



LIFE Project Number

**<LIFE11/ NAT/HU/000926>**

Inception Report

**Covering the project activities from 01/09/2012 to 28/02/2013**

Reporting Date

**<01/04/2013>**

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym

**<REDOOT - Conservation of *Falco vespertinus* in the Carpathian Basin>**

#### **Data Project**

Project location	Hungary and Slovakia
Project start date	<01/09/2012>
Project end date	<31/03/2018>
Total budget	€ 3,625,649
EC contribution	€ 2,601,760
(%) of eligible costs	74,8

#### **Data Beneficiary**

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## 2. List of abbreviations

MME - BirdLife Hungary

BNPD - Bükk National Park Directorate

KMNPD - Körös-Maros National Park Directorate

RPS - Raptor Protection of Slovakia

SNC - State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic

RFF - red-footed falcon

AB- Associated Beneficiary

AES - Agro Environmental Scheme

AWP - Annual Working Plan

CAP - Common Agricultural Policy

CB - Coordinating Beneficiary

CP- Common provisions

EC - European Commission

FDO - Financial Desk Officer

HAS- Hungarian Academy of Sciences

OKTVF - National Inspectorate on Environment, Conservation and Water

MRD- Ministry of Rural Development

PM - Project Manager

RDP - Rural Development Plan

SC - Steering Committee

TDO- Technical Desk Officer

## **3. Executive summary**

### **3.1. General progress**

Partnership agreements have been signed, reporting templates have been developed and distributed among beneficiaries. The operational project team has been established, all relevant project staff have been contracted or selected. The role and responsibilities of each project staff have been clarified in the contract of work of each employee already working with significant degree for the project. The up-to date monitoring of the administrative requirements and technical advancements based on the approval system of unified Annual Working Plans (AWP) and the monthly reports are developed and functioning. The monitoring of the achievements by the Steering Committee has started (see Actions F1. and F2.)

Relevant preparatory actions (A1., A2., A3.) started in time, planned deliverables (Annex 7.2.1 and Action A3.) are ready for implementation. Procurement processes and external contracts necessary to start the conservation/monitoring actions as scheduled are either launched or in case of public procurement procedures are in preparation. To set up the project communication and dissemination activities a Project Communication Plan with yearly calendar of planned events was prepared and accepted by all the beneficiaries (Annex 7.2.2 and Action E3.). The project logo, trilingual website (falcoproject.eu) and a facebook-site have been prepared, as well as the designing of PR set for the disseminating events (Annex 7.3. and Action E4.). The LIFE and Natura 2000 logo is used in every internal and external communication material (eg. on equipments), with a clear reference to the role of LIFE NATURE Fund in the project. Critical permits are obtained, the supplementary permits are solicited and will not obscure the project implementation.

Every beneficiary has established its own separate system for managing finances exclusively for the project. A separate registry is maintained by all partners, within the book-keeping ledger system concerning the project accounting, what should enable inquiry related to the project for controlling purpose. Work time registration systems had also been set up or adjusted to comply with LIFE's regulations.

The first visit of the external monitoring team Astrale/GEIE (by Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper and András Kovács) was successfully completed on 28.02.2013. The communication with both the external monitors and the responsible FDO/TDO by the DG of Environment is judged to be very effective.

### **3.2. Assessment of viability of the project objectives and work plan**

The project objectives and the original work plan are still viable, in spite of the small delays deriving from the time gap caused in the start up of the process due to the amendment of the Grant Agreement in the early phase of the project implementation (for details please see the point 3.3. below). The delay/variations are not threatening the general progress of the project and all the main indicators can be fulfilled within the original time frame.

### 3.3. Problems encountered

Major part of this reported period was dominated by the necessary modification of the project proposal due to the need to substitute one proposed Associated Beneficiary (Pélyi Rt.) with another (BNPD). This implied that in the first 4 months - until the signing of the modification of the Grant Agreement - the management was focused on renegotiating with project partners and recalculating the budget (see the description of Action F1. under 5.1.30 and Action F2. under 5.1.31. for details).

We could only start the implementation of some project tasks after securing that the project modifications were accepted. The delay in project commencement mainly affected the overall spending rate of the grant by 31.01.2013. However, after signing the last (modified) Partnership Agreement on 04.02.2013, the procurements - uncovered by this reporting period- accelerated significantly.

In spite of this problem the technical implementation of the project advanced as scheduled in the proposal.

