



LIFE Project Number
LIFE09NAT/LT/00581

Inception Report
Covering the project activities from 13-10-2010- to 30-06-2011

Reporting Date
30-06-2011

ECONAT

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

Data Project

Project location	Lithuania: Alytus, Lazdijai districts
Project start date:	13-10-2010
Project end date:	30-09-2014
Total budget	€ 766 260
EC contribution:	€ 381 150
(%) of eligible costs	49.79

Data Beneficiary

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List of 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
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*
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*

1. Executive summary

1.1. General progress

The project so far achieved remarkable progress. All foreseen actions were started as foreseen in the work plan. Almost all preparatory actions were started or have been discussed and considered before their foreseen starting date. There is significant progress in all actions: preparatory, public awareness and dissemination, overall project operation and management, except most of concrete conservation actions, which must start later according to the work plan.

The kick-off meeting was organised in December 2010 discussing the project actions with all AB. During the meeting management structure of the project was set and steering committee established. The agreements with AB were signed in spring 2011 before the start of field season. Last agreement due to long approval procedure was signed in June with the MoE. Also, the main co-financier – The Ministry of Environment – so far did not issue the co-financing contract due to missing internal procedures.

The implementation of activities follows the work plan. The preparation of action plan (A1.), which covers preparation for all concrete conservation actions, has been started in spring 2011. The selection of sites for possible restoration of habitats and/or establishment of ecological corridors is on-going. The specialists and experts so far indicated some sites, where landowners have been talked to about agreements and habitat restoration within their land.

The draft concept for ecological network scenario has been developed, but still needs corrections, which will be adjusted in autumn. The draft methods for turtle egg incubation in captivity and tree frog breeding ex-situ have been developed by the project specialists. The methods will be adjusted later after accumulation of more experience.

Concrete conservation measures were applied already for protection of turtle nesting sites (C5.) by putting metal nets on them to prevent predation. Eggs which were found in risky and unsuitable for incubation places like roadsides were dug out and brought to the zoo garden for incubation.

The public awareness and dissemination actions also were started. Already two study trips and two

workshops were organised in order to exchange experiences which are needed to ensure smooth implementation of objectives.

1.2. *Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable.*

We confirm that project objectives and the work plan are viable. The implementation of activities follows the foreseen work plan. The main objective 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.

The work plan had to be corrected slightly since it had overlapping or missing deadlines. Corrected version of milestones and deliverables is attached (Annex 2) where track changes allow indication of corrections. Despite small changes the work plan is valid for all actions.

1.2. *Problems encountered*

So far, project goes smoothly without any severe problems. The major threat arises due to delayed and not yet signed agreement of co-financing by the Ministry of Environment (please refer to financial part).

More experts were employed starting with CB and some of the AB. This will cause slight increase in expenditures of salaries, but it will not make substantial change increasing the expenditure by more than 30%. Also, after having started project, we detected that foreseen budget does not include some necessary expenses; however none of these items or services will cause substantial changes.

2. *Administrative part*

2.1. *Description of project management*

Main project management is performed by the coordinating beneficiary (CB). In order to ensure smooth running and management of the whole project CB has dedicated wide range of specialists to fulfil task of the project. Projects' manager and projects' director is set by CB. The project manager in the start of the project was Nerijus Zableckis, the executive director of the CB, but later in June 2011 this function went to Mrs. Dalia Batyte, former assistant of the project manager. Nerijus Zableckis is a project director, and performs supervision of the project; controls general performance; helps by reporting. 20-40% of his time is allocated for the project depending upon needs.

The project manager is responsible for smooth implementation of actions and targets, also general accountancy and compiling financial and technical reports. Project manager works 100% for the project.

Other AB dedicated specialist teams as foreseen in the revised application. Additionally accountants are dedicated to work for the project and manage AB finances. Every specialist or expert of the AB (VRP, DNP, MRP) has a dedication of relevant public staff for work in this LIFE+ project. 2 persons from MoE are nominated to work for the project. The list of personnel is attached in annex 3.

