### 5.4. Outside LIFE

*Summarise the different actions taking place outside the framework LIFE project (i.e. not financed by LIFE) but that are complementary to the project and add to its impact (if applicable).*

After the Froglife seminar (please refer to the Action E4) and study tour to Denmark (please refer to the Action D3) the staff from VRP were introduced that the Road Directorate can help them to prevent amphibian road mortalities. Autumn 2012 fences and passages for amphibians are being built (in cooperation of VRP, the Road Directorate and AmphiConsult with the help of the project team) to strengthen the connectivity of the population in Lazdijai district, where the amphibian mortality during the migrations was very high.

The lessons for the schools prepared in the project framework, are being continued in the other schools outside the project area, which express a wish to have such lessons.

A workshop for the students from Vilnius University was organised. The students were introduced to the target species ecology, the activities of the project, afterwards they helped to protect the E.o. egg clutches and restore the ponds overgrown by *Typha* sp. The workshop was held 8-10 June in the project areas LT01, LT05, LT06, LT07, 8 students participated.

The theses on target species and habitats of 3 students are being supervised (1 undergraduate student from Vytautas Magnus University and 2 Master students from Vilnius University).

Some of the activities described in the technical part were not financed by LIFE, for example “Bombina song contest” organised for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of LIFE (please refer to the Action D2a) did not require any financial resources from the project (even no working time, because it was organised in the evenings after working hours).

## Financial part

### Financial review by actions

Please fill in the following additional table (recommended). When compiling the information please refer to Form B of the proposal:

Action number and name		Foreseen costs	Spent so far	Remaining	Projected final cost
A1	Action plans	€ 30.581,00	€ 25.888,22	€ 4.692,78	€ 35.978,99
A2	Rearing methods	€ 9.941,00	€ 2.792,37	€ 7.148,63	€ 3.792,37
A3	Favourable conservation status	€ 5.304,00	€ 1.985,80	€ 3.318,20	€ 5.304,00
A4	Network-development	€ 17.381,00	€ 4.475,93	€ 12.905,07	€ 10.381,00
A5	Natura 2000 sites	€ 11.918,00	€ 5.818,91	€ 6.099,09	€ 11.918,00
A6	Permissions	€ 8.113,00	€ 3.378,77	€ 4.734,23	€ 8.113,00
A7	Farm developement	€ 13.278,00	€ 20.687,03	-€ 7.409,03	€ 23.687,03
C1	Habitat management	€ 129.696,00	€ 31.900,32	€ 97.795,68	€ 167.230,36
C2	Renovation of ponds	€ 23.012,00	€ 7.271,07	€ 15.740,93	€ 28.084,18
C3	Restoration of wetlands	€ 92.222,00	€ 939,20	€ 91.282,80	€ 97.222,00
C4	Sandpit management	€ 32.779,00	€ 74,24	€ 32.704,76	€ 5.244,64
C5	Population management	€ 108.503,00	€ 52.583,56	€ 55.919,44	€ 87.583,56
D1	Experience exchange workshops	€ 28.498,00	€ 15.688,04	€ 12.809,96	€ 25.688,04
D2a	Dissemination, cooperation	€ 4.627,00	€ 3.217,79	€ 1.409,21	€ 4.627,00
D2b	Nature educational trail	€ 12.539,00	€ 675,35	€ 11.863,65	€ 14.675,35
D2c	Guided tours in MRP	€ 1.762,00	€ 110,57	€ 1.651,43	€ 1.762,00
D2d	Guided tours in VRP	€ 1.762,00	€ 511,92	€ 1.250,08	€ 1.762,00
D2e	Notice boards	€ 750,00	€ 815,88	-€ 65,88	€ 815,88
D3	Study tours	€ 35.470,00	€ 15.478,12	€ 19.991,88	€ 25.478,12
D4	Educational material	€ 25.964,00	€ 12.343,62	€ 13.620,38	€ 25.964,00
D5	Best practice guidelines	€ 13.375,00	€ 0,00	€ 13.375,00	€ 13.375,00

