



Conservation of *Euro-Siberian steppic woods and Pannonic sand steppes* in 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI

Project N° LIFE06/NAT/HU/000098

1st Progress Report

Covering period:

1st September 2006 – 31st December 2007

Report compiled by:

Annamária Csóka

project manager

Duna–Ipoly National Park Directorate
H-1021 Budapest, Hűvösvölgyi út 52., Hungary



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PROGRESS REPORT No. 1.
Covering the project activities from 01.09.2006. to 31.12.2007.

Reporting Date
31.12.2007.

LIFE PROJECT NAME
Conservation of *Euro-Siberian steppic woods* and *Pannonic sand steppes* in ‘Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek’ pSCI

Data Project

Project location	Hungary
Project start date:	01.09.2006.
Project end date:	31.08.2011.
Total Project duration (in months)	60 months
Total budget	1 863 236 €
EC contribution:	1 397 427 €
(%) of total costs	75%
(%) of eligible costs	75%

Data Beneficiary

Name Beneficiary	Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate
Contact person	Ms Annamária Csóka
Postal address	Hűvösvölgyi út 52., H-1021, Budapest
Visit address	Hűvösvölgyi út 52., H-1021, Budapest
Telephone	+36 1 391 4635
Fax:	+36 1 200 1168
E-mail	csokaa@dinpi.hu
Project Website	www.pusztaitolgyesek.hu

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2. Lists of key-words and abbreviations

Key words:

Central-Hungary, Euro-Siberian steppe oaks, Pannonic sand steppes, conservation, management, Natura 2000

Abbreviations:

DINPI - Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate
NKÖ - Local Government of Nagykőrös Town
WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature
MoEW - Ministry for Environment and Water
SFS - State Forestry Service
NEFAG - Nagykőrös Forestry Company
pSCI - proposed Site of Community Importance

3. Executive Summary

Project objectives

Through the cooperation of Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate, Local Government of Town Nagykőrös and WWF Hungary partners requisite for the establishment of the successful long-term conservation and improvement of the favourable conservational status of the Euro-Siberian steppe woods with *Quercus* spp. and Pannonic sand steppes priority habitats in 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' proposed priority Site of Community Importance are ensured. These unique habitats can be found exclusively in the Carpathian Basin, moreover steppe oak forests of Nagykőrös represent the last larger, more or less continuous area of them. These habitats are seriously threatened by the spread of alien species, problems in natural forest regeneration capacity, improper forest management practices, fragmentation and by the ignorance of society as well as lack of information related to this area.

Expected results:

- 1.) 405 ha area becomes free of invasive species in 99% (with using mechanical and chemical methods as well as post-treatment the arboreal and herbaceous invasive species are gradually removed from the area).
- 2.) With the exclusion of game, relevant information is gained on that the decrease of ground water level accounts alone for the elimination of the natural forest regeneration processes or the excessive game population has a devastating effect on these (with fencing off forest compartments and monitoring).
- 3.) Change in forest management practices by taking over the restricted right of disposal from the forest owners over 175 ha of pSCI (through agreements and compensation we ensure, that forestry management actions harming the precious habitats are halted for 90 years as exclusively the conservational management tasks can be implemented in these areas).
- 4.) 88.5 ha indigenous forest is established in the patches formerly occupied by invasives (the reconstruction of the external and inner unity of the habitat of steppe oak forests by artificial forest regeneration with indigenous species are implemented).
- 5.) Elimination of lack of information and ignorance of local communities as well as information dissemination and utilisation of know-how on the steppe oak forests through communication aiming at the public, professionals, together with environmental education (media work, website, professional and public events, reconstruction of education centre, outbuildings and camp area together with equipment is completed, complex environmental educational programmes (min. 3) are developed complying with the local and regional needs in this pSCI site).
- 6.) Management plan of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' Natura 2000 site is elaborated (in the management plan all available data - former and novel, national, international - suggestions and results of the research carried out in the area regarding the biological state and monitoring of the effects of management tasks are utilized).

List of key deliverables and outputs

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Deliverable or Milestone	Reference Action	Deadline	Status	Evidence of reaching deliverable/milestone	Annex
project system is established	A1	05.10.2006.	completed	minutes of the kick-off meeting	1 PR: A1-1
detailed partners' agreements are signed	A1	01.01.2007.	completed	partnership agreement	sent to the Commission on 02.05.2007
Advisory Board is set up	A1	08.05.2007.	completed	correspondence, memorandum and photo of the foundation meeting of Steppe Oaks Advisory Board, presentation	1 PR: A1-5/a-b, A1-6/a, A1-6/b, 1 PR: G/a
regional office is leased	A1	01.03.2007.	completed	photos on the leased regional office	1 PR: A1-3/a-d
personnel is recruited	A1	16.10.2006.	completed	official task descriptions	1 PR: A1-2
durable goods are purchased (4 WD car, 2 laptop, 2 GPS, 1 digital camera)	A1	30.03.2007.	completed	photo on 4WD car	1 PR: A1-4
project introductory brochure is prepared (10000 copies)	A1	14.03.2007.	completed	information brochure in Hungarian and English languages (samples are attached), list of distribution	1 PR: A1-7/a-b, A2-3, A1-8
notice boards are placed out (2 items)	A1	22.03.2007.	completed	texts and photos on two information boards and their inauguration	1 PR: A1-9/a-b, A1-10/a-b
project logo and complex project design is ready	A2	27.02.2007.	completed	logo (appearing in every material connected to the project)	1 PR: A2-1
promotion materials are prepared (3000-3500 items)	A2	28.09.2007.	completed	promotion materials (folder, magnet, sticker, pen, textile bag) (samples are attached) and their distribution lists	1 PR: A2-2, A2-3
authorized reconstruction plan for educational centre and its surroundings is ready	A3	30.06.2007.	completed	photos of meetings, final authorised plans of the educational centre (plans are attached) and its surroundings	1 PR: A3-1/a-b, A3-2/a-c
public tendering is completed	A3	20.12.2007.	completed	summary of public tendering procedure, decision of board	1 PR: A3-3, A3-4
modified forestry management plans are completed	A4	31.08.2007.	completed	modified forestry management plan (example)	A4-1, A4-2, A4-3

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Deliverable or Milestone	Reference Action	Deadline	Status	Evidence of reaching deliverable/milestone	Annex
detailed contracts are ready	A4	17.12.2007.	completed	final detailed contract (example, same as in B1)	1 PR: B1-1/a-b
public tendering is completed	A4	31.07.2008.	ongoing		1 PR: A4-4/a-b, A4-5
management plan of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' Natura 2000 site is ready	A5	31.07.2011.	not started yet		
contracts are ready and signed (restricted right of disposal over 175 ha of pSCI)	B1	17.12.2007.	completed	final detailed, signed contract (example), photo on the occasion	1 PR: B1/a-b, B1-2
restricted right of disposal over 175 ha of pSCI is taken over	B1	31.08.2011.	ongoing	final detailed, signed contract (example)	1 PR: B-1/a, B1-2
70% elimination of arboreal invasives in 405 ha	C1	31.03.2008.	not started yet		
In a 88.5 ha area (60 ha in larger patches, 28.5 ha in smaller patches) the reconstruction of the external and inner unity of the habitat by forest regeneration with indigenous species is developed, plantation is completed	C2	31.05.2008.	not started yet		
12600 m game fence is completed	C3	31.12.2007.	not started yet		

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Deliverable or Milestone	Reference Action	Deadline	Status	Evidence of reaching deliverable/milestone	Annex
reconstruction of education centre, outbuildings and camp area together with equipment is completed	C4	31.05.2008.	not started yet		
405 ha area is free of invasive species in 99%	D1	30.11.2010.	not started yet		
88.5 ha indigenous forest is established	D2	30.11.2010.	not started yet		
4 national press conference with trip is completed	E1	31.08.2011.	on-going	photos on national press conference and trip	1 PR: E1-3/a-d
1 international press conference with trip is completed	E1	31.08.2011.	not started yet		
several press releases are completed	E1	31.08.2011.	on-going	list of media coverage, 5 selected articles, presentation	1 PR: E1-1, E1-2/a-e, G/b
website is set up	E2	02.04.2007.	completed	webpage in Hungarian and English	1 PR: E2-1/a-b
website is in operation with min. 30000 visitors per year	E2	31.08.2011.	on-going	www.pusztaitolgyesek.hu, usage statistics	1 PR: E2-2
educational programme (5 forest lessons, 1 summer camp, 1 nature trail programme) is completed	E3	31.05.2008.	on-going	questionnaire, photos on 'Nagykőrös Days', correspondence with schools, evaluation of inquiry, photo on exhibition stand and archery contest, presentation	1 PR: E3-1, E3-2/a-b, E3-3, E3-4, E4-2, E4-3/a-b, 1 PR: G/c
1 'Train the trainer' programme, teaching aid book in 500 copies) is compiled	E3	31.05.2008.	on-going	draft teaching aid booklet, photos on networking	1 PR: E3-5, E3-6/a-c

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Deliverable or Milestone	Reference Action	Deadline	Status	Evidence of reaching deliverable/milestone	Annex
a brochure on the educational centre programme (15000 copies), is completed	E4	31.08.2011.	not started yet		
9 occasion with min. 100-150 participants	E4	31.08.2011.	not started yet		
establishment of the educational part of the website is completed	E4	02.04.2007.	completed	education webpage	1 PR: E4-1
75 forest lessons, 180 nature trail programmes, 9 summer camps are completed	E5	31.08.2011.	not started yet		
6 'Train the trainer' programmes are completed	E5	31.08.2011.	not started yet		
10000 website visitors	E5	31.08.2011.	on-going	usage statistics	1 PR: E2-2
1 conference with 75 participants, conference proceedings (500 items)	E6	31.07.2011.	not started yet		
participation and presentation in conferences (in topics of botany, forestry, nature protection and conferences of green NGOs - altogether 4 occasions)	E6	31.07.2011.	on-going	presentations on the project to professional audience	1 PR: G/d-h
the edition of monograph (1000 copies), CD on steppe oak forests (500 copies)	E6	31.07.2011.	not started yet		
study trips (on 3 occasions for 30 participants) is completed	E6	31.07.2011.	on-going	photos on trip on 13.10.2007.	1 PR: E6-1/a-b