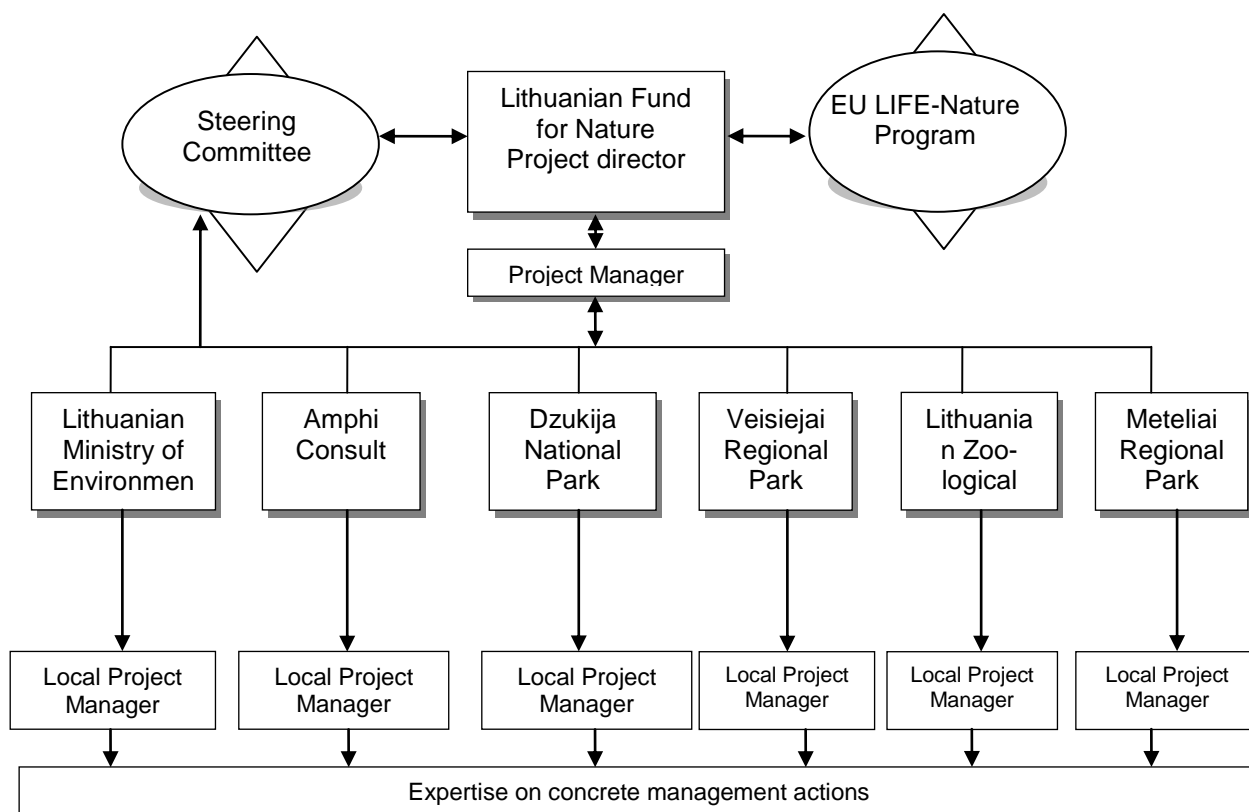
Every AB must report financial and technical implementation with results to the coordinating beneficiary yearly or according to the demand. Every person fills in time sheets, which were modified after the visit of monitor.

The steering committee was set up during kick-off meeting in December 2010. It consists of the persons: Nerijus Zableckis – secretary, without voting right; chairman: Lars Briggs – director, AC ; members: A.Klimavicius – head of protected sites strategical department, MoE; Eugenijus Drobekis – head of nature department, DNP; Irma Maciuleviciene – specialist, VRP; Ramunas Krugelis – director, MRP; Virginija Raudeliuniene, deputy director, LZS.

It was decided to have at least two meetings per year to review projects' implementation and challenges. The Steering committee already had one meeting in June.

2.2. Organigramme of the project team and the project management structure

The organigramme is almost the same as set in application, because project management structure did not change. Only change is that AC has also local manager.



2.3. Partnership agreements status (incl. date of signature) and key content

All the partnership agreements have been signed, the dates are indicated in the table No.1., agreement copies are attached (annex 1). 1st payments (40%) of the total contract sum for partners according to contract agreements were transferred as indicated in the table No.1. The only exception is MoE , the payments for this AB will be done according to the requests since the total Life part of the budget is rather very small – 880 eur.

Table No.1.

No.	Partner	Agreement No.	Agreement date	Ist Payment
1.	LZS	LIFE-11-01	18/03/2011	Done
2.	DNP	LIFE-11-02	04/04/2011	Done
3.	VRP	LIFE-11-03	04/04/2011	Done
4.	MRP	LIFE-11-04	04/04/2011	Done
5.	Amphi	LIFE-11-05	04/04/2011	Done
6.	AM	LIFE-11-06	28/06/2011	Acc. to requests

3. Technical part

The milestones, deliverables table and time table plan differ slightly indicating different deadlines. Therefore correction of deliverables and milestones tables was made according to time table, the adjustments and changes of deadlines are indicated in clarifications of actions. The project output indicators so far do not need corrections, but after having compiled the action plan (Action A.1) corrections might be needed since exact numbers of Natura 2000 sites, habitats, area size etc. will be known.

3.1. Progress

ACTION A.1: Development of action plans

Milestone	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
50 % of action plan prepared	01/03/2011	In progress
50 % target project areas visited	01/05/2011	Completed by 30/06/2011
All project sites visited	01/10/2011	In progress
100 % of action plan prepared*	01/10/2011	In progress
100 % of target species inventory carried out	01/10/2011	In progress
100 % of target species inventory carried out	01/10/2012	In progress

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

Deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
Action plans for the target species developed	01/08/2014	To be started
Produced action plan	01/02/2012	In progress

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. an submitted to MoE.