<b>D6</b>	<b>Web page</b>	€ 3.251,00	€ 1.459,53	€ 1.791,47	€ 3.251,00
<b>D7</b>	<b>Final seminar</b>	€ 14.777,00	€ 0,00	€ 14.777,00	€ 14.777,00
<b>D8</b>	<b>Layman's report</b>	€ 3.100,00	€ 0,00	€ 3.100,00	€ 3.100,00
<b>E1</b>	<b>Project management</b>	€ 68.836,00	€ 29.624,48	€ 39.211,52	€ 77.624,48
<b>E2</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>	€ 13.165,00	€ 1.048,37	€ 12.116,63	€ 13.165,00
<b>E3</b>	<b>After Life strategy</b>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
<b>E4</b>	<b>Networking</b>	€ 4.813,00	€ 4.012,04	€ 800,96	€ 4.813,00+
<b>TOTAL</b>		€ 715.417,00	€ 242.781,13	€ 472.635,87	€ 715.417,00

### ***Comments on Action costs***

We have indicated some changes in the actions.

#### Reduction of action costs:

A2 – Rearing methods have been finished, only corrections left, therefore action shall be reduced;

A4- Ecological network-development –we would like to keep smaller proportion of this action budget since most of the work has been done.

C4 – sandpit management. As informed under technical description, we ask for reduction of target to decrease restore sand pits from 30 to 5, thus, reducing action by 84% of its' volume. Accordingly we ask you to leave 16 % of initial budget for this action – 5 244 EUR, while the remaining amount shift to C1;

C5 – population management. This action requires fewer personnel, equipment and infrastructure costs, therefor we would like to reduce it by 20%;

D3 – one study tour left, therefor remaining amount is too big for one tour.

#### Increase of action cost:

A1 – preparation of action plans required more resources than planned. The correction of plans will require personnel and travel costs;

A7 – farm instalment costs increased due to bigger demand of experience exchange and investments into farms;

C1 – the action would increase if action C4 amount will be shifted to this action. By shifting the 84% of action C4 cost to C1, we shift personnel (9 139,8 EUR), travel (3 094.6 EUR) and external (15 120,0 EUR); Also savings from other actions , e.g. D3 we would like to move to this action.

C2 – more efforts personnel and external will be probably used in this actions, therefor savings in other actions we would like to move here;

D2b – education path – we expect slight increase in education path preparation and instalment costs;

E1 – management of the project. We foresee slight increase in management costs, due to higher demand for more personnel (accountants were not foreseen in the application), which must ensure proper management of the project. We would like to move savings from other successfully implemented actions, e.g. from A2.



### ***General considerations on categories***

The overall consumption of 24 months until 30-09-2012 is shown in table 4. Totally 34% of the total budget has been spent within half of the projects' life span. It covers expenditures of 24 months out of 48 months (end date 30-09-2014, 48 months totally). Thus, we can assume a slight delay of the expenditures, however this delay occurred because most preparatory A actions are implemented in the beginning of the Project, which cost less comparing to costs foreseen in the C actions.

However incurred expenditures in sum of 274.546 eur reach the threshold of 150% for next payment. 1<sup>st</sup> pre-financing issued by EC was 152.604 EUR, thus now we reach 170% comparing to first EC instalment.

**Table 4. The overall consumption of 24 months**

<b>category</b>	<b>planned</b>	<b>spent</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Personnel	296.906	143.171	18,68
2. Travel and subsistence	81.351	32.847	4,29
3. External assistance	175.257	31.276	4,08
4. Durable goods			
Infrastructure	52.468	0	0
Equipment	76.673	24.369	3,18
Prototype	0	0	
5. Land purchase / long-term lease	0	0	
6. Consumables	33.500	10.103	1,32
7. Other Costs	0	993	0.13
8. Overheads	50.105	16.777	2.19
TOTAL	766.260	259.537	33,87

### ***Comments per budget categories:***

#### **Personnel.**

##### **Unit rates:**

Two unit rates have been applied for LZS. One rate is related to ECONAT project while order of appointment to work for ECONAT included exact number of hours and rate applied. Another rate indicates salary wage paid from other than LIFE sources. These rates are listed in the financial report, and even LIFE unit rate is smaller.