## 4. Administrative part

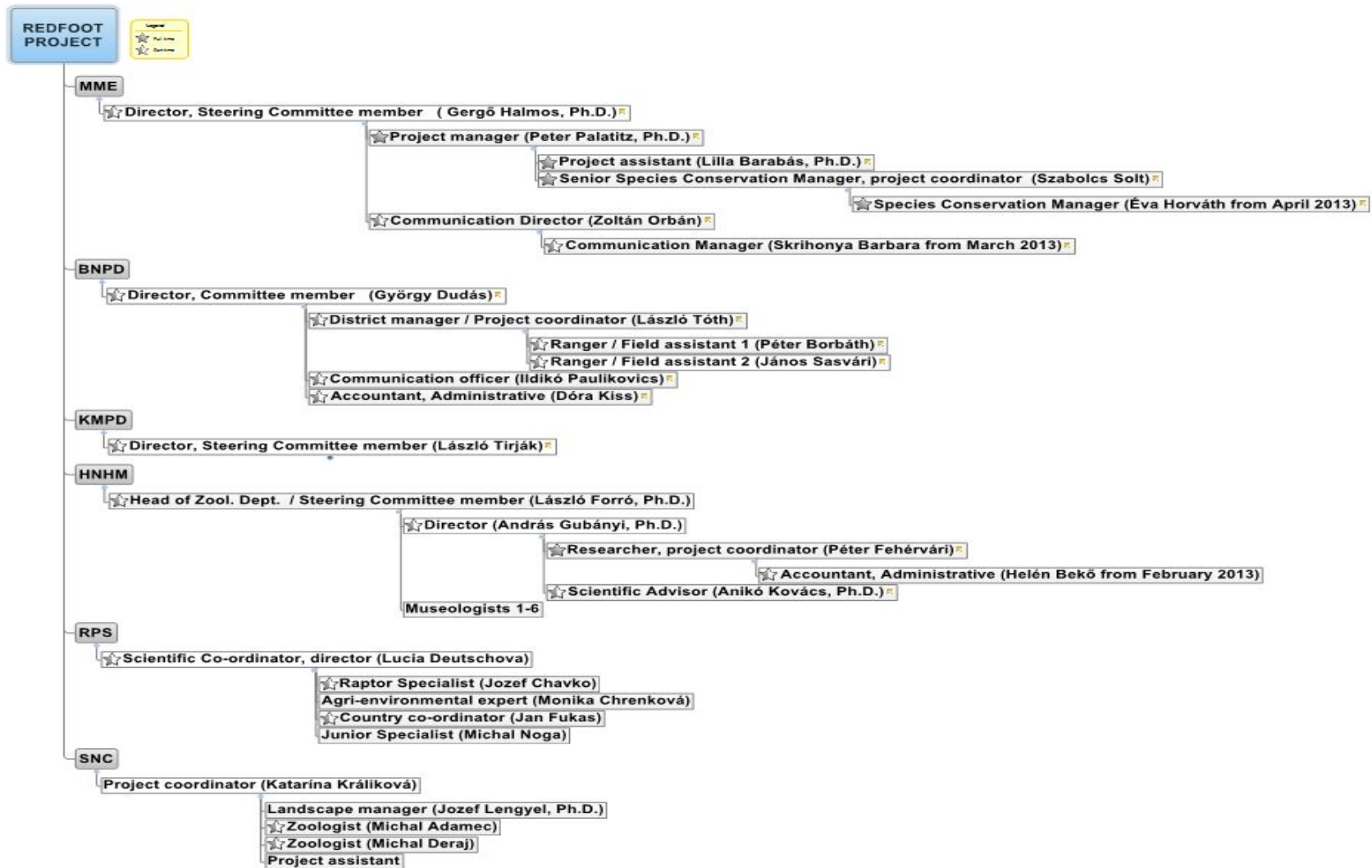
### 4.1. Description of project management

In the reporting period the management of the project was carried out by Dr. Peter Palatitz working full time with temporary service contract under direct supervision of the Coordinating Beneficiary's directorate. Dr. Lilla Barabás coordinates the administration as full time project assistant from January 2013. However, as the EC kindly approved the revision of the proposal and signed the grant agreement by 24.01.2013. the Coordinating Beneficiary's director started the preparation of the competitive tender process to hire an external company for the project management. This change is not expected to delay the project implementation as by the submission date of this report (1st of April 2013) the new project management team have been contracted and ready to start the work. (For more details on the results of the tendering process please consult the cover letter of the Inception Report as this period (March 2013) is not covered by this report.

The Associated Beneficiaries have to submit Annual Working Plans by the first working day of the actual year. After the acceptance of the AWP by the project manager, monthly reports have to be submitted to the Coordinating Beneficiary until the 25th day of next month via mail and e-mail. The monthly reports comprise both a short technical and a detailed financial parts prepared by the project coordinators and project administrators of the beneficiaries. The execution of actions, achievement of milestones, production of deliverables and realization of proposed budget are continuously monitored by the project management. Overall progress of the project, implementation of certain actions are evaluated annually by the Steering Committee Meetings (see Action F2). A system for effective inner communication, reporting routines and monitoring has been established. As an Annex of the signed Partnership Agreements a Financial Guideline with reporting templates has been developed to help the work of the beneficiaries.

All AWP arrived to the CB and have been approved by the PM in the first week of January 2013. Most relevant project staff of MME, BNPD, HNHM and RPS are employed from January 2013. The administrative-financial work is facilitated by a full-time project assistant at the CB, who keeps contact with the part-time administrators at each Associated Beneficiaries. Two ABs (KMNP and SNC) haven't included the REDFOOT LIFE+ project in the contract of work of the employees (public servants) until 31st of January and therefore no work time (and other related costs) has been accounted for the project. However, this small administrative delay didn't affect the technical implementation of the project. The selection/contracting of all of the planned employees are in progress, eg. selection for the new positions (4 cowboys and Animal Husbandry Supervisor at BNPD), two new project staffs at MME in the near future: from 01.03.2013 communication manager: Barbara Skrionya, from 01.04.2013 species conservation manager: Éva Horváth).

## 4.2. Organigramme of the project team and the project management structure



**Legend:** Persons involved in project implementation with significant work time in the reporting period are marked with stars. Filled symbols indicate full time involvement in the project, while half stars show part time assignment.

### 4.3. Partnership agreements status and key content

Bilateral partnership agreements were signed with each beneficiary (date of signature in format DD/MM/YY): BNPD (04/02/2013 and previously on 17/10/2012), HNHM (17/10/2012), KMNPD (17/10/2012), RPS (17/10/2012) SNC (20/11/2012).

The agreements are bilingual (English/Hungarian) in case of the Hungarian partners and are in English for Slovakian partners (please also find attached the copy of the agreements in Annex 7.1 of this document). The original agreements include also the following annexes:

- Life+ Nature project proposal (application) document
- Life Special Provisions and Life Nature Common Provisions (2011)
- Financial and administrative guidelines
- Financial forms and reporting templates

The Partnership Agreements lay down the budget share of the beneficiaries along with the major rights and obligations. The annexed Financial and administrative guidelines state the type of distribution of the received grants. The distribution can occur as either a.) pre-financing with quarterly advanced payment based on the Annual Working Plan in case of HNHM and RPS or b.) post-financing after acceptance of financial reports by CB for BNPD, KMNPD and SNC.

Project stamps for every partner were prepared and distributed, which they use in their own accounting. For the first period of the project (between Sept.-Dec., 2012) one report was asked from the beneficiaries by 25 January, 2013. Afterwards a monthly reporting period has been agreed upon, with reporting deadlines set as the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the following month.

One major change occurred in concluding the Partnership Agreements with ABs due to the modification of the original Grant Agreement. The necessary modification of the project tasks resulted that BNPD had to take over the work of the previously planned partner. For this reason a modified, new Partnership Agreement came into force with BNPD on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013. At the same time, the previous Agreement with BNPD signed on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 lost its validity. The new Partnership Agreement relates to the modified Commission Contract (24/01/2013) and contains the modified budget numbers. It does not contain any other significant changes compared to the previous Agreement.