Clarification

Several different deadlines are set for the same action in time table, milestones and deliverable table, therefore:

1. The action plan for ecological corridor will be finished by 01/10/2011 as it was foreseen in the time table, the deadlines in deliverable table are changed accordingly.
2. Preparation of National action plan for the target species *Hyla arborea* and update of national plan of *Emys orbicularis* will be finished by 01/02/2012. The deadline set in the deliverable table was 01/08/2014, but we try to keep the time table and therefore we would like to set a deadline on 01/02/2012, also, this date was indicated as deadline for Action plan for ecological corridors. New deadlines are indicated in the deliverables and time table in attachment Annex 2, the track changes indicate changes.

Results of the action

Action plan for ecological corridor development already started; 50% of target areas are visited.

The main activities carried cover literature research, preparation and printing of maps and research of area by visiting the places. There are more than 50% areas already visited. Most data were collected about new distribution areas of turtles, fire bellied toad and tree frogs. The data are collected and rough evaluation report prepared (Annex 7).

Detailed maps of the project area were prepared. The maps were prepared using digital data from geo-referenced basis of Lithuanian State GBD10LT. They were prepared as orthophotographic maps ORT10LT, using scale 1:10000 with several GIS layers, e.g. water bodies and protected areas. In total 154 maps in A3 size were prepared. The area for investigations covers approximately 110.000 ha. Attached there is a general map of all location where individual plots are marked indicating visited areas (Annex 4).

The next preparatory step for the field surveys was obtaining the permissions from the State Environmental Inspection to work with the protected species. According to the Lithuanian legislation, the permissions to observe, survey and manage the populations of protected species have to be obtained. The permissions are described in chapter 5.2.

Field works

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. 50% of the project areas were visited by the project staff. Also, participants of the 2nd workshop (Action D.1) did investigations of the area. During these visits the state of small water bodies and surrounding environment was evaluated and preliminary distribution of amphibian species surveyed. The data are filled in special forms (Annex 5), which were used in previous Life project (LIFE05nat/Lt/000094). So far, 80 such forms have been filled in.

During this season the main attention was paid to *Emys orbicularis* and *Hyla arborea*. These species are the rarest in Lithuania, their rearing is foreseen in the project, and the first habitat management will be carried out for these species. *Lacerta agilis* was not covered by the field surveys yet, because August is the most suitable month to observe this species.

Further plans

During the rest of the summer 2011 the investigations of areas will be continued to cover all foreseen sites by 100%. The data will be analysed in the end of summer – beginning of September and recommendations for habitat restorations and creation of ecological network will be prepared. Beside investigations, the interview with local people in the project area is carried out and filled in the questionnaire forms (Annex 6). The forms are copied for some hundred copies and distributed to project team. Furthermore, investigations of *Lacerta agilis* will be carried out in August. Some corrections and updates of the action plan will be made next years because collection of data and adjustments will be on going regularly.

Review of national plan for European pond turtles will be started in autumn when more data will be collected about new sites. Preparation of tree frog national conservation plan will be started in autumn.

ACTION A.2: Rearing methods for *Emys orbicularis*

<i>Milestone/deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Status 30/06/2011</i>
Elaboration of rearing methods	01/03/2013	In progress

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

Results of the action

The draft method for egg rearing prepared (Annex 8). 1 study tour organised for experience exchange. The exchange of rearing methods started in April 2011. The egg rearing methods have been drafted in spring 2011 after the study tour to Germany (please refer to action D.3). This draft of methods focuses on egg rearing and it is based on the experience of LZS employees and advices of specialists of visited zoos and nature stations. The practical observations started in the end of May when 47 eggs were brought to LZS from project sites (Action C.5). The method describes how to collect eggs, prepare incubators and hatch the eggs, and keeping the juveniles for 2-3 years in captivity and release to wild.

Further plans

The method for egg rearing will be elaborated further during 2011-2012 while observing the success of reproduction. The methods will be adjusted with another part of this action - rearing adult turtles. This method will be based on experience of LZS in keeping few adult turtles, and experiences of other zoos, especially in instalment of rearing station (Action C.5). Next experience exchange on rearing methods will happen in summer 2011 to Latvian herpetological station in Daugavpils.

ACTION A.3: Determining the favourable conservation status for Annex IV amphibian and reptile species in South Lithuania

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Status 30/06/2011</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 started in II quarter by field survey and collection of data about target species. The action is combined with action A.1. Collected data are used to assess populations and set criteria for evaluation of status of local populations.

Further plans: The list of indicators will be prepared during summer 2011. The collection of data will be on-going throughout the season 2011 and 2012. Evaluation of data will be carried out in 2012 autumn and draft report prepared by 01/10/2012 and final elaboration of status will be made in beginning 2013 to finish it in due time.

ACTION A.4: Ecological network-development

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Status 30/06/2011</i>
Scenario and regulation of ecological network prepared	31/12/2012	In progress

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Status 30/06/2011</i>
Scenario for ecological network development	01/02/2012	In progress

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

Clarification: The deadline for “Scenario and regulation of ecological network” in deliverable table changed into earlier date – 31/12/2011 according to time table.

Results of the action: The criteria/methodology for setting the ecological network has been discussed with stakeholders and draft version prepared (Annex 9).