The unit rate is higher in 2012 for project director Nerijus Zableckis because of calculation method: Reporting period covers vacation months - July and August, however vacation days are not included into productive days. Therefore unit rate has increased. Also Mr. Zableckis has reduced working hours number from 10 hours per day to 8 hours per day from 1<sup>st</sup> July.

##### **Employed personnel:**

More personnel has been employed by CB and almost all partners. Usually accountants and additional local experts have been temporarily or part time employed because of need to fulfil actions in order to reach project goals. The comparison between applications' budget and really employed personnel is shown in E1. CB

underestimated personnel cost for national manager and project accountancy. National manager had to be employed for 100% of time instead of part time. However the costs of extra personnel will consume the same or only slightly bigger amount of initially foreseen budget, because almost all partners started implementation of project several months later, and therefore it won't cause substantial changes to the budget.

Personnel employed by the beneficiaries has an appointment issued by the order of the director of organisation, where appropriate amount of hours (or percentage of total time) of the employee is dedicated for work within this life project. Beside this all fill in time sheets (more about time sheets under answers to EC letters).

#### Payments to bankruptcy fund:

These payments are performed only by non-governmental organisations.

#### **Travel.**

Travel costs bear expenditures of project participant costs: fuel for the car, car rent (in case travel performed by rented car), transport tickets, subsistence costs (per Diem), and accommodation costs. Travel costs (transport, accommodation, catering) incurred by participants of workshops and study tours are reported under travel category since these costs were foreseen in the application, and also it was requested during revision of application to reclassify accommodation costs under travel.

#### Travel documentation:

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

- Order of appointment;
- Travel sheet with corresponding fuel invoices;
- Accountancy sheet, where all expenditures are summed up;
- Other related documentation, e.g. car rent contract.

#### Driving sheets:

*In Lithuania:* Project personnel fills in nationally approved driving sheets. They contain:

**Trip kilometres**, either speedometer data from-to, or kilometre volume per travel, which allows tracking the purpose of the trip.

**Amounts of filled in fuel and prices with gasoline invoices** attached.

Usually gasoline is filled by project personnel in the gasoline stations, which are selected through public tender procedures. LFN for example uses Lukoil company. There monthly discount rate is applied. Fuel costs are withdrawn from the personnel cards. Therefore gasoline invoices are a bit higher than reported amounts in the monthly report issued by Lukoil. In the report we use discounted sums. The account of Lukoil is regularly uploaded with appropriate amount. In cases when Lukoil account becomes empty because it has not been paid by LFN, the travelling persons used cash to pay for gasoline.

*Denmark:* In general, travel costs can be pre-financed by the employee or are directly paid by AC. In case the employees have pre-financed the travel costs, they can request the costs from employer. In case the travel costs are directly financed by AC, the recurring costs are directly book kept by the companies' accountant.

Reimbursement of private car cost: On basis of driving book and the km-rate (fixed by national tax authority) the expenses were reimbursed. **Driving sheets** are filled in.

#### Per Diem:

Per diem amounts are set by Regulation issued by Lithuanian Ministry of Finances. Normally 1 day payment is 2,83 EUR, if employee spends more than 1 day, there is rate of 5,65 eur per day applied. If employee travels from home office to project sites, per diem rate is not applied. Usually it is the case for Regional Parks, since their home offices are located close to project sites.