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Deliverable or Milestone	Reference Action	Deadline	Status	Evidence of reaching deliverable/milestone	Annex
1 freely accessible nature trail is ready with guide book (8000 copies)	E7	31.05.2008.	on-going	map on track of nature trail and bicycle route	1 PR: E7-1
Layman's report	E8	31.07.2011.	not started yet		
effective project implementation	F1	31.08.2011.	on-going	minutes and photo of annual project opening workshop	1 PR: F1-1/a-b
Advisory Board field trip (altogether 5 occasions) is finished	F1	31.08.2011.	on-going	photos on trip on 08.05.2007.	1 PR: E1-3/a-d
20 sample areas in 10X10 m squares, a basic survey and 3-year data series for the 3 management elements and their research report is completed	F2	31.03.2011.	on-going	studies, maps, photos	1 PR: F2-1, F2-2, F2-3, F2-4/a-b, F2-5, F2-6/a-b, F2-7, F2-8
10, 10X10 sample squares (botanical, including mosses and lichens, at least 5 Arthropoda taxa), a basic survey and 3-year data series, the examination of 3 tree trunk per year and their research report is compiled	F3	31.03.2011	on-going	studies, maps, photos	1 PR: F3-1, F3-3, F3-5, F3-6, F3-7, F3-8, F3-9
After-LIFE conservation plan is completed	F4	31.08.2011.	not started yet		

4. Technical progress

Table of technical progress on project actions by 31.12.2007

1.	2.	3.	4.
Action	Deadline	Status	Description
A1 - Establishment of the project system	08.05.2007.	completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ kick-off meeting is held ▪ Partnership Agreement is bound ▪ new staff is recruited (ranger, educational coordinator) ▪ equipment is acquired (1 4WD car, 2 notebooks, 2 GPS, 1 digital photo camera) ▪ project information brochure is edited (10000 items - 9000 in Hungarian 1000 in English) ▪ 2 information boards are erected ▪ Advisory Board is set up
A2 - Brand design of the project	28.09.2007.	completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ logo and design of the program is created ▪ promotional material is prepared (700 folder, 700 pen, 700 textile bag, 1000 magnet, 10000 sticker)
A3 - Preparation of the reconstruction of the buildings	20.12.2007.	completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ authorised final plans of the reconstruction of the buildings and its surroundings are compiled ▪ public tendering procedure is implemented
A4 - Preparation of the conservational management actions	31.12.2007.	completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ exact management needs by forest compartments are documented ▪ new forestry management plans are compiled in which the management needs and change of function is included ▪ planned management is agreed by the forest owners, managers ▪ public tendering procedure is launched
A5 - Elaboration of the conservational management plan of 'Nagykörösi pusztai tölgyesek' Natura 2000 site	31.07.2011.	not started yet	

1.	2.	3.	4.
Action	Deadline	Status	Description
B1 - Taking over the restricted right of disposal of habitats Euro-Siberian steppe woods and Pannonic sand steppes	31.08.2011.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 contracts are bound with forest owners and managers on the take-over of the restricted right of disposal of habitats Euro-Siberian steppe woods and Pannonic sand steppes, for 90 years (17.12.2007.)
C1 - Removal of arboreal invasive species using mechanical and chemical methods	31.12.2008.	not started yet	
C2 - Artificial forest regeneration with indigenous species	31.12.2008.	not started yet	
C3 - Natural forest regeneration with the exclusion of game	31.12.2008.	not started yet	
C4 - Reconstruction of building complex for educational and ecotouristical purposes	31.05.2008.	not started yet	
D1 - Treatment of herbaceous invasives, follow-up treatment of arboreal invasives	30.11.2010.	not started yet	

1.	2.	3.	4.
Action	Deadline	Status	Description
D2 - Follow-up treatment of artificial forest regeneration	30.11.2010.	not started yet	
E1 - Information to the general public - Media work	31.08.2011.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ continuous media presence is achieved (21 press, 8 radio, 2 TV, 20 internet) ▪ 1 opening press conference and press trip for the national media is held (08.05.2007.)
E2 - Information to the general public - Website	31.08.2011.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ website is set (02.04.2007.) ▪ links are established ▪ website continuously operates (cc. 5300 visitors)
E3 - Development of programmes for the educational centre	31.05.2008	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ questionnaire inquiry on environmental education needs of locals (181 items) ▪ information exchange within national parks and other LIFE-programs ▪ draft teaching aid booklet is compiled
E4 - Communication of the educational programme to target groups	31.08.2011.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establishment of education webpage ▪ communication with local educators and target groups
E5 - Starting up the educational programme and continuous operation of the educational centre	31.08.2011.	not started yet	
E6 - Mutual communication aiming at different groups of professionals and dissemination of scientific results	31.07.2011.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ project was presented at professional conferences, meetings (5 presentations) ▪ field trip for 20 NGO members is held (13.10.2007.)

1.	2.	3.	4.
Action	Deadline	Status	Description
E7 - Development of a nature trail	31.03.2008.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ track of the nature trail (1800 m) and an additional bicycle route (2700 m) are designated
E8 - Compilation of Layman's report	31.07.2011.	not started yet	
F1 - Project operation, organizing cooperation with the partners	31.08.2011.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ communication between partners is continuous and effective ▪ annual project opening workshop was held ▪ thematic workshops were organized ▪ Advisory Board participated in field trip ▪ local office is rented ▪ project equipment is in operation
F2 - Conservation management monitoring	31.03.2011.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ vegetation sample plots (20) were designated ▪ vegetation quadrants were sampled in 2007 ▪ pitfall traps (85 items) and window traps (4 items) operated in 2007 ▪ game monitoring was carried out in 2007
F3 - Monitoring of biological status of habitat types of community importance	31.03.2011.	on-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sample plots (10) were designated ▪ vegetation quadrants were sampled in 2007 ▪ pitfall traps (45 items) and window traps (1 item) operated in 2007 ▪ survey on weevils, longicorn beetles, orthoptera, moths were implemented in 2007 ▪ dead wood material was examined in 2007
F4 - Continuation of the activities after project completion and preparation of an After-LIFE conservation plan	31.08.2011.	not started yet	

Description of technical progress on project actions by 31.12.2007.

A1 - Establishment of the project system

Expected results:

- official leaders and stakeholders are informed on the project
- personnel is recruited
- local office is rented
- necessary equipment is purchased
- Advisory Board is set
- a full-colour brochure introducing the project in Hungarian and English languages, in 10000 copies
- 2 information boards

Achievements:

- official leaders and stakeholders are informed on the project
- personnel is recruited (ranger, educational coordinator)
- local office is rented (Nagykőrös, Kálvin Square 6.)
- necessary equipment is purchased (4 WD car, 2 laptops, 2 GPS, 1 digital photo camera)
- Advisory Board is set
- a full-colour brochure introducing the project in Hungarian and English languages, in 10000 copies is issued
- 2 information boards are erected

Action status: completed

Description:

There are three organizations cooperating in HUNSTEPPICOAKS project. Firstly, the leaders of the partners were officially informed about the fact that the European Commission supports the project. The kick-off meeting of the project with the project participants was held 05.10.2006 in DINPI central office. Here, the project was presented (by Katalin Sipos and Zsolt Baranyai, DINPI staff) and the detailed operative rules of the cooperation were discussed (draft Partnership Agreement) as well as essential documentation of project implementation (final version, financial handbook, etc.) were given to the partners. For the list of participants and minutes of the occasion, see **Annex A1-1**. The final version of the Partnership Agreement determining the operative rules of cooperation was signed trilaterally on 31.01.2007. (the copy of this document was sent to the Commission on 02.05.2007.). Responsible person: Annamária Csóka

The new project personnel indicated in the proposal (ranger: István Justin, educational coordinator: Beáta Papp) was recruited on 16.10.2006. For their official task descriptions, see **Annex A1-2**.

We have been renting a local office in Nagykőrös since 01.03.2007. Originally, we aimed to rent a furnished office near the town centre or the project site, which is easy to access for locals. However, as Nagykőrös is a small town with restricted possibilities in this respect, finally we found a suitable building (which is situated at the market place, within easy reach of everyone), but we had to modestly furnish it, partly charged to the project. The office is approx. 80 m². It includes a bureau, where our ranger and educational coordinator occasionally work and the meetings are held, a so-called Green Point Office (part of the national Green Point Network), where people can get information on the project itself or on other conservational, environmental issues as well as take brochures on these topics free of charge. The office contains a small room suitable for overnight stays for the personnel or researchers spending a longer period in the project area. For photos on the office see **Annex A1-3/a-d**. Responsible person: Beáta Papp

Necessary equipment for the project was purchased by 30.03.2007. The 4 WD car (Ford Ranger, see photo in **Annex A1-4**), 1 laptop, 2 GPS, 1 digital photo camera are used by the ranger and educational coordinator of DINPI and 1 laptop is by the project personnel of WWF. Responsible person: István Justin

The Advisory Board (which consists of the members of DINPI National Park Council) was asked for the task of the scientific coordination of the project on 20.11.2006. On 16.02.2007., the Council accepted the request and Prof. Dr. Gábor Fekete (academic, ecologist and expert of the steppe oaks) was appointed leader of the Steppe Oaks Advisory Board (for these documents see Annexes **A1-5/a-b**). The foundation meeting was held in our local office on 08.05.2007., where the project was introduced to the members through a presentation (for the memorandum and photo of the occasion see **Annexes A1-6/a, A1-6/b** and list of presentations in **Annex G and G/a**). As on the same date the first press conference and trip were also held, the members of the Advisory Board participated in these. Responsible person: Annamária Csóka

The project introductory brochures were edited by 14.03.2007., 9000 item in Hungarian, 1000 item in English (for the final version of the brochure see **Annex A1-7/a-b**, and also **Annex A2-3, one Hungarian and English brochure is attached to the progress report**). The state authorities as MoEW, SFS, local stakeholders (forest owners, managers, forestry company, educational institutions, etc.) were also sent brochures for their information. For the united brochure distribution list of partners see **Annex A1-8**. As we have savings in this budget and the brochure is popular, we plan to re-issue it in the second half of the project. Responsible: WWF