## 5. Technical part

The red-footed falcon is one of the emblematic raptor species of Eastern Europe. Several threats caused the decline of the European population in the last decades, as in case of other long-distance migrant insectivorous bird species. The conservation status (IUCN Red List Category 1: Near Threatened) inherently designate this bird as the umbrella species of pseudo-steppes and mixed agricultural habitats in Central Europe.

Between 2006 and 2009 a complex conservation project had been executed with the financial support of the EU's LIFE Nature project (LIFE05NAT/H/000122) in Hungary. Thanks to these efforts the population size of the red-footed falcon increased and a stable fluctuation of the number of breeding pairs has been documented in recent years. However numerous problems seem to be unsolved and therefore these hinder the sustainable conservation management of the species. In neighbouring Slovakia, the situation is quite different, as despite of legal protection the species is on the brink of extinction due to unsuitable conservation management.

To strengthen the European core population of the red-footed falcon and prevent the extinction of the species in Slovakia the following **main activities** and **expected results** of the project REDFOOT are planned:

- Secure nests by placing nest-boxes and improve natural nesting condition by providing „extra nest material” for Rooks
- Improve feeding habitat conditions by means of AES in Slovakia and demonstrative farming on 530 ha in Hungary
- Prevent nest predation by stone martens and safeguard high risk nests in Slovakia
- Study migration of the falcons to identify European hotspots and establish an NGO-network to promote conservation initiatives
- Preparation of a handbook and update of the National Action Plan for the species
- Demonstrate the project results to involve stakeholders in the falcon friendly management

### Expected results

- Increase of breeding population of treated SPAs, especially in natural nests
- Increased availability of prey species will increase hunting success of the falcons
- Significant decrease of the proportion of predated or abandoned clutches
- 250 landusers of RFF habitats will use the management tools for the species
- Threat assessment of the European migration routes of RFF and prevention of threats in selected hotspots
- By 2020, the RFF population of the CB will increase to 1400 pairs (cca. by 130%) at least 700 pairs will be breeding in natural nests

## 5.1. Actions

**Overview of main achievements of the project** (for more details please see also the description of individual actions):

Name of the Milestone	Action code	Deadline (planned)	Deadline (accomplished)	Deliverable/ Milestone/ Report
Agricultural practices plan and monitoring scheme elaborated	A.3	28.02.2013	28.02.2013	Milestone
Project website on-line	E.1	28.02.2013	28.02.2013	Milestone
Communication Plan for the project prepared, project logo and communication protocol ready for use	E.3	31.12.2012	31.01.2013	Deliverable
Inception report	F.1	01.04.2013	01.04.2013	Report
Partnership agreements and contracts with main project staff signed	F.1	30.09.2012	20.11.2012 (04.02.2013)	Milestone
Project Start up Meeting	F.2	10.09.2012	13.12.2012	Milestone
Project manager nominated and contract signed	F.2	10.09.2012	10.09.2012 (01.04.2013)	Milestone

**Notes:** To facilitate the transparency and the understanding of the current advancement of the project, we provide information about the overall status of each action compared to the schedule approved in the application. The meanings of different categories are:

"Status: not relevant, start date"= the action is not starting until the next reporting date

"Status: preparatory phase, in time"= the action is not started yet, but will start until the next reporting date, therefore some preparatory activity have been made

"Status: ongoing, in time"= the action is started and running as planned

"Status: ongoing, delayed"= the action is not started as planned, or the performance is delayed

### 5.1.1. Action A.1 Elaboration of detailed management plans for key habitats of the *F. vespertinus* in Slovakia

#### **Status: ongoing, in time**

Based on previous results of LIFE05 NAT/H/000122 project the suitable methods of data collection and evaluation were established. A 3 km radius circle will be used for simplified baseline survey in each of the 19 historical nesting sites in 2013. To help the field work a contact list of responsible land users and other stakeholders has been prepared.

During the baseline survey, data about habitat structure and land use will be gathered and evaluated. The presence of suitable nesting and feeding habitats will be considered. Aerial images will be purchased and used to identify the habitat structure and land use, as well as

the presence of suitable nesting and feeding habitats and the possible threatening factors. A field survey will be carried out to complete the information in spring/summer 2013, when the information about the crop structure will be refined in cooperation with the local land users.

Based on the baseline survey the key sites for conservation measures will be selected and management plans for selected sites will be prepared until the end of February 2014, as declared in the project proposal.

#### **5.1.2. Action A.2 Promotion and enforcement of an agri-environmental scheme for *F. vespertinus***

*Status: ongoing, in time*

Negotiations on the EU budget 2014-2020 closed in February 2013 and the final text of the CAP approved by the Agriculture Committee has been recently voted in the European Parliament. In consequence the national negotiations on the technical development of specific AES are in preparatory phase (Slovakia), or didn't started yet (Hungary).

In Hungary the project staff started the negotiation with the relevant local and national stakeholders. An informal meeting was held in the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) with the participation of MME Habitat conservation unit.

In Slovakia a coordination meeting of NGO platform to influence the process of preparation of the new Rural Development Plan took place on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 in Banská Bystrica, with the aim to coordinate the activities of NGOs and State Nature Conservancy in agricultural policy at the national level. A meeting of Working group for preparation and modification of the Rural Development Plan for the period of years 2014 – 2020 was held at the Ministry of the Environment on 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2013. The newly proposed agri-environmental scheme for *Falco vespertinus* was presented during this meeting. The main points of the agri-environmental scheme for *Falco vespertinus* was elaborated based on the Hungarian results from LIFE05NAT/H/000122 project and experiences with agri-environmental schemes in financial period 2007-2013 in Slovakia. The final version of the RDP in Slovakia itself will be under further discussions.