#### Usage of cars:

Lithuanian legislation allows using cars for the project, which are private, rented or owned by CB or AB. In case of private cars usage a contract of rent has to be issued, however owner is not paid for the rent, but only compensated appropriate amount for the repair of the car (not amortization, but real expenditures).

For example: two persons working in LFN for ECONAT: Nerijus Zableckis and Dalia Bastyte use sometimes LFN's car Ford Fusion, registration No. FCU512, or rented car in case when company's car was occupied. Car is rented from company, which proposed lowest price. Car rent was included into application under travel costs as indicated in detailed travel costs calculation in the answer to EC during application revision.

#### Workshop and study tour costs:

In project proposal it was foreseen to cover workshops and study tour costs in the amount of (travel): Workshops D1 – 11.340 eur; Study tours D3 – 10.336 eur. So far workshop costs included participants' transport costs, accommodation and catering during workshop or study tour. Normally, LFN cannot cover any costs of people not employed by LFN. Therefore either special orders of appointment or agreements must be issued. Cooperation agreement is an agreement between Beneficiary and invited participant, where both parties agree that travel and accommodation costs will be covered or reimbursed by the Beneficiary. In some cases guides or lecturers were paid honorarium; they are reported under other costs.

#### **External.**

##### Pond digging:

In the project budget it was foreseen "Digging of ponds in target areas". However during tender procedures we asked tender participants to provide price per machinery working hour. Such contract is based on previous LIFE project (LIFE05NAT/LT/000094) when machinery was paid for hours. Another way to tender is to ask price per m3 of excavated earth, however it is hard to measure while working hours are proved every day by supervising projects' personnel.

The service paid for company covers rent of the machinery including full costs of operation: driver, fuel, technical care and also transportation to the project sites.

##### We ask you to accept following external cost, which was not foreseen:

- Consultancies on A1 inventory of species; legal consultancy, on permissions, and Natura 2000 establishment; translation service to translate application from English to Lithuanian for MoE (due to fact that all documentation in Lithuania must be in Lithuanian).
- Additional costs for DVD movie creation. As informed in the inception report, we have subcontracted film production. There was foreseen DVD film production;

however under budget category there was only DVD production (1000 copies) foreseen without costs for filming. Therefore additionally we have to increase the action cost adding film production expenditures.

According to tender procedures, we have selected lowest price for 1000 DVD copies and film production. Total amount to be spent on action will include:

DVD – 1000 copies – 5700 eur (under consumables as foreseen in the budget).

Film production – 7854 eur (extra amount in external);

Total 13554 eur.

The needed amount – 7854 eur will be taken from savings from web page design (foreseen 2000 eur, paid 395 eur), audit (foreseen 5000 EUR, according to tender proposed lowest price – 3500 EUR); the rest will be taken from other savings under the same category, or by increasing category costs up to 10%.

Remark: Financially unreported remains external service provided by herpetologist dr. Martina Meeske. She is subcontracted by AC, but so far unpaid for service: consultancies of turtle rearing, preparation of A1, monitoring and other turtle related actions.

### **Infrastructure.**

No expenditures have been incurred for infrastructure. Initially foreseen construction of rearing station (further we call it rearing enclosure), with foreseen cost 12 468 eur, in fact cost only 3 852,42 EUR, which has been reclassified according to incurred costs: consumables (2 904,27 EUR) and personnel (948,15 EUR). Many small items were purchased for station instalment, e.g. plastic, glass, concrete, etc., which according to CP are consumables. Also 2 technical workers of LZS were allocated to construct instalment. The construction took place in old building, which was converted into rearing enclosure.

### **Equipment.**

#### Changes in the budget:

The expenditures for purchase of rearing place was foreseen under equipment for 7 473 EUR, but LZS spent totally 4 539,69 EUR: 2 404,2 EUR under equipment, and 2 135,49 under consumables. Such division occurs because of internal rules of depreciation. Only items which cost more than 1000 LTL are inventoried as durable goods.