The concept was adjusted to the Lithuanian situation and its’ first draft was developed during the meetings with the experts, staff from the Ministry of Environment and the workshop “Establishment of ecological networks – experiences and perspectives” (Action D.1). The draft of methodology sets indicators to define habitat types which ensure ecological connectivity in the landscape and support target species. The elaboration of the network during the workshops and seminars was implemented. For example, during 1st workshop foreign experts discussed, how classification of land-use elements and management schemes existing in areas might be incorporated into ecological network (the minutes are attached (Action D.1)).

Further plans: The preparation of management regulation of the network will start in autumn when main criteria for habitat restoration will be set. Legal documents: methodology and management regulation will be prepared and submitted to MoE in due time.

Implementation of demonstration example – a network within Alytus county – will be done in practice during the whole project duration. All C actions refer to the creation of the corridor in practice. Administrative reform has no impact on the objectives of the project because we do not foresee any legal document to be adopted within administrative units. The C actions will be implemented on the basis of local agreements and permissions, issued either by private owner or by the local Land reclamation offices in Lazdijai, Varena or Alytus municipalities for state owned land. These offices function instead of Alytus County since the functions for land issues have been split after the reform.

ACTION A.5: Establishing new Natura 2000 sites

Not to be started yet.

ACTION A.6: Preparation for permissions

Milestone	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
50% of permissions achieved	01/03/2012	In progress
100% of permissions achieved	01/03/2014	

Expected results: 40 permissions for management.

Results of the action : Totally 10 landowners have been met. The landowners were approached by field experts during investigations in spring 2011. All 10 landowners show their interest into elaboration of agreements, however none of them have signed yet because not all habitat restoration measures are clearly set.

Further plans: Local meetings with landowners will be on-going throughout the summer and autumn 2011 to sign 10 agreements. In summer we expect to have signed 10 agreements and permissions.

ACTION A.7: Farm development

Milestone	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
Ecological development of 2 farms carried out	01/06/2014	In progress
100% of permissions achieved	01/03/2014	

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

Results of the action

The selection of potential farmers started. Local meetings with potential farmers were made, and one study tour to another EU financed project organised.

Local farmer Jonas Sidaravicius, who is also very good specialist of turtles and amphibians, was employed by LFN to help with this task. His local knowledge and experience in farming will help by selection and involvement of farmers and developing the farms. So far, we contacted landowners in 3 places, where special farming is needed. 1 place is located close to Bestraigiské forest, where it is needed to manage the area by grazing nesting slopes. However, the landowners live there only during the summer and they cannot take care of the cattle. Another strategic locality is Vilkiautinis ponds. The land, surrounding the ponds belongs to 7 owners and we plan to check the possibilities for the cattle there. One more locality, which needs such management, is Baltosios Ančios Herpetological Reserve, but almost all the houses are made into the summerhouses there. These are only the first ideas, where the cattle would be the most useful; still more research is needed.

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: Selection of 2 farmers/farms will be on-going throughout the summer. Selected farms before any instalment will get prepared business (development) plan. For this reason we invited experts from WWF to help in development of nature friendly farms.

Actions C: Concrete conservation actions**ACTION C.1: Habitat management for target species in the project area**

Results of action: Not to be started yet. The first works will be done in autumn 2011.

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

Results of action: Not to be started yet.

ACTION C.3: Restoration of wetlands

Not to be started yet. This action will be started in autumn as foreseen in project time table. The permission procedures were discussed in local municipalities' melioration departaments (more in chapter 5.2.).

ACTION C.4: Habitat and population management in sandpits

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
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 m² water installed; 100 m² of nesting sites per site; b.c and b.v. supported by captive breeding and release of 3000 animals (if species is still present); 1 exploited sand pit re-cultivated as demonstration site.

Results of action

Registration of sand pits potential for creation of foreseen habitats is started. We found 8 places where sand was dug out, and which could be restored into habitats. Mainly such sites 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 smooth. Also the exploited sandpits can be made into a perfect habitat for sunbasking of *Lacerta agilis* and digging for *Pelobates fuscus*. Water if needed can be hold if additional plastic layer is laid on the bottom of sand pit. We will consider this kind of instalments when compiling action plan, also after study tour to sand pit management sites (Action D.3).

Further plans

Investigation and registration of sand pits. Possible restoration works, i.e. removal of garbage in autumn 2011 might started.

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

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
1 st young <i>Hyla arborea</i> released	01/09/2012	In progress
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 frogs. *The clarification is provided for 2 of them:*

- *Subactivity - Rearing methodology*

The rearing methods as it was informed during monitoring visit foresees that hatched turtle juveniles must be kept about 3 years in captivity before they can be released into nature. However it is only draft method, and it will be changed and corrected. According to other countries experiences, juveniles are kept for shorter period, i.e. in Germany. Today LZS has already 4 hatched juveniles (they were first time reproduced by turtles brought to Zoo some years ago). The observations of their development also contribute to the elaboration of methodology, and today it can be confirmed by responsible specialists of LZS that their development is going faster than estimated. Good feeding conditions, temperature, light ensure the same or even a bit faster development than in nature. It means that 2 years old hatchlings might be ready for release them to wild nature.