#### **5.1.3. A.3 Elaborate agricultural practices plan and monitoring scheme for the project sites in Hungary**

*Status: ongoing, in time*

Several partner meeting (HNHM, BNPD, KMNPD, MME) and internal consultation for workers have been organized targeting project aims, actions and implementation techniques of framing (see Actions C4. and C5.) and monitoring (see Actions D3. and D4.) activities. This meetings proved to be useful in delivering intriguing comments on specific details of planned project activities and methods of implementation and rules of internal decision making and communication.

In coherence with the project schedule, we prepared the integrated Agricultural practices plan and monitoring scheme concerning C4.,C5., D3. and D4. actions within the framework

of this action. The original document together with an English summary is delivered as separate document in **Annex 7.2.1.**)

#### **5.1.4. A.4 Preparation of a red-footed falcon book**

*Status: not relevant, start: 2016*

#### **5.1.5. A.5 Elaboration and submitting of the National Action Plan in Hungary and Rescue Program in Slovakia for *F. vespertinus***

*Status: not relevant, start: 2016*

#### **5.1.6. C.1 Creating artificial nesting opportunities**

*Status: preparatory phase, in time*

The nest box design available from the previous project (LIFE05NAT/H/000122) was used to start the procurement process. In Hungary (HUBN10004) the installation of boxes will take place mainly in 2013, and should be finished by 30.04.2014. In Slovakia the nest boxes will be installed from 2014 after the suitable sites are selected within the activity of A.1 action.

#### **5.1.7. C.2 Creating conditions for natural nesting opportunities by planting and restoration of forest patches and windbreaks in project SPAs**

*Status: preparatory phase, in time*

In Hungary the exact places of the plantations were selected during site visits. Plantation of forest patches at Hevesi-sík (HUBN10004) is planned for autumn 2013 (by 01.11.2013).

In Slovakia the trees will be planted after the suitable sites are selected within the A.1 action. A list of suitable tree species was prepared and discussed with experts. It will be necessary to make a field survey with the experts, to specify the optimal tree species composition and exact locations. To ensure the optimal results of planting, the whole process will follow the related SK technical standards (STN 83 7010 – STN 83 7019).

#### **5.1.8. C.3 Implement and demonstrate conservation techniques to improve Rook colony formation**

*Status: preparatory phase, in time*

In Hungary two municipalities (Székkutas, Kardoskút) were contacted to provide "green waste" for testing the methods of supplying branches and sticks for rooks. New project staff (Éva Horváth) will be employed from 1st of April 2013 and will be charged mainly with the actions C3., C6, D2., D5.

In Slovakia the possibility of providing material is being discussed with farmers and vineyards owners in two project SPAs (SKCHVU019 Ostrovné lúky and SKCHVU005 Dolné Považie). The suitable material will be available for testing from March 2013.

### 5.1.9. C.4 Implement, test and demonstrate grazing and mowing practices at the Heves project site (HUBN10004)

*Status: ongoing, in time*

BNPD will start the grazing in favor of red-footed falcon on 360 ha in the spring of 2013.

In this preparatory phase we developed in detail the previously proposed treatments for the 5 years of farming. The integrated Agricultural practices plan and monitoring scheme (delivered as separate document in **Annex 7.2.1.** within the framework of Action A3.) details the exact locations (GIS maps) and timing of treatments for the first agronomic year (spring 2013/winter 2014). This works will be implemented under the action C4. and monitored under action D3.

The selection of new employees (3 cowboys of 4 planned and the Animal Husbandry Supervisor) was completed, the preparation of working contracts are in progress. The procurement processes of most important infrastructure, equipments and the animals are accepted by the MRD and some are finished, or either launched or under preparation (for the latest details please see the table below, updated by 28.03.2013.):

Input	Cost category	Procurement process	Status
Purchase of traditional drinking site for grey cattles	Infrastructure	direct treaty	quotation requests submitted
Purchase of traditional summer night refugee for grey cattles	Infrastructure	direct treaty	quotation requests submitted
Plantation of forest patches	Infrastructure	direct treaty	quotation requests submitted
Purchase of 4x4 car /pickup	Equipment	direct treaty	completed by February
Purchase of binoculars (2 pc)	Equipment	direct treaty	quotation requests submitted
Purchase of grey cattle heifers (120 pc)	Equipment	public procurement	quotation requests submitted
Purchase of socks (1) for grey cattles	Equipment	direct treaty	quotation requests submitted
Purchase of balance to weigh animals	Equipment	direct treaty	quotation requests submitted
Purchase of tractor	Equipment	open public procurement	under preparation
Purchase of mowing adapter	Equipment	open public procurement	under preparation
Purchase of round baler adapter	Equipment	open public procurement	under preparation
Purchase of hay rake adapter	Equipment	open public procurement	under preparation
Purchase of trailer	Equipment	open public procurement	under preparation
Purchase of a caravan	Equipment	direct treaty	completed by February
Purchase of front loader adapter	Equipment	open public procurement	under preparation

#### **5.1.10. C.5 Implement, test and demonstrate agricultural practices at the Vásárhelyi project site (HUKM10004)**

**Status: ongoing, in time**

KMNPD will start the farming in favor of red-footed falcon on 170 ha of arable land by 01.09.2013.

In this preparatory phase we developed in detail the previously proposed treatments for the 4 years. The integrated Agricultural practices plan and monitoring scheme (delivered as separate document in **Annex 7.2.1.** within the framework of Action A3.) details the exact locations (GIS maps) and timing of treatments for the first agronomic year (autumn 2013/spring-summer2014). This agronomic works will be implemented under the action C5. and monitored under the action D3. Purchase of necessary equipment and seeds will be needed only in the second half of 2013.

#### **5.1.11. C.6 Test and demonstrate methods to prevent M. foinea predation of artificial nesting sites in Hungary**

**Status: ongoing, in time**

Widespread consultations were made with Zoo and veterinary experts to set up the captive (ex situ) testing environment. Main conclusions are that trapped adult martens are unsuitable for testing, they damage themselves in captivity and never behave naturally. Therefore we contacted pest control agencies and zoo help lines to collect all available young animals, usually emerging from the end of April when construction works of buildings reveal nests of martens. We established strategic partnership with the ZOO of SZEGED, Hungary to start the test using their animals and cage facilities.