#### Additional purchases:

We have indicated in the Inception report about need to purchase additional equipment, needed for project actions. Therefore we have purchased:

Transmitters with radio receiver and antenna for turtle research A1.

Trimmers for bush cutting, 2 pc., for bush cutting C2.

Camera for documentation of project actions. Generally declared under E1.

Totally spent 6 752 EUR. We kindly ask you to accept these costs.

#### Clarification about cattle purchase:

Totally LFN paid for 22 beef cattle purchase (21 heifers and 1 bull). Totally it has been paid 27 258,46 EUR. In application we have foreseen 10 cattle or 20 sheep for 10.000 EUR. Therefore we kindly ask you to accept costs of 11 cattle, and half of incurred costs – 13 629, 23 EUR.

The purchase of cattle has been implemented by the farmer according to the agreement between LFN and farmer. The cattle appear on the farmers' list of durable goods,

however depreciation of cattle will occur for 10 years period as it is stated in the agreement, thus, every year 10% of cattle value will be reduced until 0% after 10 years.

The costs for the above mentioned items will be covered from savings: purchase of data and GIS software (foreseen 10 000 EUR, spent 429 EUR) equipment for zoo – 5068 EUR. We kindly ask you to accept changes under equipment.

#### **Consumables.**

As already informed in the Inception Report we have wrongly allocated some expenditure under consumables. Some of the items like layout or printing were reported under external. However we reported unforeseen items like various materials purchased for turtle rearing place and rearing station. We kindly ask you to accept unforeseen items to be reported under consumables.

#### **Clarification about Turtle food:**

The fodder consumed by turtles has been estimated by the end of every month. A special certificate has been issued by LZS project manager, where appropriate amounts of food with corresponding invoiced amounts are indicated. These amounts refer to formula of food consumption by individual juvenile and adult turtle.

#### **Other costs.**

They were not foreseen in the budget, therefor we kindly ask you to accept these costs. They originate since we have expenditures, which fall under this category:

Honorarium for lecturers – 801,42 EUR. We paid only high level experts for preparation of lecture to present their personnel experience about particular cases of network development and provide input for Lithuanian case.

A guide was paid who guided group during farmers' trip in Latvia and Estonia – 192 EUR.

Totally 993,42 EUR.

#### **Overhead.**

We kindly ask you to accept higher overheads of project partners: DNP, VRP, MRP, LZS. They have reported higher than 7% overheads due to very high office running costs in Lithuania (heating, and electricity). However CB reduced their overheads, therefor general overheads do not exceed 7% rule.

#### ***Financial Issues raised by the Commission***

#### **Letter of 22-09-2011**

##### **Personnel costs**

*The question was raised concerning projects director costs – the workload too high for projects director; and too many experts employed which can result in increased personnel budget.*

I would like to inform, that project's director involvement into project has been dedicated up to 20% of his total workload. I also would like to inform that we decided to reclassify project's director's role into financial manager. It is related to the fact that

since 1<sup>st</sup> July there is new executive director in LFN, who carries out supervision of all projects including LIFE without salary costs for ECONAT project. The financial manager is responsible for providing financial advice and support to project manager to enable sound project implementation, monitors and prepares budgetary planning for actions, including right allocation of co-financing, prepares financial report and contributes to technical reporting, also contributes to the implementation of particular actions, e.g. A4, A5, A7. The financial manager dedicates 20% of his total workload to the project.

Comment on increased number of personnel is given under budget comments (personnel).

#### Additional equipment items

This question has been answered under financial comments for equipment.

#### External costs

This question has been answered under financial comments for equipment.

#### Civil servant/permanent employees

The expenditures on construction of rearing enclosures have been explained in financial comments. The LZS seconded own staff – 2 technical workers – for this particular task. They have been instructed to work for ECONAT project.