Two boards were erected providing information on HUNSTEPPICOAKS project. On the two sides of each board, in Hungarian and in English, the short description of the project and information on LIFE-Nature and Natura 2000 can be read (see final versions of the texts in **Annex A1-9/a-b**). One of the boards is located at the market place, which is near town centre and locals visit the place in high numbers (apparently, it is in the neighbourhood of our rented office, see photo in **Annex A1-10/a**). The other board is erected on the corner of the Pálfája forest compartment, where the future education centre is located (see photo in **Annex A1-10/b**). The photos were taken on the inauguration of the boards, on 22.03.2007., with the participation of project members. Responsible: NKÖ

A2 - Brand design of the project

Expected results:

- identifiable and distinctive project logo and graphical elements that make up an easy-to-understand, nice and consistent brand design
- different types of promotion objects in altogether 3000-3500 pieces

Achievements:

- project logo was designed and it is in use
- graphical elements that make up an easy-to-understand, nice and consistent brand design were elaborated and used to create the project website, the information brochure and the promotional material
- different types of promotion objects decorated with the logo of the LIFE programme and with that of the project were obtained: 700 pcs of pens, 700 pcs of textile bags, 700 pcs of folders, 1000 pcs of fridge magnets and 10,000 pcs of colour stickers

Action status: completed

Description:

WWF Hungary implemented the creation of the project brand in cooperation with the partners. To define the unified message of the logo and design as well as harmonize the styles required for different uses and target groups (e.g. professionals, general public, children) a personal meeting was organized with the participation of the communication staff of WWF and DINPI on 28.11.2006 (responsible Klára Kerpely).

Three professional graphic designers were contracted to create and present on drafts different ideas for the possible project logo and the graphical elements for the brand design. We evaluated the received drafts involving the project partners and then the author of the best proposal received the contract for the elaboration of the selected draft with graphic elements for different uses.

However, another proposal for the digital design elements was also rewarded and used as a basis for the project website design.

The final logo package was elaborated and delivered by 27.02.2007. Final version of the logo is attached (**Annex A2-1**).

The defined budget for promotional material allowed us to obtain 3100 promotional objects of higher value and 10000 colour stickers. The promotional material were delivered by 30.04.2007, with the exception of the paper folder. The producer firm of this object, which had given us the best offer, later faced serious business problems and could not produce the objects. We had to contract another company, which finally delivered the folders by 28.09.2007.

The acquisition of a wide range of objects makes possible to use them for several purposes, such as events and interactive on-line activities for the general public, representation activities of the project, involving experts, partners, stakeholders and decision-makers. The promotional material is used by all members of the partnership, however WWF Hungary is coordinating its distribution. The distribution plan of the material and the present status matrix of distribution are attached (**Annex A2-2**).

The logo of the LIFE programme and that of the project appear on all promotional objects. On larger objects the logo of the Natura 2000 network and that of all project participants and co-financiers, together with the URL of the project website also appear. Photo of the promotional objects is in **Annex A2-3**. **An item of pen, textile bag, folder, fridge magnet and colour sticker is attached to the progress report.**

A3 - Preparation of the reconstruction of the buildings

Expected results:

- authorised reconstruction plan for the buildings of 'Pálfája' forest, which meets the environmental educational requirements both in appearance and function.

Achievements:

- authorised reconstruction plan for the buildings and their surroundings in 'Pálfája' forest, which meets the environmental educational requirements both in appearance and function.

Action status: completed

Description:

For drafting the reconstruction plans for the main building, outbuilding and the surrounding area of future Pálfája educational centre, former existing plans for the reconstruction for public welfare purposes (submitted also in the appendix of the project proposal) created a good base. NKÖ, DINPI and occasionally WWF participated at the meetings concerning the planning period of the reconstruction (in office and field e.g. on 22.03.2007.), see photos in **Annex A3-1/a-b**.

The drafts are designed for a medium-scale renovation. To comply with environmental educational needs, new plans were drafted by a designer charged by NKÖ, which includes the solar collectors and the possibility for selective garbage collecting, composting, removal of concrete paving from the courtyard, etc. The buildings will be also accessible for disabled visitors with the help of ramps and special washroom. The plan includes the following rooms: main building: warming-up kitchen, employing hall, washrooms (for washing hands only), institutor's room; outbuildings: toilets for women and men, (half) open-air showers. For the plans see **Annex A3-2/a-b, copies of plans are attached to the progress report**. The planned arrangement of the surroundings can be studied on the function map of the garden, which can be found in **Annex A3-2/c**). The authorisation of the agreed plans was the task of the NKÖ (as owner, property manager of the site).

The public tendering procedure was organised by NKÖ. DINPI, as beneficiary charged an external public tendering consulting company to supervise the whole process of the procedure. (This is compulsory according to the public tendering rules when EU support is used in a certain project. Its cost was not foreseen during the compilation of the procedure.) The date of the call for tender is 28.09.2007., the date of the compilation of the summary on the procedure is 10.12.2007. In the call the following elements were included (for the detailed list see the official summary of the public tendering procedure, in **Annex A3-3**):

- strengthening on the statistics of the main building (201 m²)
- architectural works on the main building (e.g. development of a new roof, isolation)
- building in new sanitary ware into side-buildings (toilets 40 m², 8 showers);
- inner and outer electric works in the main and side buildings
- mechanical works in the main and side buildings as well as in the garden (water system, solar collectors, etc.)
- arranging in the garden (e.g. entrance and side gate, fence, bicycle storage, table, bench) and in Pálfája forest compartment (see-saw, swing, tables, benches, etc.)

The procedure was valid, however, a problem arose: the 3 bid offers received were all above the amount foreseen in the proposal to a high extent (The lowest bit offer was net 29 149 555 HUF, which equals 115034 EUR, with the exchange rate of 03.12.2007.). Finally, the next meeting of NKÖ board of representatives set this problem in the agenda and on 22.11.2007. this institution accepted that the remaining net 9599555 HUF will be given by NKÖ's own budget for the reconstruction works (not as part of the project expenses). (For the decision of the board see **Annex A3-4**.) Thus the contracting date with the winning company is 20.12.2007. The reconstruction works (thus Action C4) can be launched at the beginning of January, 2008. The inauguration of the furnished educational complex and its surroundings (together with the nature trail) is foreseen on 05.06.2008.

A4 - Preparation of the conservational management actions

Expected results:

The results of the preparation and authorisation of modified forest management plans are the following:

- the fragments of priority habitat types get the primarily protection function instead of a primarily economic function
- the preconditions for the nature conservational management actions are established in accordance with the actual forestry management plan
- on the basis of fieldwork the preparation of detailed contracts and public tendering is finished

Achievements:

The results of the preparation and authorisation of modified forest management plans are the following:

- the fragments of priority habitat types got the primarily protection function instead of a primarily economic function
- the preconditions for the nature conservational management actions are established in accordance with the actual forestry management plan
- on the basis of fieldwork the preparation of detailed contracts is ready
- public tendering is launched

Action status: on-going

Description:

The compilation of the subsequent forestry management plans of the project area was due in 2006-2007. As it was not a modification of valid plans but compilations of new ones (valid for the next 10 years), after discussing with the forest managers DINPI itself could negotiate with SFS, competent forestry authority. (It was not the forest manager, who should have applied for the modifications of the plans, as it was foreseen in the project proposal.)

Preliminary talks with forest managers and SFS took place during the preparation of project proposal. Negotiations on the forestry management plans of the supported project launched at the beginning of October, 2006. After presenting the main guidelines, on the subsequent occasions (initiated usually by SFS) SFS representatives and DINPI staff visited each forest compartment in the project site, which took turn with office meetings. The list of the meetings in the above topic is the following:

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
06.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (office)	discussion on the content of forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
24.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
25.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
26.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
08.11.2006.	Pusztavacs (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
09.11.2006.	Pusztavacs (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
13.11.2006.	Cegléd (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
20.11.2006.	Cegléd (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
11.12.2006.	Cegléd (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
24.01.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	reconciliation with forest management plan content of each forest compartment	forest managers, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
19.02.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	taking soil samples from 115 C forest compartment	István Nagy, István Justin (DINPI)
09.03.2007.	Nagykőrös (office)	discussion on the draft forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
04.07.2007.	Nagykőrös (office)	reconciliation with NEFAG	representatives of NEFAG, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
11.07.2007.	Nagykőrös (office)	discussion on the draft forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
24.07.2007.	Pusztavacs (office)	closing session on forest management plans	representatives of SFS, István Justin (DINPI)

The detailed fieldwork with the authority guarantees that conservational management works (elimination of invasives and forest transformation) foreseen in the proposal are authorized to implement in each forest compartment.

SFS also slightly altered the boundaries and numbering of forest compartments during the compilation phase, for changes see map in **Annex A4-1/a-b**.

SFS is also the soil protection authority in the project area. As a part of the compilation of the forestry management plans, the 'principal aim' was foreseen to change from 'forest for wood production' to 'forest for soil protection'. (This latter expression means that because of unfavourable site conditions, the cover can decrease to 30 % without reforestation liability). SFS agreed with the change of the category in the cases of open steppe oak forests forming mosaics with sandy grassland patches, however, in compartments with more closed forest stands, the change was rejected. For this reason in these areas the cover can decrease only to 70 %.

However, the fencing off in these compartments can bring substantial changes on the regeneration conditions (it is presumably strongly supported if the game population is eliminated) and the 70% cover may be reached. If the natural processes head for the opening of the forests here, thus the decrease of the 70% cover, DINPI will initiate reconciliations with the SFS for the modification of the 'principal aim' of even these compartments (the modification of forestry management plans).

