



LIFE Project Number

LIFE07 NAT/SK/000707

Final Report

Covering the project activities from 01/01/2009 to 31/12/2015

Reporting Date

<31/05/2016>

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym

Conservation of Endangered Bird Species Populations in Natural Habitats of the Danube Inland Delta (Danube birds)

Project Data

Project location	Slovakia: Bratislava, Danube Floodplains, Komárno, Štúrovo Hungary: Szigetköz, Győr
Project start date:	01/01/2009
Project end date:	30/06/2013 Extension date: 30/06/2014, 31/12/2014, 31/12/2015
Total Project duration	84 months (including Extension of 30 months (12 + 6 + 12))
Total budget	4 577 663 €
Total eligible budget	4 577 663 €
EU contribution:	2 288 831 €
(%) of total costs	50
(%) of eligible costs	50

Beneficiary Data

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Project general objective

Project general objective was to improve the conservation status of the floodplain bird species that are protected in SPA Dunajské luhy and SPA Szigetköz (*Alcedo atthis*, *Anas querquedula*, *Anas strepera*, *Ardea purpurea*, *Ciconia nigra*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Dryocopus martius*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Milvus migrans*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Riparia riparia*, *Sterna hirundo* and *Tringa totanus*). For this purpose the most threatened natural habitats of the target species had to be restored; appropriate site management had to be introduced; conditions for long-term sustainability of the conservation status of target species had to be created; and awareness of the key stakeholders and public on the conservation of floodplain habitats had to be raised.

1.2. Specific objectives

Specific objectives of the project were:

1. Restoration of selected wetlands, dried-up river branches and oxbows including renewal of the water supply.
2. Restoration of river branch connectivity, water regime and flowing water conditions.
3. Land lease or purchase and following introduction of appropriate habitat management.
4. Elimination of fish migration barriers at two strategic points and restoring bird's food base.
5. Restoration of abandoned meadows as feeding and nesting bird habitats.
6. Restoration of bird's refugia and nesting areas by planting of native tree species.
7. Acquiring of relevant scientific data on target species and their habitats.
8. Awareness rising of key stakeholders and public.

1.3. Project site

Project was implemented in 2 adjacent Special protection areas (SPA) along the Danube River, which represents also the state border between Slovakia and Hungary. Danube floodplains; sub-site 1 in Slovakia represent the SPA Dunajské luhy, NATURA 2000 Code SKCHVU007, surface area 16 512 ha. Danube floodplains; sub-site 2 in Hungary represent the SPA Szigetköz, NATURA 2000 Code HUFH30004, surface area (ha): 17 185 ha.

Naturally this area represents large continuous floodplain, divided administratively between two countries, where populations of targeted species are not separated by the virtual administrative state border.

1.4. Species and habitat types targeted

The project is targeting fifteen Annex I and II/1 species for which SPA Dunajské luhy and SPA Szigetköz have been designated by restoration of their natural habitats: 1. Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), 2. Garganey (*Anas querquedula*), 3. Gadwall (*Anas strepera*), 4. Purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), 5. Black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), 6. Marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), 7. Black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*), 8. Little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), 9. White-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), 10. Little bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*), 11. Black kite (*Milvus migrans*), 12. Night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), 13. Sand martin (*Riparia riparia*), 14. Common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), 15. Common redshank (*Tringa totanus*).

Main conservation issues being targeted (including threats) were: 1. River regulation, 2. Changed water levels, 3. Changed water level dynamics. 4. Lack of food for zoophagous bird species, 5. Forest management, 6. Abandonment of traditional use of meadows, 7. Disturbance of sensitive species, 8. Insufficient scientific data, 9. Lack of awareness of authorities, decision-makers and public.

1.5. Expected results

- Improved conservation status of target Annex I (and Annex II/1) bird species *Alcedo atthis*, *Anas querquedula*, *Anas strepera*, *Ardea purpurea*, *Ciconia nigra*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Dryocopus martius*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Milvus migrans*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Riparia riparia*, *Sterna hirundo* and *Tringa totanus* in SPA Dunajské luhy and SPA Szigetköz.
- Nesting habitats of these bird species targeted restored or improved at 270 ha and at 4.1 km of river branches length; feeding habitats improved at 319 ha and 16.4 km of river branches length.
- Recently dried-up river branches and oxbows restored (renewed water supply): ‘Istragov’ marsh (77 ha), ‘Dunajské kriviny’ river branch system (2 ha and 1.4 km), ‘Százazerdei’ river branch (1.5 ha) and selected small dried-up river branches (18 ha).
- Restored river branch connectivity, water regime and flowing water conditions: ‘Medved’ovské rameno’ river branch system (4 km), ‘Veľkolélske rameno’ river branch system (5.5 km), Százazerdei river branch (1.5 ha, 1.5 km), wetlands in the Ásványi river branch system (70 ha), selected small isolated river branches (18 ha, 4 km).
- Two fishways constructed on strategic places in the left-sided river branch system
- At least 150 ha of lowland meadows restored and regular management introduced at three localities.
- At least 35 ha of land afforested with native tree species; together at least 15 000 young trees planted.
- Steep river banks of minimal length 25 m restored at 4 places – nesting habitats of *Riparia riparia* created.
- Raised awareness about target bird species, river restoration and nature conservation issues, information and promotional materials produced and distributed, information panels installed, presentation book produced, project promoted in the local, regional national and international media.