#### **Letter of 09/10/2012**

To provide a description of the time registration procedure for you and all your associated beneficiaries, in particular the submission of the daily time sheet of the employee and the validation by the supervisor.”

Time registration procedure is set up by every Beneficiary. The CB prepared time registration rules based on the commission’s circular note of 08-12-2010 on registration time devoted to Life+ projects. These rules have been discussed with AB, and final version is followed for time registration:

- Time worked on the LIFE ECONAT project is identified and noted on the electronic project time sheets, prepared specifically for the recording working time on the LIFE09 NAT/LT/000581 project.
- Daily devotion of the time on tasks related to the different projects is registered on daily basis by the worker. The working hours are typed into the LIFE ECONAT project time sheet.
- Completed project time sheets are printed and signed by the employee and approved by the supervisor within first week following the month it concerns.
- In cases when employee has no access to time registration system (e.g. during fieldwork), the timesheets are filled in as soon as the employee gets access.
- In case time sheet is signed by the director of the AB, the supervision is performed by the accountant.
- In case of several LIFE or EU funded projects, only one time sheet is filled in.

Time sheets originals are regularly collected by CB. There was a case when Monitor during visit was shown only print outs of the AC personnel, which were sent to CB in electronic version. But I can ensure, that all AB have to send their documents at least twice per year and I strictly follow this procedure.

Inform how you have rectified deficiencies in the timesheets and invoices;

Removal of deficiencies in Time sheets is explained above.

The time sheets of AC which were shown during the monitoring visit 15/05/2012 were internal AC files, which were sent to CB under request to see the general situation with the working time. Such situation occurred because the agreement between AB and AC for cooperation in the ECONAT project was signed 04/04/2011 and the first report foreseen (the same as for all beneficiaries) was 15/06/2011. The first report was not submitted because not many actions were carried out during the two months. The date of the second report was 01/08/2012 (again, standard date we have in the agreements with all beneficiaries). We had not received any report yet from AC before the visit of monitoring. Therefore we had no signed original timesheets, only internal files from AC. Currently we have signed annexes to the agreements that all AB submit reports more often, i.e. once per half a year. We kindly ask to accept the personnel costs of AC.

The invoices are now clearly stamped. For this CB and AB have produced special stamps. We use extra line in digital format under the requisites when sending information to companies to issue invoices. Example is given below:

Lietuvos gamtos fondas

Labdaros paramos fondas

Įmonės kodas 190776346

PVM kodas LT100005480317

Adresas Algirdo g. 22-3

LT-03218

Projektas ECONAT LIFE09NAT/LT/581

Explain excessive working hours

Excessive working hours was a mistake in time sheets which occurred on the fact that time was registered during intensive work when educational material had to be prepared. Therefore employee this month spent more time than usual. According to CP CB and AB are supposed to register actual number of hours worked. Therefore sometimes working hours registered in time sheets exceed usual workload, however employee works less next week or month, thus, keeping LIFE working hours in line with total working hours number registered by the employer.

Provide more details about the information boards and clear justification of the higher costs.

The cost of 386 EUR under D2e has been foreseen for notice boards, which are supposed to be cheaper than information boards, which are foreseen under D2a for the cost of 2 700 EUR.

## ***Co-financing***

The co-financing to the project is provided by the National Programme for EU LIFE+ projects. The national co-financing of 192 373,00 EUR has been allocated by the order of the Minister of MoE, issued by 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011, No. D1-83. The first prepayment of 76 949,22 EUR has been transferred by 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2012, out of which 36 179,66 EUR has been spent.

However this issue needs **clarification**.



The co-financing agreement has been signed by LFN and The Environment Project Management Agency (EPMA), the date of agreement is 30-03-2012 (agreement attached in the annex 38). Initially the co-financing of 192.373 EUR has been allocated by the MoE, which is also Associated Beneficiary of the project. The co-financing amount has been included into the AB declaration, however administration of the co-financing has been assigned to the EPMA, which belongs to MoE, but forms different Legal Entity. Usually EPMA administrates projects assigned by MoE. We would like to keep MoE as AB with foreseen contribution, which is administered by EPMA without registering EPMA as a co-financier.