In the case of a certain forest compartment, 115 C, soil samples were taken (as an additional cost not foreseen for this action) to justify the supposition that the soil conditions of this compartment do not enable the regeneration of forests at all. The survey proved that there is a soil layer (below 50 cm depth), which contains hidrocarbonate in a high concentration. Here, owing to the fact that the roots of seedlings spread in this layer and they cannot reach the water table as well as in the region generally there is precipitation shortage, successful regeneration is impossible to achieve. SFS accepted the result of the survey and took out this compartment under any forestry use. In the case of another compartment, the same problem may rise (140 B), so DINPI plans to charge an external expert for soil survey next year (for the map of forest aim categories see the map in **Annex A4-2**).

For an example of a newly compiled forestry management plan see **Annex A4-3**. (We have presently the digital format of the new forestry management plans, because these have not arrived yet in paper format up to now from SFS.)

The fence building was also negotiated with the authority. It forms part of another authorisation procedure, initiated by the forest managers. The permission is given in every case as the purpose of fence is game exclusion. Regarding the line of the fence there may be slight modifications, however, up to now the line and length of the fences have not changed. Further clarifications in this respect will be sent to the Commission in the first half of February.

The owners consented to the execution of conservation management works in the overwhelming majority of the planned areas. However, they insisted on the construction of temporary fences in the forest reconstruction areas, due to the excessive game population (which is underpinned also by the results of game monitoring of 2007, see on **Annex F2-7 on CD**). For this reason the mobile electric fences and game repellents planned to be changed for fences with presumably higher expenses (which are to be classified to infrastructure costs). We will provide more details on these topic subsequent to the progress report.

DINPI reserved other field days for the compilation of the detailed content of the technical documentation for the public management procedure, which practically meant visits and estimations on each forest compartments. The list of field trips as follows:

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
31.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of the data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
02.11.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of the data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
23.01.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
08.02.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI), László Gálhidy (WWF)
14.02.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
21.02.2007.	Budapest (office)	preliminary discussion on public tendering	Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
06.03.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
07.03.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin (DINPI)
10.04.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, István Nagy (DINPI)
12.04.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin (DINPI), László Gálhidy (WWF)
25.04.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin (DINPI), László Gálhidy (WWF)
22.05.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
14.08.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)

DINPI compiled a data sheet that contains all the relevant information for the technical material of the public tendering procedure by forest compartments (see an example in **Annex A4-4/a** and photo **A4-4/b**) and also technical descriptions.

We hired an external public tendering company for the implementation of the whole tendering procedure, as it is compulsory in the case of EU project support according to the Hungarian regulations, Law on Public Tendering, which need was not foreseen during the compilation of the procedure (and has an additional cost). Certainly, the technical material for the procedure is provided by DINPI. As the first session of procedure is on-going, we are not allowed to attach the technical material now, however, we will send it with the overall documentation of the public tendering procedure to the Commission in the interim report.

From the viewpoint of public tendering procedures Action C1-D1 and C2-D2 are managed together.

According to the negotiations with the consulting company, we have to separate min. two sessions of public tendering procedures, in which we have to use completely different types of procedures. In the first phase, we will have two procedures on three leased subareas (154 ha), containing invasive elimination with stump and shoot treatment, forest regeneration in stripes, 1 year post-treatment. It will be an EU level open tendering procedure. (The remaining 31 ha of lease, compartment 136 C, will be included in the procedure after EU permission for area change under the restricted right of disposal.)

The launch is due at end of December 2007, announcement of results and contracting at the end of February 2008 and conservational management works can start in the middle of March. The schedule of the works in 2008 is the following: stump treatment takes place in spring and forest regeneration in autumn, as planting in autumn the regeneration is generally more successful and needs less replacement. Invasive shoot treatment is due in autumn also. With this, 2 shoot treatments can be saved (in June and August) as the success of the autumn treatment is as good as in spring. Because the stump treatment is accomplished in spring, forest regeneration can start immediately in autumn.

However, in the second phase, the owners' exclusive right for managing the area (in the areas which are not subjects of lease) is have to be taken into consideration when selecting the type of procedure. For this reason, these procedures will be of inviting character, presumably containing altogether 3 procedures (one by forest managers). The launch of these is foreseen by the end of March 2008, the announcement of results and contracting can take place in the middle of summer and conservational management works can start and finish in Autumn, 2008.

For fence construction the authorised plans has to be compiled at the beginning of next year. As there are fences in which different sections are subjects of different public tendering procedure types (open or of invited character, on the basis of the status of the forest compartments) the procedures cannot be launched completely independent of each other.

During the implementation of this action, the following problems rose:

108 A, 103 B, 104 A, B, E forest compartments are in the property of cc. 140 forest landowners. We planned to lease also this compartment in the original proposal, for this reason, the official leader of the landowners in that period signed the pre-contract (attached to the project proposal). However, the landowners changed their leader this year. Subsequently, DINPI presented the project on one occasion as well as sent again official information letters (for the new leader and every owner) on the management actions to be implemented on the area of the landowners. Despite all these efforts, at the next official meeting of landowners, the members (by voting) rejected the participation in the project.

We made steps to find cooperative forest owners, who possess further steppe oak habitats in good condition to lease and manage these as a substitution for the property of the landowners, and replaced it with 136 C forest compartment (of similar size as the dropped out ones).

The ownership of other forest compartments (98 A, B, C, D, E) are not regulated. (These are under local nature protection, initiated by NKÖ since the 1980s, the fact of its protection was enforced in 2004). In here the registered property manager is still the long-ago dissolved farmer's cooperative. DINPI has already made official steps to draw this property under its property management. This procedure will go on and hopefully successfully close next year. However, as the ownership of the area is not regulated and the registered forest manager is also absent, until that time the conservation management has to be suspended.

NEFAG agreed with the execution of the conservation management work on its property (see agreement in the annex of project proposal, we also had subsequent meetings with its representatives). However, the company seemingly intends to implement the works at a considerably higher price than the marketable value. They presumed on leasing their areas to us, however, in the case of a state organisation this is option was excluded. This is also a good reason why we intend to launch open procedures first: we can use the bid offers as financial orientation in the procedures of inviting character.

(For the maps of the planned and actual areas to manage see map in **Annex A4-5/a-b**).

We organized a workshop and field program with the aim of exchange of experiences in invasive management between national parks and external scientists of the topic in Hungary. (Also representatives of LIFE-Nature projects were present.) For the minutes of the occasion and photo see **Annex A4-6/a-b**.

In this action we faced delay, for subsequent reasons and details please see Part: Problems. Based on the results of the first session of public tendering the size of areas to be managed has to be supervised. However, we cannot provide more details presently.

B1 - Taking over the restricted right of disposal of habitats Euro-Siberian steppe woods and Pannonic sand steppes

Expected results:

- discontinuation of economic forest use on patches of habitats of community interest (altogether 175 hectares) as well as establishment of a long-term professional cooperation between the conservational manager and private owners

Achievements:

- 6 contract bound guaranteeing the discontinuation of economic forest use on patches of habitats of community interest (altogether 175 hectares) for 90 years as well as establishment of a long-term professional cooperation between the conservational manager and private owners

Action status: completed

Description:

The project proposal included the pre-contracts bound on the restricted right of disposal of habitats with the forest owners. For the compilation of the final contract, which is valid for the next 90 years, DINPI hired an external real estate lawyer with remarkable experience gained in this field. (The reason for this act was: after submitting the proposal our law expert left the institute and was not replaced.) With this, additional costs not foreseen were added to this action. During the internal negotiations, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai drafted the elements to be included into the contract and the real estate lawyer converted these into the special language of law. During the reconciliations with the forest owners and managers, the external lawyer and DINPI staff answered the questions posed by the stakeholders, problems, certain cases were discussed and the elements required by the owners were included in the draft proposal.

We have to note, that the sort of contract initiated by DINPI (taking over restricted right of disposal over habitat types) is the first to be bound in Hungary. For this reason, we could not have learnt from earlier experiences and as the contract is quite complex as well as valid for an extraordinary long term, this phase of the project proved to be very time-consuming.

For the list of negotiations, see the table below:

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
17.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (NKÖ office)	presentation of the concept of contract on restricted right of disposal over the habitats	forest owners, managers, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, Annamária Csóka (DINPI)
06.02.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	launch of the compilation of contract with the help of the external real estate law expert	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
27.02.2007.	Nagykőrös (NKÖ office)	reconciliation on the concept with the owners	forest owners, managers, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
01.03.2007.	Nagykőrös (NKÖ office)	reconciliation on the concept with the owners	forest owners, managers, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
10.08.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	discussion on the content of the contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
15.08.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	discussion on the content of the contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
16.08.2007.	Budapest (County Land Registry Authority)	discussion on the possibilities of the inclusion of restricted right of disposal into the land register	representatives of the County Land Registry Authority, real estate lawyer, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
29.08.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	reconciliation with forest owners on the content of contract	forest owners, managers, real estate lawyer, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
05.09.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	reconciliation with forest owners on the content of the contract	forest owners, managers, real estate lawyer, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
20.09.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	further discussion on the detailed content of contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
04.10.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	reconciliation with forest owners on the content of the contract	forest owners, managers, real estate lawyer, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
15.10.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	further discussion on the detailed content of the contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
05.11.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	compilation of final version of the contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
04.12.2007.	Budapest (real estate lawyer's office)	final reconciliations on the text of the contract	real estate law expert, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
05.12.2007.	Budapest (real estate lawyer's office)	final reconciliations on the text of the contract	real estate law expert, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
06.12.2007.	Budapest real estate lawyer's office	final reconciliations on the text of the contract	real estate law expert, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
07.12.2007.	Budapest (real estate lawyer's office)	final reconciliations on the text of the contract	real estate law expert, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
11.12.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	presentation of the final version of contract to owners, discussion	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
13.12.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	final version of contract to owners, discussion	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
17.12.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	contracting	forest owners, managers, heads of DINPI, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)

The contract founds value of assets right, right of common, for 90 years, documented in land registry.

Finally, 6 contracts (70-90 pages each) were bound with the 4 forest owners, for the following reasons: one owner's mother has widow's right on the area to be leased, and a separate contract had to be compiled for her, one owner's wife has different owner's share on each plot numbers to be leased, and she has also her own contract. As in the tasks indicated in the contract forest managers also has responsibility, they also signed the contract (in fact, in 3 contracts as in the other cases the owner is also the manager). For the text of contract (one example) see **Annex B1-1/a on CD** and the photo on signing the contract in **Annex B1-1/b**.