This year 47 eggs were collected. According to observations in incubators, almost all of them are fertilized and will hatch in autumn 2011. We estimate that in any case, if we release them in summer of 2014 after 3 years of rearing, the generation of turtles hatched in 2012 will probably be released after 2 years of rearing. It will ensure that objective will be reached. For this we will ask next year for

permission by state authorities for collection of 5-6 nests or more nests depending upon number of hatched turtles in 2011. This year permission was issued only for 50 eggs (please refer to chapter of permissions), but successful experience and results in rearing will ensure that responsible authorities will issue permission for needed number. Also, the permissions will be asked for nest collection, because number of eggs varies in every nest, average 10-15 eggs, therefor exact number of eggs could not be collected. Therefor logically nests must be collected.

Subactivity - The radio tracking

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 draft methodology of rearing (Action A.2) advises not to disturb released juveniles. Therefor radio tracking will be applied to adult turtles. The sites where nesting sites are unknown will be of most importance to radio track. 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, which is 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. This year radio tracking is performed in Vilkiautinis, a new location of turtles is monitored by 6 transmitters, and 4 transmitters – in part of Juodabalė, a Natura 2000 site, where it is unknown where animals hibernate and lay eggs. We plan to extend radio tracking to 2012 to cover more unknown places and then foresee management measures to improve the situation.

Expected results would be monitor of 4 new sites by radio tracking of 20 animals. For this we need to use 20 transmitters and 2 radio receivers. Budget will increase by purchase of 20 transmitters (appr. 5000 Eur) and 1 radio receiver (1000 eur) , 1 receiver is used from another Life project (LIFE05NAT/LT/000094).

Deadline for subactivity – 31/12/2012.

Results of action

Nesting site protection and radio tracking implemented, laboratory equipped, rearing of e.o. and tree frogs started.

In June 2011 5 turtle populations were monitored by 9 people every day from 5 p.m. until 12 p.m. and in the mornings. 13 nests (3 nests in Juodabalė, 9 in Kučiuliškė, 1 in Bestraigėškė) were covered by metal nets to protect them against predators.

1 laboratory equipped with 2 incubators for rearing and 1 conditioner. The third incubator will be purchased next year. Incubators were ordered in Czech Republic (picture attached). However incubators are sensible to the temperature, therefor conditioner was purchased to ensure that no implications occur during very hot days.

47 turtle eggs have been reared. Eggs from the nests on the roadsides were collected from 4 clutches. The collected eggs were transported by car to LZS. They were measured, weighed and currently are incubated in the incubators.

Also, tree frog breeding ex-situ was started. The project team did research of still existing tree frog populations. In the end of May 200 eggs from the strongest population of tree frogs (close to Kapčiamiestis) were collected in one pond. The eggs were transferred to the farmer Jonas Sidaravicius, where outdoor containers have been installed. The eggs developed into tadpoles after one week, the tadpoles are additionally fed with fish food. Containers were regularly cleaned to prevent diseases and predation. In the end of June the larvae were transferred to cages, installed in the pond by farmer. The larvae are kept for some weeks in cages, where they can safely feed and develop before they can be released back to wild.

Amphibian experts Florian Bibelriether and Lars Briggs from AC prepared the methodology and instructed

Dalia Bastyte and Jonas Sidaravicius, how to rear the eggs. The rearing methodology for tree frogs is attached as Annex.10.

Permissions were issued for all rearing and investigation activities. They are attached: Annex 11.1. Turtle investigations; 11.2. Tree frog breeding; Annex 11.3. other amphibian species investigations.

Further plans

Further observation will be carried out to monitor reared turtle eggs, which must hatch in autumn 2011.

Juveniles of tree frogs after metamorphose in July and August 2011 will be released into wild.

The enclosures in LZS for rearing will be installed in 2012. After having consulted with other Zoos, LZS will install 3 enclosures: 1 for adult turtles of 30 m2 size, and 2 for juveniles, 20 m2 in total. The enclosure for juveniles will be 1 building, but it will be divided into 2 parts, where juvenile turtles will be separated into two flocks. It will reduce competition between animals. The total size of enclosures will be bigger than planned, but construction costs will fit to the same budget. There is remade calculation of costs, which is in more details presented in financial chapter.

D. Public awareness and dissemination of results

ACTION D.1: Experience exchange workshops

Milestone	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
1 st experience exchange workshop organised	01/12/2010	Completed by 28/02/2011
2 nd experience exchange workshop organised	01/06/2011	Completed by 31/05/2011
3 rd experience exchange workshop organised	01/11/2012	
4 th experience exchange workshop organised	01/11/2013	

Expected results:

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

Results of 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 attached as annex 12.

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 are attached as Annex 13.

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.

Further action

The activity will be implemented as foreseen in work plan. 3rd workshop to be organised in autumn 2012 and 4th workshop in autumn 2013.

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

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
Installment of 7 notice boards	01/12/2010	Not started yet
50 % of meetings and guided tours implemented	01/11/2012	In progress
100 % of meetings and guided tours implemented	30/06/2014	In progress

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

Clarification

7 information boards are described in action D2e.