We started also to negotiate with trail camera sellers to test the effect of human hair and pet fur placement, and alternative feeding sites in urban environment. In cities the population density of martens exceeds those of natural habitats providing an excellent opportunity to increase sample size of in situ tests.

We also consulted with animal keepers owing tamed martens to participate in some physical exclusion and pheromone tests. In case if there will be no marten available some methods (ultrasound repellents or egg aversion) can be tested also on widely available ferrets (*M. putorius furo*).

#### **5.1.12. C.7 Regulation of shooting Corvids in key nesting sites within the project SPAs in Slovakia**

**Status: preparatory phase, in time**

Recent legislation framework was analyzed. Hunting regulation proposal will be prepared in 2013 for key sites selected under action A.1.

#### **5.1.13. C.8 Secure protection of the most endangered migratory and roosting areas**

*Status: ongoing, in time*

We contracted our previous network partners to start the cooperation. LIFE secretariat have kindly approved the participation of the director of MME (Dr. Gergő Halmos) to "The BirdLife International Global Partnership Meeting and World Congress" 18 - 22 June 2013, Ottawa, Canada. Apart of the presentation of the project, expected outcomes are:

- List of live contacts along the entire flyway of the red-footed falcon aiming to participate in the survey of migration
- Discussion of technical and administrative details of planned contracts under Action C8. and partner visits under Action F3.
- Signature of contract or preliminary agreement with network partners to implement Action C8.

Meanwhile we started to change information with three different logger-and PTT producers. Since the planning of the proposal the technical development - especially those of GPS loggers- allow us to set up a more ambitious research plan. However the exact design of devices needs a lot of discussion between researchers and technicians as the red-footed falcon is at the lowest extremity of the weight range capable to wear these devices.

#### **5.1.14. C.9 Guarding and protection of active *F. vespertinus* nests in Slovakia**

*Status: preparatory phase, in time*

The action will be implemented in the breeding period, active nests will be identified and guarding will be ensured.

#### **5.1.15. C.10 Implementation of an agri-environmental scheme to ensure optimal management of feeding territories in Slovakia**

*Status: ongoing, in time*

The action will be implemented after the new specific AES is approved to be integrated in the RDP 2014 – 2020. However the negotiations with land users and land owners have already started in order to discuss the conditions, secure information flow between stakeholder groups and to assist the preparation of the specific AES under Action A2.

#### **5.1.16. D.1 Monitoring of impact of the project actions in Slovakia**

*Status: not relevant, start: 2017*

#### **5.1.17. D.2 Monitoring and evaluation of Rook colony formation**

*Status: preparatory phase, in time*

From end of March-early April when rooks return to colonies different placement method and branches and sticks sizes will be provided for rooks. Supplement material will be painted

to later identification in nests and a photo documentation will follow the process for evaluation and dissemination of results.

#### **5.1.18. D.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the project sites' treatments in Hevesi-sík SPA (HUBN10004)**

**Status: preparatory phase, in time**

Several site visits were made by MME, HNHM, BNPD staff to designate the location of treatments. As result the Agricultural practices plan and monitoring scheme of the treatments were developed under Action A3. (attached in **Annex 7.2.1.**), detailing the timing and extent of the baseline monitoring activity taken place in this year.

#### **5.1.19. D.4 Monitoring and evaluation of the project sites' treatments in Vásárhelyi-és Csanádi puszták SPA (HUKM10004)**

**Status: preparatory phase, in time**

Several site visits were made by MME, HNHM, KMNP staff to designate the location of treatments. As result the Agricultural practices plan and monitoring scheme of the treatments were developed under Action A3. (attached in **Annex 7.2.1.**), detailing the timing and extent of the baseline monitoring activity taken place in this year.

#### **5.1.20. D.5 Monitoring and evaluation of nest predation by Martes foina**

*Status: not relevant, start: 2nd quarter 2014*

#### **5.1.21. D.6 Assess the socioeconomic impact of the project actions**

*Status: not relevant, start: 2017*

#### **5.1.22. E.1 Develop project website**

**Status: ongoing, in time**

The trilingual project website ([falcoproject.eu](http://falcoproject.eu)) is developed and the facebook site ([www.facebook.com/pages/FalcoProject/564702320223921](http://www.facebook.com/pages/FalcoProject/564702320223921)) is also online since 28.02.2013. The basic communication languages are English, Hungarian and Slovakian, but as added value from our network partners the Romanian and Serbian version of the site is expected to be prepared. Both products are refreshed and updated according to the rules of the Communication Plan of the project (see action E3. in this document). All beneficiaries prepared one page on their own sites to show their role in the REDFOOT project:

<http://mme.hu/termeszetvedelem/kiemelt-fajvedelmi-programok/kek-vercse/kek-vercse-life-2012-2018.html>

<http://bnpi.hu/oldal/kekvercse-life-335.html>

[http://www.kmnp.hu/user/browser/File/falcoproject\\_eu\\_kmnp.pdf](http://www.kmnp.hu/user/browser/File/falcoproject_eu_kmnp.pdf)

<http://www.nhmus.hu/hu/intezmeny/uvegzseb/life%20>

[http://www.dravce.sk/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=886&Itemid=615&lang=sk](http://www.dravce.sk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=886&Itemid=615&lang=sk)

<http://www.sopsr.sk/web/?cl=10008>



### 5.1.23. E.2 Produce and erect notice boards in project area

**Status: preparatory phase, in time**

The visual plan has been subcontracted by MME together with the logo and PR set designing (see actions E3. and E4). The deadline of the graphic design of notice boards is 15th of April, 2013. The notice boards will be erected by 30.09.2013. in Hungary and by 31.12.2014. in Slovakia.

### 5.1.24. E.3 Project communication

**Status: ongoing, in time**

The Communication Plan of the project (attached as deliverable in **Annex 7.2.2.**) was prepared. The document targets all relevant fields of communication needed to achieve the goals of the project and a detailed calendar which will be updated every year. The role of every project staff in the communication chain is specified to increase efficiency of communication actions. The digital Annex of the plan helping the visual communication of the project by providing logos of all beneficiaries, the LIFE logo, the Natura 2000 logo, the new project logo (English, Hungarian, Slovakian versions) in both raster and vector formats and Powerpoint slide templates in English, Hungarian and Slovakian. From 1st of March 2013 a Communication Manager (Barbara Skrionya) will help MME team with the coordination of the communication as half time employee of the Coordinating Beneficiary.