### ***Clarifications concerning VAT***

VAT can be recovered only by AC. All Lithuanian AB must pay VAT, but they cannot recover it.

Non VAT payers are these partners: MoE, MRP, VRP. These partners are not included into VAT register, therefore they cannot recover VAT.

Partners, registered into VAT register: LFN, DNP and LZS. However LFN and DNP cannot recover VAT since EU or any other project, funded from public funds, are not related to their economic activity according to the Law of Value Added Tax (announced Žin., 2002, Nr. [35-1271](#)):

#### ***Article 3. Scope of VAT***

*3) the goods and/or services are supplied by a taxable person in the performance of his/its economic activities, i.e. acting as such. A natural person shall not be considered a taxable person in respect of the supply of goods and/or services if the transactions concluded by the natural person are not related to the economic activities carried out by him.*

LZS has an exemption under the Law of Value Added Tax, paragraph 23. Part 1, which states the activities carried out by non-profit bodies, particularly by zoological gardens, are not the scope of VAT.

The declarations are provided by non VAT partners:  
MoE, MRP, VRP (Annex 39).

Bearing in mind that none of Lithuanian Partners are in the scope of VAT, we kindly ask you not to require official VAT statements. Instead of this we can provide printouts from official State Tax Inspectorate webpage <http://www.vmi.lt/lt/index.aspx?itemId=1003740>, because VAT payers are listed publicly.

### **AUDITOR DATA**

Auditor has been preselected according to public tender.

The winner is:

UAB "Audito laikas",

Company registration Number: 251373640

Address: Vytauto g.43, Marijampolė,

Audit Certificate No. 001222

Mrs. Zina Kazlauskienė, auditor certificate No. 000123

[el.p.zina@auditolaikas.lt](mailto:el.p.zina@auditolaikas.lt), tel. [+37069983955](tel:+37069983955)



## List of Annexes

1. The action plans for the corridors
2. E.o. rearing methodology
3. Criteria for the favourable conservation status
4. Scenario for creating the ecological network
5. Scenario for creating the ecological network2
6. The amendments to the regulation of the Nature Frame
7. The management regulation for the target species
8. Natura 2000 of Bestraigiškė
9. The form of agreement and its translation into English
10. The map of the area of the demonstration farm
11. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats in the project area LT07
12. The photos and a table with coordinates of new habitats in the project areas LT01 and LT06
13. The photos and a table with coordinates of egg laying sites created in the project area LT06
14. The photos and a table with coordinates of the restored habitats
15. Changes to the Methodology for Reclamation of Damaged Lands
16. A course work about growth of E.o. hatchlings in LZS
17. The photos of the enclosures in LZS
18. H.a rearing methodology
19. Course works about distribution and habitats of small E.o. populations and colonization of restored ponds by *Odonata*
20. Meetings with the landowners
21. Event for the 20th LIFE Anniversary “LIFE protects our rare animals”
22. Event for the 20<sup>th</sup> LIFE Anniversary “Bombina song contest”
23. Guided tour in MRP
24. Guided tour in VRP
25. Information board in LZS
26. Study tour to Denmark, study tour to Latvia and Estonia
27. Educational material for schools
28. Posters
29. T-shirts
30. The minutes of the Steering Committee meeting
31. EU Workshop on Amphibian Mortality on Roads
32. Wetland study trip
33. LIFE AQUILA study tour in Lithuania
34. List of articles, radio and television broadcasts
35. DVD film scenario
36. Distribution details of the project dissemination materials
37. Report about use of protected species submitted to MoE after field season 2011.

38. The co-financing agreement between LFN and The Environment Project Management Agency (EPMA);
39. VAT declarations of MoE, MRP, VRP, DNP.