The most important elements of the contract:

- the contract is valid from the date of contacting
- in the contract there are references on the Natura 2000 network, the conservation of steppe oaks and public interest of conservation
- forest owners are primary targets of the contract but it includes regulations for the forest managers as they have also responsibilities
- the owner has an obligation to inform the customers, inheritors, forest managers on the content of the contract
- the contract has to be registered in the land registry and in the forestry registry
- DINPI and its all-time successors are displayed in the contract
- the notice to quit is excluded regarding all-time owners/managers
- the owner/manager has to preserve the natural state of the area independently from the branch of cultivation (it can be forest, grassland, pasture but not ploughland)
- hunting objects, game ploughlands are not allowed to operate in the project area
- the reconciliations for preliminary decisions of special authorities (conservation, forestry) is the role of DINPI regarding the conservational aims and management included in the contract (also for the actions in the project and long term management plan)
- the wood originated from the management works is a property of the owner/manager, its transportation is the task of the party to the contract
- every benefit deriving from the proper use of the area concerns the party to the contract, DINPI will not establish a claim for these
- the owner/manager is obliged to avoid cases of double founding

- all the landuse plans of the area has to be previously approved by the DINPI and it can interpose veto for conservation damage uses
- the owner has an obligation that he continuously charges a forest manager on the area
- during the 90 years, the tasks connected to the forest manager's status have to be accomplished by the forest managers at their own expenses (compilations of forest management plans, data providing, etc.)
- the contracting party takes into consideration that the conservation management works of the project are contracted as a result of public tendering procedures; he accepts that he is not exclusively entitled for the implementation of the management works, however, he is obliged to participate in the authorisation phase
- the forest manager has a right to make a bid offer for the public tendering procedures

As this contact is one of the most important pillars of the project, we intend to use a special translation service to translate the text of contract into English and we will handle it to the Commission as a part of our interim report.

The signed contract is formally a pre-contract, however, regarding its content it is finalised. The reason for this: the land registry authority indicated that if the lease does not refer to complete plot numbers, drafts on the leased areas have to be drawn by geodetic experts. This act is foreseen in the first quarter of next year and results additional expenses in this action, which we could not have seen in the proposal.

During our work, we faced the following problem:

108 A, 103 B, 104 A, B, E forest compartments are in the property of cc. 140 forest landowners. We planned to lease also this compartment in the original proposal, for this reason the official leader of the landowners of that period signed the pre-contract (attached to project proposal). However, the landowners changed their leader this year. Subsequently, DINPI presented the project on one occasion as well as sent again official information letters (for the new leader and every owner) on the management actions to be implemented on the area of the landowners. Despite all these efforts, at the next official meeting of landowners, the members (by voting) rejected the participation in the project.

We made steps to find cooperative forest owners, who possess further steppe oak habitats in good condition to lease these as a substitution for the property of the landowners and replaced these with 136 C forest compartment. As a result of this, the contracts cover 175 ha altogether.

For the map of the areas indicated in the project and actually taken over please see **Annex B1-2**.

E1 - Information to the general public - Media work

Expected results:

- increased interest on the issues targeted by the project and wide knowledge of the results achieved
- wide media presence
- 4 press conferences with press trips held for the national media
- 1 press conference with a trip is organised for the international media
- press releases are issued
- press articles collected and filed in

Achievements:

- 1 opening press conference and press trip for local and national media to introduce the project, the problems to solve, goals to achieve, etc. was organised
- press releases to be sent to the Hungarian media were issued
- relatively high media coverage generated by the press trip and the press releases
- specific articles and news were published in the magazines and monthly papers of the beneficiary and partners about the steppe oak woods, important habitats, Natura 2000, conservation goals and activities of the project
- articles were collected, filed in and made available on the project website

Action status: on-going

Description:

Media work started from the very beginning of the project with articles in the magazines of the project participants and in a local paper in Nagykőrös. A list of printed and electronic media appearances (articles, news, interviews) is attached in **Annex E1-1**. Selected articles (5 examples) are also attached (**Annex E1-2/a-e**).

The first regional press release was issued in March 2007 on the occasion of the establishment of the information boards of the project. It generated several articles in regional and local media and interviews in radio programmes.

The opening press conference and press trip was held on 08.05.2007 with the participation of 13 journalists, the members of the Advisory Board, project staff, guests and heads of the three implementing organisations. After the press conference a field trip was organized with a short performance of a local archery club as media attraction included. They presented how people lived in that time when the steppe woods was the typical vegetation of the Hungarian Plain. For photos please see **Annex E1-3/a-d** A preparatory meeting and field trip was held with the participation of WWF staff, the ranger of DINPI and the press officer of NKÖ on 12.04.2007 (responsible: Klára Kerpely).

Most of the generated publications were issued exactly on the Day of Birds and Trees on 10.05.2007. what gave them special attention. Apart from the News sections of papers, on-line portals and the regional TV channel, articles with colour photos were published in magazines, such as *Vadon* (Wild) and the Hungarian edition of *Natural Geographic*.

Articles and news, related to the project or the habitat are continuously present in the magazines, websites and monthly paper of the beneficiary and partners. Furthermore, several radio and TV interviews with project staff have been broadcast.

As information dissemination for non-professionals also a presentation was held, see list of presentations in **Annex G and G/b**.

E2 - Information to the general public – website

Expected results:

- an up-to date website in Hungarian and English version with an e-mail address, downloads, links to a number of other websites (LIFE, beneficiary, partners, other projects)
- banners and links are established
- a certain amount of visitors (expected number of visitors 30000 per year) and downloads

Achievements:

- an up-to date website in Hungarian and English on www.pusztaitolgyesek.hu was created, and its content is maintained: required logos, a direct e-mail address of the project, contact information, project description, news, maps, downloads, photo gallery, links to a number of other websites (LIFE, Natura 2000, beneficiary, partners, co-financiers, other LIFE projects, related sites), etc.
- links to the project website were placed on the websites of the beneficiary, the partners and other LIFE projects
- total amount of visitors up to 10.12.2007 was over 5300

Action status: on-going

Description:

The creation of the website (design and programming) was subcontracted to a professional web designer team. For faster updates a user-friendly administration interface was created, through which the communication officer of WWF and the education programme coordinator of DINPI can easily upload new contents. The Hungarian version of the website, with an English summary included, was set up in by 02.04.2007 (see **Annex E2-1/a**). The full English version was published by 08.10.2007 (see **Annex E2-1/b**). As the translation of the great amount of text of the initial content was well beyond the capacity of WWF, it was subcontracted, while the updates will be continuously translated into English by project staff and published in both languages.

The website is hosted by the same server that WWF uses for its own homepage. As WWF changed its service provider this year, both sites moved to a new server on 31.05.2007. From that date on detailed visit and usage statistics of the project website are available. Although in the first year the planned 30000 visits/year were not reached, the number of monthly visitors are continuously increasing (usage statistics attached in **Annex E2-2**).

Links to the project website were placed on the homepages of the project participants and other websites, as follows (this list is not exhaustive):

<http://www.nagykoros.hu/>

<http://www.dinpi.hu/>

<http://wwf.hu/index.php?p=vedelem&sub=4>

http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pusztai_t%C3%B6lgyes

<http://www.geocaching.hu/caches.geo?id=1825>

<http://www.forestpress.hu/hu/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=7706&Itemid=>

<http://www.kerecsensolyom.mme.hu/hu/content/show?datatype=links>

http://www.life-tapolcaimedence.hu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19&Itemid=62

E3 - Development of programmes for the educational centre

Expected results:

- preparation of the educational strategy for the area;
- preparation of educational programmes for at least three main educational activities (min. 5 school class, min. 1 summer camp, min. 1 nature trail programme, with all necessary teaching materials and methods);
- preparation of a 30 hours 'Train the trainer programme';
- edition of a teaching aid book, in min. 500 copies;

Achievements:

- survey on environmental educational needs in the area
- exchange of experience with environmental educators
- collection of materials for the educational program

Descriptions:

1. Preliminary survey on the environmental educational needs of the region

This section was implemented through questionnaire inquires during 2007. With the aid of these, local stakeholders were drawn in by personal questioning (e.g. in the frame of 'Nagykőrös Days' event), questionnaires sent to educational institutes or downloaded from our website. For the questionnaire see **Annex E3-1**. (The content of the questionnaire is detailed in its evaluation below.)

a) 'Nagykőrös Days'

On 01.09.2007, during the festival organized in Nagykőrös town centre our project was represented with a stand. Besides the questionnaires to be filled in and information on the project, we provided games on better knowledge on nature for each age group (e.g. looking for leaf pairs of different tree and bush species, puzzles of oak drawings, treasure chest with corpses of a snag-beetle, longicorn beetle to be examined through a magnifier, interesting crops, seeds from the area, etc.). As a reward, promotional materials of the project were given for the players (see **Annex E3-2/a-b** for photos on the occasion). 36 visitors filled the questionnaire during the festival.

b) Download from the internet

The questionnaire can be downloaded also from the webpage of the project's education section.

c) Contacting education institutes

From all sorts of communication, this proved to be the most efficient (142 questionnaires were collected this way). Each primary and secondary education institution (27 altogether) were sent 20 questionnaires (in a format, which could be easily copied) in the settlements of Nagykőrös, Csemő, Nyársapát as well as Cegléd (larger settlements of the region). In addition to the questionnaires, all these institutions were given our promotional materials popularizing our project (20 project presenting brochures, 1 folder, 5 stickers per school). This activity is connected also to Action E4. (For our letter and list of addressees, see **Annex E3-3**.)

Altogether 181 filled-in questionnaires returned to us. The first part of the questionnaire referred to the age, residence and experience in education of the questioned person, while the second part to the expectations regarding the programs of the future education centre. A part of the respondents is willing to take part also in the elaboration of the education program and the arrangements in the surroundings of the centre (they declared of these with giving their contacts). For the detailed evaluation of the inquiry, see **Annex E3-4**.