### 5.1.25. E.4 Communication with stakeholders

**Status: ongoing, in time**

In Hungary beneficiaries agreed in the timing of the events and included in the calendar of the Communication Plan (see action E3 and **Annex 7.2.2.** for details). One demonstrative event will be held by 30.06.2013 in HUBN10004 (BNPD). Another demonstrative event will be organized 21.09.2013 at Kardoskút (HUKM10004-KMNP) together with the "Fehér-tó Napja" ("Day of Lake Fehér"). The later event is a traditional festival of local nature enthusiasts, municipalities and the KMNP, organized with great success for several years. The MME Communication staff will be charged with the conception, overall communication, technical content of the demonstrative events (eg. presentations, invitation of external experts etc.), while the communication managers of the national park directorates and local rangers will secure the place, catering, and the presentation of the demonstrative management. The visual plan of the PR set is ready for production (see **Annex 7.3.** for details), at least 50% of the planned quantity will be ordered for the first meeting.

In Slovakia we started to organize the first meetings with stakeholders. Meetings will be held from March 2013 onward in all relevant SPAs, aiming to discuss several project related issues (presentation of project objectives and actions, cooperation in the identification of the crop structure necessary for the analysis within A.1, possible forms of data exchanges, agri-environmental schemes, providing nesting material for rooks, erection of notice boards). The knowledge exchange excursion to Hungary will be organized in the second week of September to join the demonstrative event of KMNP at HUKM10004.

#### **5.1.26. E.5 Transportable exhibition for schools**

**Status: preparatory phase, in time**

We commenced the planning and the compilation of necessary materials for the production of the planned mobile exposition.

#### **5.1.27. E.6 Exhibition at the Museum of Kardoskút (HUKM10004)**

*Status: not relevant, start: in the 2nd quarter of 2014*

#### **5.1.28. E.7 Layman's report**

*Status: not relevant, start: from 2017*

#### **5.1.29. E.8 Technical communication of the project results**

**Status: preparatory phase, in time**

First steps in technical communication took place:

- Internal meeting of MME Scientific Committee (25 January 2013, Budapest)
- Internal meeting of HNHM Scientific Committee (12 February 2013, Budapest)
- Symposium of the Society of Hungarian Biologists (23 February 2013, Felsőtárkány, Hungary)

#### **5.1.30. F.1 Project management, monitoring and reporting**

**Status: ongoing, in time**

In the start-up phase of the project the commercial private associated beneficiary (Pélyi Rt.) planned to be the major partner in farming has refused to sign the Partnership Agreement in October 2012, referring to the recent change in their financial interests. To overcome this problem, following the Article 15 of the common provisions, the Coordinating Beneficiary urgently requested the Commission to modify our Grant Agreement and substitute Pélyi Rt. with BNPD, an associated beneficiary already participating in the project. The coordinating beneficiary also asked the approval to externalize the project management.

We hereby express our gratitude to all whom participated in the process from both the External Monitoring Team Astrale GEIE (Andrej Bača), the Financial (Paivi Rauma) and the Technical (László Bécsy) Desk Officers from the EC for their dedicated and effective work and guidance through the procedure. Finally, we successfully closed the modification with the signature of an amendment to the original Grant Agreement on 24 of January 2013.

During the amendment process requiring extra time allocation, the management of the project was secured well under the circumstances. The PM took part in the kick-off meeting, held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012, in Sofia, Bulgaria. The Opening meeting of the project and the training of the project staff was held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012, at the HAS Institute of Ecology and Botany at Vácrátót, Hungary.

#### **5.1.31. F.2 Hold Steering Committee Meetings**

*Status: ongoing, in time*

Dr. Peter Palatitz the contact person of the REDFOOT LIFE+ project, coordinator of the Red-footed Falcon Research Workgroup of MME BirdLife Hungary started working with temporary service contract on 01.09.2012. Due to the late arrival (08.10.2012) of the signed grant agreement with EC and regarding the conditions leading to the amendment of the grant agreement of the project (see details under action F1) beneficiaries agreed to delay the first Steering Committee Meeting planned to be held by 10.09.2012. The project manager secured the information flow among beneficiaries and after the arrival of the modification of the original Grant Agreement in late January 2013 and subsequent signing of new partnership agreement with BNPD (04.02.2013) started to organize the SC meeting. Meanwhile the second planned meeting time was coming, therefore we decided to join the two meetings.

Finally, the Steering Committee Meeting took place on 21-23 February 2013, in Felsőtárkány, Hungary. Participants signed the attendance sheet, approved the main achievements of the project and discussed major tasks until the next meeting (latest by 31.03.2014).

#### **5.1.32. F.3 Networking**

*Status: ongoing, in time*

We are in continuous communication with the previously planned network partners (LIPU-ITALY, BSPB- BULGARIA, USPB-UKRAINE and Milvus Group-ROMANIA) to discuss the framework of networking and possible country-specific activities to allow to establishing the synergic implementation with action C8. First partner visits expected to take place in September, when a roosting site survey and a consultation on the possibility of legal protection for red-footed falcon in Ukraine is expected.

#### **5.1.33. F.4 Independent Audit**

*Status: ongoing, in time*

The coordinating beneficiary decided to delay the contracting of the auditor until the signature of the new grant agreement. The project management started the procurement process in February 2013 and the external auditor is expected to be selected and contracted by 01.04.2013 (for details please check the cover letter).

#### **5.1.34. F.5 After LIFE Conservation Plan**

*Status: not relevant, start: from 2017*

## 5.2. Availability of appropriate licences and authorisations

MME has permits for all research activities directly linked to the red-footed falcons in the project in Hungary (capture, marking, other sampling) for the period 2011-2015 from OKTVF (permit no.: 14/2583-5/2011 and 14/131-7/2012). We asked for supplementary resolutions (eg. for swap-netting and soil trap sampling) to the above mentioned permits from OKTVF. This should be automatically accepted therefore we do not expect it to hinder the project implementation.

Permits are not needed for the project works in Slovakia.