Results of action

Even though this action was foreseen to be started from the autumn 2011 it has already started in the spring 2011. The talks with the landowners, who live in the areas potential for the habitat restoration, are being carried out. Currently there are contacted 10 landowners, who live in the strategic places for the ecological network.

Further actions

This action will be carried on more intensively in the autumn.

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

Not to be started yet.

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

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
5 guided tours implemented	01/07/2014	

Expected results: 5 guided tours for 100 people.

To be started in 3rd quarter 2011.

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

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
5 guided tours implemented	01/07/2014	

Expected results: 5 guided tours for 100 people.

Bicycle orientation competition "Do not be slow as a turtle" will be organised on 30th July in Veisiejai regional park, whereas the routes will cross Natura 2000 sites designated for turtles. The poster attached (Annex 15). About 50 participants expected.

ACTION D.2.e: Installation of notice boards

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
Installment of 7 notice boards	01/12/2010	Not started yet

Expected results: 7 notice boards

Clarification

Since this action was described not clearly, we would like to prolong the deadline until the end of year 31/12/2011 instead of 01/12/2010.

ACTION D.3: Study tours

Milestone	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
1 st study tour organised	01/06/2011	Completed by 03/04/2011
2 nd study tour organised	01/05/2012	Completed by 08/04/2011

3 rd study tour organised	01/06/2012	
4 th study tour organised	01/10/2013	

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

Clarification

In description it is mentioned 4 study tours. Since we have specific subjects, I would like to keep 4 study tours as foreseen in milestone table.

Results of action

2 study tours were organised in spring 2011. 1 study tour aimed for experience exchange by Zoos on turtle rearing, and another tour aimed for farm development.

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 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.

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.

Further action

To be implemented according to time table. The possible topics for study will be sand pit management and cross border exchange with Belorussia, but due to unstable political situation in Belorussia, we might change this topic.

ACTION D.4: Printed educational material, touring exhibition

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Status 30/06/2011</i>
The folder about the project produced	01/12/2010	Completed by 01/12/2010
Educational material for schools prepared	01/05/2010	
All educational material printed	01/05/2014	
Handbook on Natural Frame published	01/08/2014	

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Status 30/06/2011</i>
Brochures produced	01/12/2010	Completed by 01/12/2010
Posters printed	01/01/2012	
T-shirts produced	01/01/2012	
Educational material for schools produced	01/10/2011	
Folders produced	01/06/2013	
Touring exhibition	01/09/2013	

DVD produced	01/09/2014	
Handbook printed	01/08/2014	

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 happen 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; however there is a deliverable as folder foreseen to be finished by 01/06/2013. We would like to set up this date for pocket guide for agricultural advisors since there is no other folder except project folder foreseen in application.

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 are two due dates – 01/03/2013 in deliverables table and 01/05/2011 in milestones table. We would like to set up a new due date and publish it in the autumn for the new school year. 01/10/2011 would be the new date.

Results of action

a) Informative folders

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 are attached as Annex 18. Distribution details of all dissemination materials attached in annex 23.

b) Touring exhibition

There was an exhibition “40 year for Ramsar sites” organized on 2nd February for International wetland conference since project is directly related to wetland restoration. The exhibition was published in the Ministry of Environment. The exhibition contained 30 pictures about wetland restoration measures from different life and other projects about digging, bush cutting, various types of dam instalment. Life logo and project name used on the title, pictures attached as annex 24. Now the exhibition will be updated and in autumn held in project areas.

c) Camera in zoo garden.

We would like to report here turtle days, which belong to the activities of LZS. To address the attention of the general public an 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 turtle day attached Annex 18. The camera instalment will be done in *spring 2012*.

d) DVD

The preparation of DVD movie started. There were tender procedures for selection of filmmaker performed. The winner is operator Mrs.Inga Grisonovaite, she proposed lowest price. There is one interview already made by this film maker from the turtle day in Kaunas zoo prepared, you can find it in http://www.glis.lt/?pid=1&news_id=139 . However in the budget the costs are foreseen for consumables – production of 1000 copies of DVD, but no cost for external assistance on movie production. Therefore this assistance will be paid from savings in the same budget category. We plan to reduce costs for other expenditures.

Further actions

There will be deliverables produced: T-shirts (200 copies), educational material for schools prepared, poster about corridors printed.

ACTION D.5: Best practice guidelines

Not to be started yet.

ACTION D.6: Web page

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
Web page developed	01/12/2010	Completed by 31/04/2011

Expected results: Webpage prepared

Results of 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. The web page contains information about project, objectives, presents species and habitats. Other AB have the links to the project website.

ACTION D.7: Final project seminar

Not to be started yet

ACTION D.8: Layman's report

Not to be started yet

Action E: Overall project operation and monitoring

ACTION E.1: Project management and accountancy

Milestone	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
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. Project management in details is described in chapter for management. The Steering committee already had one meeting in June 21 in Meteliai regional park (programme and participant list with minutes are attached in Annex 20). There were all members present except LZS. The progress of project and further actions were discussed.

ACTION E2. Monitoring of the effect of project.

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
The programme	01/06/2011	Completed
Database	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.