2. Preparation of an educational strategy

In the process of working out the educational programs, several special books were obtained and a large quantity of materials was download from the internet, as well as consultations were held so far. The education program coordinator of the project gained information, learnt best practices from the education officers of DINPI and other national park directorates in Hungary. She exchanged information also with the education expert of Szénások-LIFE (project run also by DINPI, as beneficiary), visited their LIFE-office and studied their educational methods.

As DINPI accredited an environmental educational program in 2006, this will mean great help in accrediting our 'Train the trainer' program within HUNSTEPPICOAKS. The evaluation of the questionnaires helps further shaping of our programs.

The collected material is partly in digital format, partly bound in a teaching aid booklet form (draft of the teaching aid book, which is to be issued in the frame of this action). For the photo of the teaching aid booklet and examples of other materials see **Annex E3-5**.

The education program coordinator participated in the following 'Train the trainer' programs and consultations:

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
8-10.11.2006.	Jósvafő	special meeting of the education officers of national parks of Hungary	Beáta Papp (DINPI)
30.04.2007.-02.05.2007.	Lakitelek-Tőserdő	visit in Kontyvirág Forest School studying the occupation of educational officers of Kiskunság National Park held for students	Beáta Papp (DINPI)
14.06.2007.	Kistarcsa	visit on experience-trail of Rügyecskék Foundation, studying their occupation with school children	Beáta Papp (DINPI)
22.06.2007.	Fót	participation and studying nature trail program of DINPI on Fóti-Somlyó	Beáta Papp (DINPI)
18.-20.09.2007.	Hortobágy	special meeting of the education officers of national parks of Hungary	Beáta Papp (DINPI)

For photo documentation of these see **Annex E3-6/a-c**.

Responsible person of this action: Beáta Papp

E4 - Communication of the educational programme to target groups

Expected results:

- brochure on the educational centre programmes, 15000 copies
- three types of green events annually, with 100-150 participants each (in 3 years, altogether on min. 9 occasions)
- the educational section of the main web page is emphasized
- high levels of public awareness on the educational centre and its programs and parallel to this, related to steppe oak forests of Nagykőrös and the Natura 2000 network

Achievements:

- the educational part of our webpage is in operation and serves up-to-date information
- the educational and exhibition stand of the project is prepared

Description:

Within this action, setting the education part of the project webpage (containing preliminary information) was implemented, both in Hungarian and English languages (see webpage on education in **Annex E4-1**). As the reconstruction works of the educational centre and its opening advance further up-to-date information will be placed here.

Our educational and exhibition stand to be used at conservational events was also prepared by DINPI staff in November 2007. It is made of wood by a special design, which is nice, easy to assemble as well as to transport (see its photo in **Annex E4-2**).

Despite the fact that the education programs have not been finalized, we disseminate preliminary information among the target groups connected to education. The brochure informing on the project (in the frame of Action A1) serves as a herald also for the educational part of HUNSTEPPICOAKS project, as it presents the planned education programs of Pálfája education centre. The brochure was sent to the 27 education institutions of the region within the inquiry detailed in Action A3.

Drawing attention to the future education programs was also supported by a series of colour, laminated posters (6 items, A3 format), which were displayed on the traditional archery contest organized on 30.06.2007 in Nagykőrös. The participants of the tournament were given promotion materials of the project (see photos in **Annex E4-3/a-b**).

Called upon by the Kossuth Lajos Primary School of Nagykőrös, on 12.11.2007. Beáta Papp presented the educational section of HUNSTEPPICOAKS project for the institutor staff of the school (see **Annex G and G/c**).

Responsible person of this action: Beáta Papp

E6 - Mutual communication aiming at different groups of professionals and dissemination of scientific results

Expected results:

- experts are continuously informed about achievements in the management tasks as well as they can provide feedback by their comments on these actions
- approximately 75 scientific experts from all over Europe as well as 20 Hungarian professionals get acquainted with the results of the project
- NGOs active in the field of the Natura 2000 site management have the opportunity to learn from the experience of the project coordinators

Achievements:

- conservation experts and NGOs active in the field of nature conservation were informed through several presentations
- one field trip for green NGOs was held

Action status: on-going

Description:

The communication with different groups of professionals proceeded with the participation of DINPI and WWF staff in scientific events. In November 2006 a seminar was organised by a large nature conservation NGO for botanists and conservation professionals about conservation actions to preserve plant species and associations in Hungary. Project staff of DINPI participated in the conference, where Katalin Sipos, Head of Department for Nature Conservation presented the the project, especially from the viewpoint of invasive elimination (**Annex G and G/d**).

In March 2007 WWF staff participated in the yearly National Conference of the Hungarian Environmentalist and Nature Conservation NGOs and National Forest Forum in Kecskemét in order to inform Hungarian green NGOs and forestry professionals about the launch of the project, and also to generate a dialogue about the problems of natural forests on the Great Plain. László Gálhidy presented the project (**Annex G and G/e**) and the information stand was managed by Klára Kerpely. In the regular NGO forum organized by DINPI, Katalin Sipos presented the on-going projects of the Directorate, thus also HUNSTEPPICOAKS project to the representatives of NGOs (**Annex G and G/f**).

In June 2007, at the ranger's meeting of DINPI held in Nagykőrös István Justin presented our project to the complete ranger staff of the organisation in field (**Annex G and G/g**).

Annamária Csóka presented HUNSTEPPICOAKS project among other on-going projects of DINPI in the frame of a lecture to students of applied zoology, in the University of Veterinary, Budapest in December 2007 (**Annex G and G/h**).

The first one of the 3 planned study trips to the project site was organised on 13.10.2007. Most of the 20 participants were members of NGOs but also joined us some representatives of the media, specialised in environmental issues. László Gálhidy and István Justin gave professional guidance to the group through the project site (see photos in Annex **E6-1/a-b**).

E7 - Development of a nature trail

Expected results:

- introduction of the nature value and role of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI and Natura 2000 network through 10 stations of the nature trail, with 2200 m length
- establishment of the first nature trail within the area of Nagykőrös town together with the local government
- free-of-charge service of the educational program
- 8000 copies of A5 format nature trail guide
- 1000-1500 visitors per year

Achievements:

- designation of the track of the nature trail
- determination of the topic of the stations

Description:

In the summer and autumn of 2007, with repeated, detailed field visits and GPS documentation, the track of the nature trail was designated (see map in **Annex E7-1**).

During the designing period the possible locations of the trail were tested and the topic of each station was discussed in field. With the designation of the track, the exact length of the trail is indicated, which is 1800 m. In the project proposal we foreseen a 2200 m long trail, however, during the field trips it revealed, that the feasible length cannot reach 2200 m around the education centre. Nevertheless, as bicycle is a very popular means of transport in Nagykőrös, the nature trail is completed by a 2700 m bicycle route, which offers also possibility for visiting a more remote site, where forest transformation carried out in the project can be observed. The stations of the footpath and bicycle route are partly overlapping.

Based on these achievements we started the compilation of the nature trail booklet and the designing of field elements.

We plan to inaugurate the nature trail together with the education centre (05.06.2008.) By this time, the nature trail guide book will be edited as well (it will be available also on our webpage).

Responsible person of this action: Beáta Papp

F1 - Project operation, organizing co-operation with the partners

Expected results:

- Implementation of the project is proceeding effectively, organized and with expertise

Achievements:

- project staff works and cooperates
- local office is rented
- workshop was organized with project participants at the beginning of 2007
- thematic workshops with partners are held connected to certain actions throughout the year
- Advisory Board was convened once in 2007, participated in field trip
- project equipment is in operation

Action status: on-going

Description:

Each project member was appointed (together with the ones employed exclusively in the project, as mentioned in A1) in October 2007. Their task lists are extended by the references on their tasks in the HUNSTEPICOAKS project. The participation of the project staff can be supervised in the timetables (in the case of the ranger also in the ranger's diary).

The project staff of DINPI spent several days in 2007 in the local office according to the timing of the actions connected to the project area. However, to enable local interested people to meet and inquire us regularly, the office had opening hours every Tuesdays, from 09:00 to 15:00 and also telephone contact of the project staff was provided. Numerous workshops were held in the office (with project partners, external monitor, Advisory Board, forest owners, rangers of the national park, etc.). Other details on the local office can be found in Action A1.

Our annual project opening workshop was held on 22.02.2007. with the participation of all partners. Here, the achievements of 2006 and the tasks for 2007 were discussed and the detailed work plan for 2007 was approved (for the minutes of the occasion and photo see **Annex F1-1/a, F1-1/b**).