## 5.3. Envisaged progress until next report

**Overview of main achievements of the project** as planned in the proposal until the next report (01.04.2014)

Name of the Milestone	Action code	Deadline (planned)	Deliverable/ Milestone/ Report	Main responsible(s)
Management plans SK	A.1	28.02.2014	Deliverable	RPS, SNC
Plantation of forest patches at Hevesi-sík (HUBN10004) project site	C.2	01.11.2013	Milestone	BNPD
Nest material placed by the project staff near Rook colonies	C.3	01.03.2014	Milestone	MME
Beginning of grazing treatments at Hevesi-sík (HUBN10004) project site	C.4	30.04.2013	Milestone	BNPD
Beginning of demonstrative arable farming on the Vásárhelyi Project site (HUKM10004)	C.5	01.09.2013	Milestone	KMNPD
Technical document on the M. foina predation	C.6	01.04.2014	Deliverable	MME
Decision of the competent Authority	C.7	31.03.2014	Deliverable	RPS, SNC
Notice boards erected	E.2	30.09.2013	Deliverable	BNPD, KMNPD
First demonstrative event at Hevesi-sík (HUBN10004) project site	E.4	30.04.2013 <b>expected: 30.06.2013</b>	Milestone	MME, BNPD
PR set for farmers produced (Hevesi-sík (HUBN10004) project site)	E.4	30.06.2013	Deliverable	BNPD
PR set for farmers produced (Vásárhelyi-project site HUKM10004)	E.4	30.08.2013	Deliverable	KMNPD
Second demonstrative event at Vásárhelyi (HUKM10004) project site	E.4	30.09.2013	Milestone	MME, KMNPD
Transportable exhibition is ready	E.5	01.04.2014	Deliverable	HNHM
Steering Committee Meeting	F.2	31.03.2014	Milestone	MME

***Additional activities until the next report (01.04.2014) sorted by actions:***

**Action A2.** Further meetings with stakeholders, submission of specific AES to the MRD, if relevant.

**Action A3.** Annual update of the Agricultural practices and monitoring plan. (attached in ***Annex 7.2.1.***)

**Action C1.** At least 100-100 nest boxes will be produced in each country, at least 50 of them will be installed in suitable habitats in Slovakia. All nest boxes will be installed in Hungary by 30.04.2014.

**Action C8.** An expedition to Africa (Angola) is planned for the autumn-early winter period in 2013 to start marking RFFs with PTTs to reveal pre-nuptial migratory routes. Live mapping of migrating individual birds will be presented and commented on the website (Action E1.)

**Action C9.** Identification of active RFF territories in Slovakia, guarding of endangered nests.

**Action D2.** Baseline survey, test 'stick and branch placement' methods to manipulate Rook colony formation, preparation of a 'Best practice handbook' for the municipalities.

**Action D3.** Baseline survey according to the Agricultural practices and monitoring plan. (attached in ***Annex 7.2.1.***)

**Action D4.** Baseline survey according to the Agricultural practices and monitoring plan. (attached in ***Annex 7.2.1.***)

**Action E1.** Regular monthly update of the website and weekly news at the Facebook-site as detailed in the Communication Plan (attached in ***Annex 7.2.2.***)

**Action E2.** The notice boards will be designed by 15 April 2013, produced and erected by 30.09.2013 in Hungary and by 31.12.2014 in Slovakia.

**Action E3.** Annual update of the Communication Plan for 2014, including the audiovisual archive of the appearances and press releases of 2013 for the project.

**Action E8.** Submission of two abstracts related to red-footed falcon research, and participation to the Synbiology Symposium, March 2013 ( <http://szuszi.nhmus.hu/>). Abstract submission and participation to the next EBCC conference (17 - 21 September 2013, in Cluj, Romania (<http://www.ebcc.info/index.php?ID=478>))

**Action F1.** External project management operating and improve project implementation, all project staff employed, major procurement finished, annual working plans approved, Progress Report prepared and submitted.

**Action F3.** First network partner visit accomplished, documented.

**Action F4.** Audit report of 2013 is available.





Action code	Action short name	Action status	Proposed in application file																								2018									
			2012				2013				2014				2015				2016				2017													
			III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.							
OVERALL PROJECT PROGRESS (REPORTING SCHEDULE)			planned	Inception				1st Mid-term				2nd Mid-term				Progress				Final																
			achieved	Inception				Mid-term				2nd Mid-term				Progress				Final																
D. Monitoring																																				
D.1	Monitoring of impact of project actions (SK)	planned not relevant																									x	x	x	x						
D.2	Monitoring Rook colony formation	planned not relevant				x							x	x	M															M						
D.3	Monitoring the project treatment in Hevesi-sík SPA (HUBN10004)	planned not relevant				x	x								D			x	x											D						
D.4	Monitoring the project treatment in Vásárhelyi-p. SPA (HUKM10004)	planned not relevant				x	x						x	x	D																D					
D.5	Monitoring of the nest predation by M. foina	planned not relevant											x	x	x	x	x	x	D																	
D.6	Assess the socio-econ. impact	planned not relevant																														x	x	x		
E. Public awareness																																				
E.1	Develop and maintain project website	planned in time	x	x	M	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
E.2	Notice boards	planned in time				x	x	D																												
E.3	Project communication	planned in time	x	x	D	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	D	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	D	x					
E.4	Communication with stakeholders	planned in time		x	x	D	D	x	x	x	x	M	x	x	x	M	x	x	x	M	x	x	x	M	x	x	x	M								
E.5	Transportable exhibition	planned not relevant				x	x	D	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
E.6	Exhibition in the museum of Kardoskút	planned not relevant																																		
E.7	Layman's report	planned not relevant																														x	D	x		
E.8	Technical communication	planned not relevant																																		
F. Overall project operation																																				
F.1	Project management and reporting	planned in time	M	x	R	x	x	x	R	x	x	x	R	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	R				
F.2	Steering Committee meetings	planned in time	M						M				M				M																			
F.3	Networking	planned in time	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
F.4	Independent audit	planned in time																															x	x		
F.5	After LIFE Conservation Plan	planned not relevant																																x	x	D



## **6. Financial part**

### **6.1. Establishing the accounting system**

Every Beneficiary has established its own separate system for managing finances exclusively for the project. A separate registry has to be maintained by all partners, within the book-keeping ledger system concerning the project accounting that will enable control inquire. The separation has to be done by breaking down the ledger account; in addition to this a separate cost centre and code can also be used.