Clarification

Since no due dates are provided in approved application, I would like to set the following deadlines . The reports reflecting the status of populations, implemented investigations, and assessment of habitats will be produced each year by the end of January. There will be 3 preliminary reports prepared and submitted to MoE by the end of year. Final report will be prepared and submitted to MoE in the end of project. The database will be prepared by the beginning next year, 28/02/2012. These deadlines are indicated in the changed milestones table.

Results of action

Monitoring programme prepared, attached as annex 21.

Further actions

The next actions will be preparation of database and performance of monitoring.

ACTION E.3: After Life Strategy
Not to be started yet.

Action E4. Networking with other projects.

Milestone /deliverable	Deadline	Status 30/06/2011
Networking with other projects.	31/12/2013	

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

Results of action

1 exchange meeting with another Life project was made. 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 also belong to target species of our project.

Further actions

Next meeting in summer will be organised by LZS for turtle rearing exchange with project LIFE09 NAT/LV/000239 Life-HerpetoLatvia, which is run in Daugavpils.

Project publicity

The project already appeared in biggest newspaper "Lietuvos rytas" about protection of nesting sites. The article mentions the support of European Union, but it does not specify further programme details or project number. Also two video spots were made on nesting site protection and rearing of tree frogs were published by the internet portal of Lietuvos rytas, they can be found here: <http://www.lrytas.lt/videonews/?id=13077195531306478607> And <http://www.lrytas.lt/videonews/?id=13086423251307004641&sk=5>. Other news portals reported several events related to the project, totally 13 times. Article in "Lietuvos rytas", and summary list of appearance in media attached as annex 22

3.2. Availability of appropriate licences and authorisations

Up to date 3 permissions for work with threatened species and collection of turtle and tree frog eggs were issued by responsible state authorities. The procedure is performed by the State Environmental Inspection in cooperation with Commission of Red List, which was asking additional questions about investigations, especially concerning the breeding of turtles. The permissions were issued in beginning of May, thus, there was enough time to start research by capturing the turtles. The permissions allowed collection of only 50 turtle eggs and incubate them in incubators in Zoo. Next year we will ask for more eggs to be collected since we will have results of incubation this year. These results will provide evidence that action is needed and that eggs can be successfully reared in Zoo.

Also, breeding of tree frogs this year will prove the selected method for breeding. Therefore next year we will ask for permission to collect more tree frog eggs. Other permissions needed for restoration activities (pond digging, removal of vegetation) will cover these documents: a) agreement/permission by landowner. When foreseen works are within private land, then landowner's written agreement is needed. In case of state owned land, permission is issued by local Land reclamation office in municipality; b) Further, no permissions are needed for pond digging or restoration of small size ponds (up to 300 sq m) except in protected areas, where administration of the protected site must approve digging. For ponds bigger than 300 sq m up to 5000 sq m project must be agreed by municipality.

3.3. Grant scheme

No.	Activities	subaction	2010	2011					2012				2013				2014				Envisaged progress until next report 01/09/2012
			IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV		
A1	Preparation of action plans and local management plans	proposed	x	x	x	x													Action plan prepared. NATIONAL action plan for tree frog prepared, and e.o. action plan updated.		
		actual																			
A2	Elaboration of rearing methods for Emys and amphibians	proposed		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							Rearing methods finished		
		actual																			
A3	Determining favorable conservation status for Annex IV amphibian and reptilian species	proposed			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							Draft report on fav conservation status prepared		
		actual																			
A4	Ecological network developement	proposed		x	x	x	x												Methodology for creation of ecological network and management regulation prepared		
		actual																			
A5	Establishment of new Natura 2000 sites	proposed						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Potential sites for new natura 2000 sites found		
		actual																			
A6	Preparation for permissions	proposed						x	x		x	x			x	x			50% of permissions achieved		
		actual																			
A7	Farm developement	proposed				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Potential 2 farmers found, draft farm development plans developed.		
		actual																			
C1	Habitat management for the target species in the project area	proposed					x	x			x	x			x	x			Restoration started, about 25% of objectives achieved		
		actual																			
C2	Renovation of ponds, mitigation of predation on target species	proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			Restoration started, about 25% of objectives achieved		
		actual																			
C3	Restoration of wetlands	proposed					x	x		x	x								Restoration started, about 25% of objectives achieved		
		actual																			
C4	Habitat and population management in sandpits	proposed				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Restoration started, about 25% of objectives achieved		
		actual																			
C5	Population management of Hyla and Emys	proposed			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		20 turtles radiotracked,not less than 120 eggs reared, predators live traps installed, 500 juveniles of tree frog released.		
		actual																			
D1	Experience exchange workshops	proposed		x		x				x				x				x	None		
		actual																			
d2	Dissemination and cooperation with local players	proposed			x				x	x		x	x		x	x			notice boards erected, web camera installed, 4 guided tours organised.		
		actual																			
D3	study tours	proposed			x				x										3rd study tour organised		

		actual																		
D4	printed materials	proposed	x	x			x	x			x	x		x	x		x	x		
		actual																		
D5	Best practice guidelines	proposed															x	x		
		actual																		
D6	Web page	proposed	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x		x	x		x	x		
		actual																		
D7	Final project seminar	proposed															x	x		
		actual																		
D8	Layman report	proposed															x	x		
		actual																		
E1	Project management	proposed	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		actual																		
E2	Monitoring the effects of the project actions	actual						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
		proposed																		
E3	After Life Strategy	actual															x	x	x	
		proposed																		
E4	Networking with other projects	actual							x	x			x	x						
		proposed																		

4. Financial part

4.1. Putting in place of the accounting system.

Accountancy procedures have been established in accordance with local (Lithuanian, Danish) legislation and CP rules. Technically invoices are registered and paid by the accountants of beneficiaries according to the order of project managers and according to the local rules of the organizations. Every beneficiary allocates the invoices to the internal account that makes easily to distinguish between the projects.