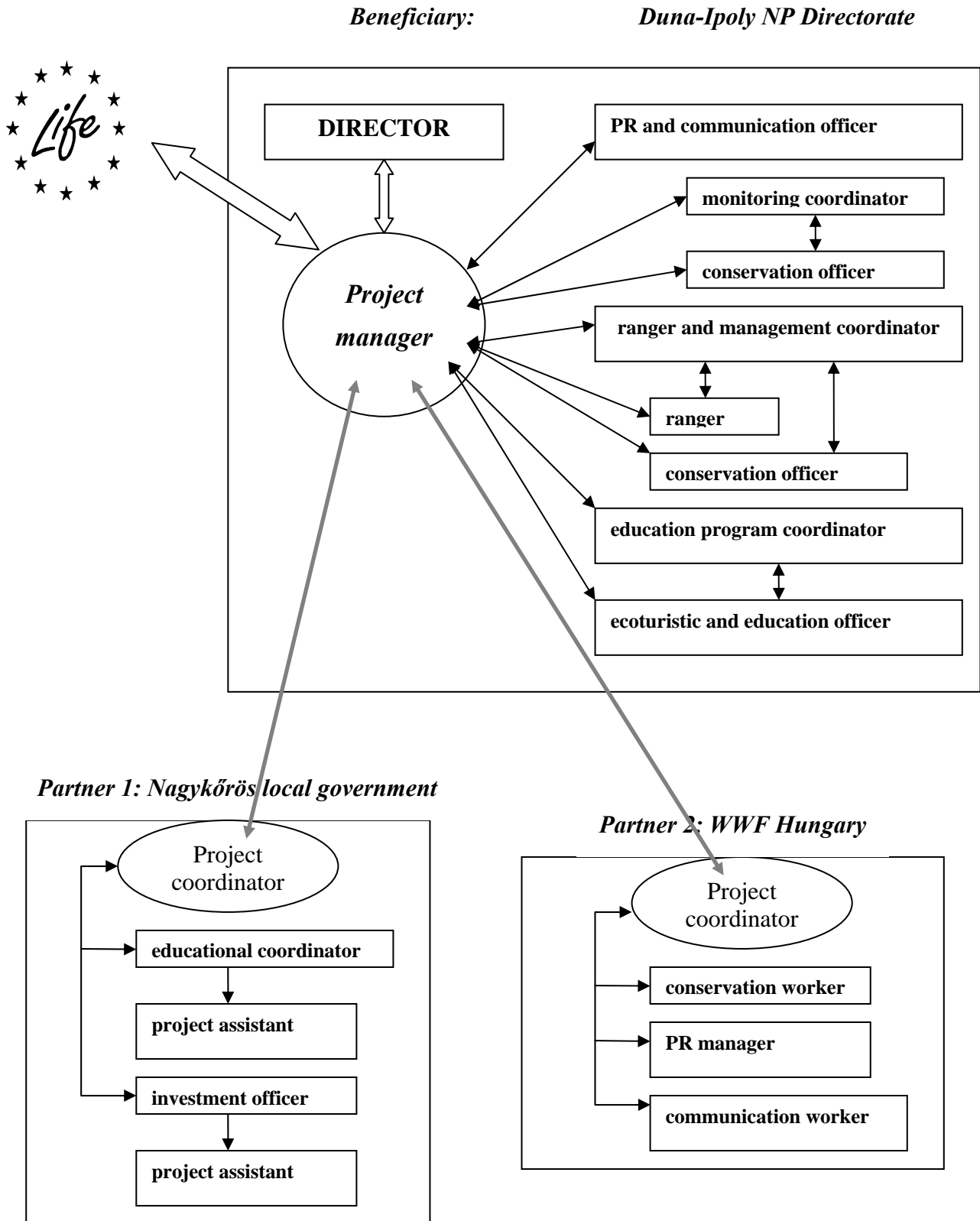
Thematic workshops with partners were held in cases when considerable amount of tasks gathered to discuss and the personal presence of the partners was needed (as mentioned in every action separately, not exhaustive).

The Advisory Board was convened this year on 08.05.2007. for the event of its official foundation as mentioned in A1. (Its members also participated in the field trip.) Because the members of the Advisory Board are in high positions and extremely occupied, we agreed that the internet will be used as the main channel of communication (in December 2007 we sent our reports on the monitoring standards and results of this year for approval).

The necessary equipment for the project (4WD car, 2 laptops, 2 GPS, 1 digital photo camera) is in operation (their purchase was mentioned in A1).

Responsible: Annamária Csóka

The organogram as follows:



F2 - Conservation management monitoring

Expected results:

- the result of the action is the detailed documentation and evaluation of the effects of habitat management actions, through structural variables and indicator organizations
- on the base of the monitoring data the real effects of the project are determinable and quantifiable, such as the trend of decrease of invasive species (coverage decline during the project, seedling grown up during the project, etc.)
- the results of F2 are important for the long-term management plan (management plan of the Natura 2000 site (Action A5) for determining the necessary tasks

Achievements:

- detailed documentation on basic state of the management quadrants in 2007
- pitfall trap samples were collected as basic state survey in 2007

Action status: on-going

Description:

Conservational management monitoring - botanical part:

In 2007 this task was implemented by an external researcher, vegetation specialist, experienced in surveys on steppe oak habitats. The management monitoring protocol for the special requirements of the project was elaborated by him. 20 quadrants were appointed by the researcher during summer, 2007 (with the participation of the representatives of DINPI). For their distribution map see **Annex F2-1**. These quadrants will be sampled in each vegetation period until 2011. The data collection took place during the summer, through this basic state before management was recorded. The sampling units are 50X50 m quadrants that represent well the potential vegetation mosaics of the project area, sites as well as the management and regeneration types.

The researcher made draft vegetation maps on the quadrants illustrating the main vegetation types. The vegetation was sampled by types and levels, the coverage of each plant species and the area of the vegetation patches were recorded within each quadrant. As a characterisation of the vegetation patches, on the state of the vegetation type structural characteristics, species set, typicalness, condition and the observed damaging-disturbing factors were recorded. The researcher gave the complete species list within every quadrant and calculated the relative frequentness of each species. The number of oak seedlings within the sampling plot was also recorded. For the exact dates of fieldwork see report of researcher. The detailed study can be found **on CD, in Annex F2-2**.

The annual data series will be elaborated by the person evaluating and drawing conclusions in 2011. The results will be used for the compilation of the middle and long-term management plans for the Natura 2000 area.

Conservational management - zoological part:

Based on the reconciliations with the special staff of DINPI and experience of other projects using similar research methods, the following conservational management method was applied in 2007: The zoological part of the management monitoring was provided by pitfall trap series deposited along transects at the end of July 2007, operating continuously until the end of November 2007 (for their location, see map in **Annex F2-3**). On the average, a pitfall trap line consisted of 10 traps. The overall 85 trap was deposited connected to the botanical management sampling plots. The traps were emptied every second week by a DINPI team generally of 4 persons led by István Justin, during one day, or occasionally by 2 people during two days (for photos see **Annex F2-4/a-b**). On some occasions project staff of WWF also participated in this fieldwork.

For selecting the samples into larger taxa we charged an external researcher, who at the same time identifies the ground beetle specimens. Other selected taxa (their exact number will be known after the selection) will be forwarded to specialists to identify. The researchers will provide the species lists (with numbers of specimens also indicated) by the end of April, 2008.

In the summer of 2007 a window trap (for a photo see **Annex F3-5**) was also hanged in the canopy in the project area, as we considered this as a proper sampling tool both in management and biodiversity monitoring. However, experiences showed that fixing and emptying the window traps are difficult and the samples provided by these tools were not satisfactory regarding either quality or quantity. Therefore, we will utilize window traps in the project area in the future but only for biodiversity monitoring.

We also have to investigate the game populations of the project area because field experience shows that the excessive game stocks exercise detrimental effect on the natural regeneration processes of the steppe oak forests. On the other hand, it has to be continuously examined by our ranger that in the fenced-off areas game are absent.

During the year of 2007, the basic state survey was implemented in game monitoring, which serves also as a basis for the evaluation of the whole data series in 2011.

When planning the survey, we contacted also Szénások-LIFE for their experience in this topic. In 2007, the researcher charged by DINPI compiled studies on the methodology of game monitoring in the project area and the suggestions for future evaluation of the results. He also executed the game monitoring for 2007 from October to the middle of December.

The applied method contained walking along 5 permanent tracks 4 times each (at dawn or dusk, when game is the most active) noting observations on the observed game individuals (for the map of tracks, see **Annex F2-5**). In case of areas to be fenced off, a part of the track runs outside and a part inside the fence.

As this method is applicable well for fall deer, roe deer, deer, but not much for wild boar, the survey was completed by observations made from hides by the ranger of the project (for the list and photo see **Annex F2-6/a-b**). For the three studies see **Annex F2-7 on CD**. For a photo taken on game monitoring in field, see **Annex F2-8**.

As the methodology study is compiled and our ranger participated also in most sampling occasions in 2007, DINPI staff will be able to implement the game monitoring in each following year. With the help of the suggestions on evaluation, the rapid evaluation of the data series can take place, drawing up tendencies and enabling the inclusion of the experience into the management plan of the Natura 2000 site, in 2011.

Responsible person of this action: István Justin

F3 - Monitoring of biological status of habitat types of community importance

Expected results:

- the result of the action is the detailed documentation and evaluation of the natural values of the 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI, especially the qualitative and quantitative state and changes of reference habitat types and its species
- detailed lists of plant and animal species occurring, phytocoenological records of reference habitat types and maps of the distribution of reference values utilized in editing the conservation management plan of the Natura 2000 site (Action A5).

Achievements:

- detailed documentation on basic state of the reference quadrants in 2007
- pitfall trap samples were collected as basic state survey in 2007
- taxa of weevils, longhorn beetles, moths are collected, species lists are compiled
- dead wood material was investigated, species lists are available

Description:

Conservational management monitoring - botanical part:

This task in 2007 was carried out by the external researcher, who implemented also management monitoring. He elaborated the biodiversity monitoring protocol for the special requirements of the project. The 10 biodiversity monitoring quadrants were designated by the researcher during summer, 2007 (with the participation of the representatives of DINPI, photo in **Annex F3-1**). For their distribution see map in **Annex F2-1**). The sampling was executed during the summer. These quadrants will be investigated each vegetation period until 2011. The sampling units are 50X50 m quadrants which represent well the potential vegetation mosaics, vegetation types and flora of the project area.

The researcher made draft vegetation maps on the quadrants illustrating the main vegetation types. The vegetation was sampled by types and levels, the coverage of each plant species and the area of the vegetation patches within each quadrant. As a characterisation of the vegetation patches on the state of the vegetation type, structural characteristics, species set, typicalness, condition and the observed damaging-disturbing factors were recorded. The researcher gave the complete species list within the quadrants and calculated the relative frequentness of each species. The number of oak seedlings within the sampling plot was also recorded. The study can be found **on CD, in Annex F3-3**.

The annual data series will be elaborated by the person evaluating and drawing conclusions. The results will be used for the elaboration of the middle and long-term management plans for the Natura 2000 area in 2011.

Conservational management - zoological part:

The zoological part of the biodiversity monitoring was provided by pitfall trap series deposited along transects at the end of July 2007, operated continuously until the end of November 2007 (for the location of traps, see map in **Annex F2-3**).

The overall 45 traps were deposited connected to the botanical management sampling plots and were emptied as described in Action F2. If the trap perished (with great probability by wild boars), this fact was also recorded. In the procession of samples we plan to use the method described in F2. (For photos see **Annex F2-4/a-b**.)