There is severe emphasis on controlling, as checking wouldn't happen only by Associated Beneficiary internally, but between the AB and the CB. All relevant documentation is checked monthly by the CB's project administrator. Incurred costs of a project partners are approved by CB only if all relevant documents are provided. Costs financed by LIFE or by own contribution should be clearly separated in the books. Sources are distributed in accordance with the Annual Working Plan and budget. On the spot checks of administrative systems are also planned by CB on regular basis. It is responsibility of all beneficiaries to guard the original source documents and send official copies to the CB (except in case of the time sheets, where CB has the originals and AB keeps the copies).

Work time registration systems had also been set up or adjusted to comply with LIFE's regulations. Partners use day-to-day paper-based time-sheets to keep track of worked hours – action codes on which the person is working also need to be shown on the sheets. Validation of time sheets is done by the program coordinator (or by the direct supervisor in case of the coordinator himself).

All costs connected to the project undergo a 3-steps approval system. The first and second steps are the local program coordinator and the responsible person at the financial department. The third step is the control check at the CB.

### **6.2. Continued availability of co financing**

The necessary amount of co-financing, which was planned in the application's budget, is directly transferred by the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) to the concerned beneficiaries (i.e. national park directorates).



### 6.3. Costs incurred

Budget breakdown categories	Total cost in €	Costs incurred from the start date to 31.01.2013 in €	% of total costs
<b>1. Personnel</b>	1 377 489	26 059	1,89%
<b>2. Travel and subsistence</b>	224 913	2 262	1,01%
<b>3. External assistance</b>	676 682	294	0,04%
<b>4. Durable goods</b>	0	0	
<b>Infrastructure</b>	54 815	0	0,00%
<b>Equipment</b>	448 672	0	0,00%
<b>Prototype</b>	0	0	
<b>5. Land purchase / long-term lease</b>	0	0	
<b>6. Consumables</b>	608 912	41	0,01%
<b>7. Other Costs</b>	37 088	0	0,00%
<b>8. Overheads</b>	197 078	2 006	1,02%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3 625 649</b>	<b>30 663</b>	<b>0,85%</b>

The official exchange rate of the European Central Bank on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012 (314.38 HUF / 1 EUR) and on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2013 (291.71 HUF / 1 EUR) was used respectively in the calculations.

In consequence of the delay in the start up of the project (see details under the description of Action F1 and F2) the overall spending of the cost categories by 31.01.2013 are behind the planned schedule. Moreover the obligations of four public Associated Beneficiaries (BNPD, KMNPD, HNHM, SNC) require more time for planning and administrative procurements, as in case of private companies. This delay didn't affect the technical advancement of the planned actions and from the beginning of the year the project management and administration structures are operating at all the beneficiaries. Up to the date of closing of this report (29.03.2013.) several major equipment procurement processes have been finished and this has improved the rate of spending significantly.

**Budget breakdown according to actions:**

Action number and short name	Foreseen costs	Spent so far	Remaining	Projected final cost
A1. Management plans in SK	64 145	1 232	62 913	64 145
A2. Agri-environmental scheme	29 041	872	28 169	29 041
A3 Agricultural and monitoring plan	39 659	5 491	34 168	39 659
A4 red-footed falcon book	53 312	0	53 312	53 312
A5 National Action Plan	24 083	0	24 083	24 083
C1 Artificial nesting opportunities	169 009	0	169 009	169 009
C2 Planting forest patches	124 762	0	124 762	124 762
C3 Rook colony improvement	45 684	2 448	43 236	45 684
C4 Grazing and mowing at HUBN10004	983 450	0	983 450	983 450
C5 Agricultural practices at HUKM10004	175 505	0	175 505	175 505
C6 Prevent M. foina predation	43 518	775	42 743	43 518
C7 Regulation of Corvid shooting in SK	9 974	0	9 974	9 974
C8 Protection of migratory & roosting areas	196 075	0	196 075	196 075
C9 Nest guarding in SK	65 780	0	65 780	65 780
C10 Feeding site management in SK	18 135	0	18 135	18 135
D1 Monitoring project actions in SK	57 952	0	57 952	57 952
D2 Monitoring Rook colony formation	14 583	0	14 583	14 583
D3 Monitoring sites' treatments at HUBN10004	140 960	41	140 919	140 960
D4 Monitoring sites' treatments at HUKM10004	108 133	200	107 933	108 133
D5 Monitoring M. foina predation	6 893	0	6 893	6 893
D6 Socioeconomic impact of project actions	741	0	741	741
E1 Website development	37 194	27	37 167	37 194
E2 Notice boards	15 509	0	15 509	15 509
E3 Project communication	69 139	68	69 071	69 139
E4 Communication with stake holders	196 871	196	196 675	196 871
E5 Transportable exhibition	21 076	521	20 555	21 076
E6 Exhibition in the Museum of Kardoskút	51 068	0	51 068	51 068
E7 Layman's report	22 693	0	22 693	22 693
E8 Technical communication	41 918	0	41 918	41 918
F1 Project management	523 337	16 619	506 718	523 337
F2 Steering Committee meetings	5 546	0	5 546	5 546
F3 Networking	57 826	165	57 661	57 826
F4 Independent audit	15 000	0	15 000	15 000
Overheads	197 078	2 006	195 072	197 078
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3 625 649</b>	<b>30 663</b>	<b>3 594 986</b>	<b>3 625 649</b>

## **7. Annexes**

### **7.1. Partnership agreements**

### **7.2. Deliverables**

**7.2.1. Agricultural practices plan and monitoring scheme (pdf. - Action A3.)**

**7.2.2. Communication Plan (.pdf - Action E3.)**

### **7.3. Visual plan for the PR sets (.pdf - Action E4.)**

### **7.4. Output indicators. Definition. (attached as separate .xls file)**

### **7.5. CD containing the electronic version of the report**