The project budget forms part of the budgets of beneficiaries. This ensures complete control over the project's expenses by all AB. All expenditure receipts feature a clear reference to the Project (number and abbreviation).

The project manager is responsible for the project's general accountancy and compiling financial reports. Once a year, the associated beneficiaries submit to the project manager financial reports, adhering to the corresponding LIFE forms.

4.2. Continued availability of co-financing.

The main co-financier – AM still did not sign the agreement. Expected date to be signed is III quarter of 2011. The internal procedure of transfer of funds and control system of expenditures must be prepared and approved by the Ministry of Finances. Therefore it consumes time. We are regularly updated about the progress by the MoE, which is responsible for preparation and approval of this procedure.

So far, missing co-financing did not hinder the implementation of the project, but if this continues further, the C actions could not be started in due time.

4.3. Costs incurred

Table No.2. Breakdown of costs.

Budget breakdown categories	Total cost in €	Costs incurred from the start date to 31.05.2011 in €	% of total costs
1. Personnel	296906	24400.46	8
2. Travel and subsistence	81351	9950	12
3. External assistance	175257	1371.32	0.8
4. Durable goods			
Infrastructure	52468		0
Equipment	76673	5533.13	7
Prototype			
5. Land purchase / long-term lease			
6. Consumables	33500	56.94	0.2
7. Other Costs		847.37	
8. Overheads	50105	1162.73	2.32

TOTAL	766260	42871	5
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The total expenditure of the budget so far is too small comparing with the next reporting period. The period to the next midterm report (01/09/2012) remains 14 months, all together with inception report (9 months) the period consists of 23 months. Thus, 60% of the time to report remains. The first payment received from the Commission was 152 604 EUR, thus, to reach 150% of the first pre-financing threshold 228 906 EUR must be spent. So far we have spent 42 871 eur, which is 18% of the total budget. This gap in expenditures happens because now expenses were incurred only for preparatory actions. The bigger portions will be spent for C actions during remaining part of this and next season, i.e. by purchasing external services and equipment, i.e. tractor, hay bailers etc.

So far biggest proportion spent in travel category because of travel compensations for the participants of two international workshops and study tour.

There are some adjustments to the budget. The equipment will require more expenses. We already had to purchase not foreseen equipment: photo camera (digital Canon powershoot) in order to document the project actions; GPS tools, 3 units explicitly are used by field workers; bush cutter (trimmer) purchased by the MRP, it is used to cut grass and bushes by cleaning the nesting sites, shores of the ponds and other habitats, where vegetation removal is needed; 10 radio transmitters for monitor of adult turtles in unknown project sites. Also, additionally 1 radio receiver is needed, and 10 more radio transmitters by the spring next year. All this purchase will cost extra not more than 10.000 eur, thus, it will not cause substantial budget changes.

Another change in budget is needed to shift the expenses from consumables category to the external assistance. The budget lines under consumables: No.10- up to No.21 should belong to external assistance, the total sum shifted must be 23.500 eur, thus, not it will not cause substantial change of the budget.

After having evaluated more precisely instalment costs of rearing of 3 enclosures for turtles, LZS provided a new division of budget. The costs have been divided into materials, i.e. concrete, fences, metal net and other items, which will be needed for construction. Work will be performed by own employees of LZS. All these expenditures will result in building the long term infrastructure, thus, financially it musyt belong to infrastructure costs.

VAT is not recoverable by all AB and CB even that some of them are VAT payers. According to Lithuanian legislation, VAT might be recovered only from the commercial activity. However LIFE financed projects do not belong to commercial activity. VAT declaration will be provided for each project participant with the mid-term report at the latest.

Annexes

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name</i>
1.	Agreements
2.	Corrected deliverable and milestones table
3.	List of personnel
4.	Maps (not scanned, only printed)
5.	Example of evaluation forms
6.	Interview forms
7.	Field work summary
8.	draft method for turtle egg rearing
9.	criteria/methodology for setting the ecological network draft version
10.	draft method for tree frog rearing
11.	Permissions.
12.	Kick-off seminar
13.	1 st workshop
14.	2 nd workshop
15.	Poster
16.	1 st Study tour (programme)
17.	2nd Study tour
18.	Folders
19.	Turtle day
20.	Steering committee meeting
21.	Monitoring programme
22.	Media summary tables, article
23.	Materials dissemination table
24.	Cd with pictures