In the year of 2008, we intend to decrease the number of pitfall traps (in 2007 their number was altogether 130), for the following reasons: the emptying of the high number of traps is very time consuming and energy demanding. Thus, our ranger will be able to empty the traps (the exact number is a matter of consultation with experts, at the beginning of 2008) during one day (it is important from the viewpoint of the evaluation of the samples).

We intend to fix approx. 3 window traps as a part of biodiversity monitoring in 2008. (For the photo of a window trap see **Annex F3-5**).

Apart from the pitfall and window traps, according to our plans, the biodiversity monitoring would concern different taxa each year until 2011. (The quadrants of 50X50 m area are not optimal from the viewpoint of each zootaxon, however, we aimed to connect the sampling sites of taxa to the botanical quadrants if it is possible.)

Weevil and longhorn beetle collection was fulfilled this year (for the species list see **Annex F3-6**).

On one occasion in autumn, survey on moths was implemented (see photo and list in **Annex F3-7/a-b**).

At the end of September 2007, an external researcher charged by DINPI launched survey on the orthoptera fauna with one field day (sampling with grass net) which will be followed with further 4 days in 2008 (see photo in **Annex F3-8**).

In autumn 2007 the comparative examination on dead wood material of native and invasive tree species was accomplished by two experts of the DINPI staff: Sándor Bérces and Valentin Szénási (for the preliminary results see **Annex F3-6** and photos in **Annex F3-9/a-b**).

Responsible person of this action: István Justin

5. Problems encountered

In respect of Action A4 and B1 we have delayed implementation. (In the case of Action A4, the planned deadline was 31.03.2007. In Action B1, the take-over of the restricted right of disposal was due by 31.12.2006 according to the project proposal.)

The reasons for the delay are as follows:

Although DINPI could have initiated the compilation of forestry management plans and we started to work on this topic in October 2006, we faced a very long procedure, in which we were dependent on SFS (which is also the soil protection authority). Parallel we had to negotiate with the forest owners and managers of the forest compartments. In this round of new management plan compilation the case was not the simple prolongation of the present plan but a profound change to another kind of forest use. In this special case, we had to negotiate on the change of 'principal aim' and invasive elimination as well as forest regeneration, both in office and field with SFS by each forest compartment. In a certain, duly underpinned case a compartment was even taken out of forestry use (after survey on soil samples). This action part was time and energy consuming and required the cooperation of several parties.

Parallel to the compilation of forestry management plans we reserved numerous field days for the compilation of the detailed content of the technical documentation for the public management procedure, which practically meant visits and estimations on each forest compartment and recording data on the sheets elaborated by us. For the implementation of public tendering procedures it was compulsory to hire an external public tendering company. Certainly, DINPI prepared and provided all the technical material for the procedure, which also demanded long time. The contract on the take-over of the restricted right of disposal contains parts, in which forest owners declare that they will enable the implementation of conservation management works in even those areas, which are not leased. To enclose these points, the exact documentation on the management needs in the compartments had to be ready by the time of contracting.

For this reason, the public tendering procedure could not have started before the contracts had been signed.

In Action B1, for the compilation of the final contract on restricted right of disposal DINPI had to charge an experienced external real estate lawyer because our law expert left the institute and was not replaced. What is more, our contracts with the take-over of restricted right of disposal over habitat types is the first to be bound in Hungary. There were no best practices to study either from the side of conservation or law. After internal negotiations, where we drafted the elements to be included into the contract and the real estate lawyer converted these into the special language of law, we answered the questions posed by forest owners and managers, problems, certain cases were discussed and the elements required by the owners were included in the draft proposal. This process consumed far more time than we foresaw in the project proposal. We had to discuss also with the Regional Land Registry Authority on the registration of the special lease in the land register. In the contract, we had to respect also the forest managers' viewpoints as they also have responsibilities. Two additional contracts had to be bound because of the diverse ownership characteristics of certain plot numbers. By the time of contracting, the owners had to declare that they allow us to implement the conservational management works on even those areas, which are not leased. As the contract is valid for 90 years, it had to contain special clauses regarding the change of ownership, inheritance, havaria, sale and purchase, responsibilities in different cases, etc. The contract is as long as 70-90 pages.

The compilation of the forestry management plans of the project area, the fieldwork necessary for the conservation management works, the preparation of the contract for the take-over of the restricted right of disposal and the preparation of the public tendering procedure proceeded parallel and in several cases we had to wait for answers from stakeholders (authorities, forest owners, etc.) in more rounds, which in several cases took long. What is more, these actions were built on one another (for example, the compilation of the forestry management plans and fieldworks are prerequisites for the compilation of the contract and the preparation of public tendering procedure).

As these latter actions are the most important pillars of the long-term conservation of the steppe oak forests and of the project itself, the adequate amount of time needed for their thorough foundation.

During our work, we faced additional problems, which were not foreseen, in the cases of the area of forest landowners and another with not regulated ownership. (For more information, see Actions A4 and B1).

In the case of the problems we face now and detailed also in certain actions connected to conservation management we can provide additional information by the end of February 2008, presently these actions are in motion and we are constantly seeking for the best solutions.

In our project proposal, the deadline of the interim report was foreseen by 31.12.2007.

We informed the Commission on our intent to postpone this deadline in a letter sent 08.11.2007., because due to our problems, the spending of eligible costs of the project did not reach the necessary threshold according to the CP Art. 23. by the foreseen date. The postponement was accepted by the Commission. As replacement of the interim report, the present progress report is submitted.

However, we plan to work up the delay and submit the Interim Report by 31.12.2008, as the Commission suggested in its answer to our letter.

6. Financial issues

PROJECT COSTS INCURRED (between 01.09.2006.-31.12.2007.)

Cost category	Total cost according to the Commission's decision*	Total costs incurred from the start date to 31.12.2007.	%**
1. Personnel	238872	71476,5	3.84
2. Travel	52056	4231,16	0.23
3. Outside assistance	636500	20161,26	1.08
4. Durables: total cost	329600	28475,84	1.53
5. Land purchase	490000	221979,97	11.91
6. Consumables	42400	8204,25	0.44
7. Other costs	21880	2164,38	0.12
8. Overheads	51928	5214,22	0.28
SUM TOTAL	1863236	139927,61	19.43

(The exchange rate of 03.12.2007. was used: 1 EUR=253,4 HUF)

In the cases of cost categories outside assistance and durables: total costs we have considerably less amount spent than foreseen by 31.12.2007. The reason for this in outside assistance is that the conservational management works (C1, C2) launch with delay, only in 2008. In durables: total costs the building reconstruction (C4) as well as fence building (C3) are also due later than foreseen, in 2008.

In the year of 2008, we are going to eliminate the delay in the implementation of these actions (see Planned project progress below) and we will reach the foreseen percentages by budget categories as well as the necessary threshold for submitting the interim report.

7. Planned project progress (for the next six months)

A4 - Preparation of the conservational management actions

The launch of the public tendering procedure for conservational management works took place at the end of December 2007. Thus, the announcement of results and contracting will be effectuated in the middle of February 2008 and conservational management works will start in early spring (according to weather conditions).

C1 - Removal of arboreal invasive species using mechanical and chemical methods

The start of the invasive elimination works is due at the beginning of March 2008.

C2 - Artificial forest regeneration with indigenous species

The start of the invasive elimination works is due at the beginning of March 2008.

C3 - Natural forest regeneration with the exclusion of game

The launch of public tendering procedure for fence takes place in spring 2008.

C4 - Reconstruction of building complex for educational and ecotouristical purposes

The reconstruction works of the buildings together with its surroundings will start in January 2008 (dependent on weather conditions). We foresee the inauguration of the furnished educational complex and its surroundings (together with the nature trail) on 05.06.2008.

E1 - Information to the general public - Media work

Publication of articles and news in our own periodicals will be continued. Parallel, we plan to publish in the local paper of Nagykőrös a 2-monthly series of thematic articles, as local people are a primary target group.

The next press conference and field trip will be organised for the opening of the education centre and nature trail on 05.06.2008.

E2 - Information to the general public - Website

The website will be kept up-to-date with all the achievements, news and photos of the project.

Two weeks before the opening of the educational centre we will launch a banner campaign to popularize the educational programs and the website (increase visitors' number). Banners will be established on frequently visited on-line portals, linking to a simple on-line quiz on the project website.

In order to obtain more detailed data on the readers' habits of the project website and on the visitors' number of the educational subsection, from the beginning of 2008 Google analytics software will be installed and used to generate and analyse the visitor statistics of the website.

E3 - Development of programmes for the educational centre

We will go on with activities drawing in local educators and networking. The two study trips with teachers will be implemented in spring or early summer 2008.

Environmental education programs for Pálfája Education Centre will be finalised by the end of May 2008.

E4 - Communication of the educational programme to target groups

We will issue the brochure popularising the programs of the education centre and launch the presentation of the programs on the website's educational part by 30.06.2008.

E6 - Mutual communication aiming at different groups of professionals and dissemination of scientific results

We will continue participating in conferences and meetings on conservation topics. (On the next occasion in Conference on Actual Flora and Vegetation Research, the representatives of DINPI will take part and bring a poster on the project, at the end of February 2008.)

E7 - Development of a nature trail

We plan to inaugurate the nature trail together with the education centre (05.06.2008.) By this time, the nature trail guidebook will be edited (it will be available also from our webpage).

F1 - Project operation, organizing co-operation with the partners

In January 2008, the members of the partnership will hold their annual project opening meeting. Here, the achievements of last year and the tasks of 2008 will be discussed. Apart from this occasion, partners will meet when project implementation requires personal discussion. We plan to convene the Advisory Board on 05.06.2008, for the opening date of the education centre.

F2 - Conservation management monitoring

Vegetation monitoring in the 20 management quadrants will be launched by 30.06.2008. Pitfall traps will be deposited in the project area during spring (the timing is dependent on weather conditions).

F3 - Monitoring of biological status of habitat types of community importance

Vegetation monitoring in the 10 biodiversity quadrants will be launched by 30.06.2008. Pitfall traps and window traps will be deposited in the project area during spring (the timing is dependent on weather conditions).

The survey on the orthoptera and moth fauna as well as dead wood material of the area will be continued.