1.6. Achieved results

- Improved conservation status of target bird species and their habitats. New nesting pairs and population increase recorded for species White-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) at the location of action C.1, Common redshank (*Tringa totanus*) at the location of action C.7 of Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) - 8 new pairs at the location of actions C.3, C.4, C.5 and C.9 and Sand martin (*Riparia riparia*) – 970 new pairs in nesting season of 2012 at the location of action C.9.
- Aquatic and wetland nesting and feeding habitats of bird species targeted restored or improved at 186.2 ha and at 22.91 km of river branches length. Terrestrial habitats of lowland meadows and floodplain forests were restored at 229.86 ha.
- Recently dried-up river branches and oxbows restored (renewed water supply): ‘Istragov’ marsh partially restored (21.4 ha), ‘Dunajské kriviny’ river branch system

(0.7 ha and 1.2 km), ‘Százazerdei’ river branch (1.3 ha) and selected small dried-up river branches (39.3 ha) restored.

- Restored river branch connectivity, water regime and flowing water conditions: ‘Medved’ovské rameno’ river branch system (2.7 km), ‘Veľkolélske rameno’ river branch system (5.26 km), Százazerdei river branch (1.3 ha, 1.5 km), wetlands in the Ásványi river branch system (55.9 ha), selected small isolated river branches (39.3 ha, 4.25 km).
- Two fishways constructed on strategic places in Baka and Veľkolélske rameno’ river branch.
- 184.6 ha of lowland meadows restored and regular management introduced at four localities.
- 35.76 ha of land afforested with native tree species; together 44 900 young trees were planted.
- Steep river banks of length 265 m restored at 3 places – nesting habitats of *Riparia riparia* and *Alcedo atthis* created.
- Raised awareness about target bird species, river restoration and nature conservation issues, numerous information and promotional materials produced and distributed, 20 information panels installed, presentation book produced, project frequently promoted in the local, regional national and international media.

1.7. Long term result achieved

The project was focused mainly on one-off investments and interventions, which did restore natural river dynamics and vital ecosystem functions and services. Restored wetlands, river branches and river banks will provide for a long time living space, feeding and nesting habitats for target bird species. Sustainable grazing regime at Veľkolélsky ostrov Island has been established, which is now functioning without any project financing. Lowland meadows as birds feeding habitats were restored and are maintained by grazing. **Population of several target bird species did increase** already during the project, although the project actions have mainly the long-term impact.

1.8. Socio-economic context

Positive socio-economic impact and local acceptance of the project has been achieved by intensive and constant communication with local stakeholders and communities. Local companies and workers took part in implementation of the project action. Starting sustainable grazing of lowland meadows has established several permanent local jobs.

Many people have really appreciated especially large scale river branch restoration actions, bringing the landscape back to times of their youth and childhood. Local inhabitants directly benefit from the restored ecosystems services by fishing, recreation and locally also hunting.

1.9. Key deliverables and milestones of the project divided according to the project's actions

Action	Deliverables and milestones	Deadline	Realisation
A.1	Mathematical hydrological model	31/03/2010	Finished 28/02/2010
A.2	Technical documentation for restoration of 'Istragov' marsh	30/09/2010	Finished 28/02/2011
A.3	Technical documentation for restoration of 'Dunajské kriviny' river branch system	31/03/2010	Finished 09/2010, Supplement 11/2011
A.4	Ichthyological expertise on construction of the fishways	31/03/2010	1 st study finished 12/2009 Supplement 29/11/2010
A.4	Technical documentation for construction of the fishway on two strategic points in river branch system	30/09/2010	Finished 1) 08/2011 and 2) 01/2012
A.5	Expert study on restoration of 'Medved'ovské rameno' river branch system	30/09/2009	Finished 04/2010
A.5	Expert study on restoration of 'Veľkolélske rameno' river branch system	30/09/2009	Finished 28/02/2010
A.5	Technical documentation for restoration of 'Veľkolélske rameno' river branch system		Finished 12/2010, Supplement 12/2011
A.5	Technical documentation for restoration of 'Medved'ovské rameno' river branch system	30/06/2011	Finished 11/2011 Updated 06/2012
A.6	Expert study on restoration of lowland meadows bird habitats by grazing	30/09/2009	Finished 15/11/2009
A.7	Expert study on planting of native trees to create refuges and nesting places for endangered bird species	30/06/2009	Finished 31/10/2009
A.8	Technical documentation for restoration of the 'Száraserdei' river branch	30/09/2009	Finished 20/12/2009
A.8	Technical documentation for restoration of wetlands in 'Ásványi' river branch system	31/12/2010	Finished 20/12/2009
B.1	First land purchased	30/03/2009	Finished 30/01/2009
B.1	Land purchase and long-term lease contracts, land ownership certificates	30/06/2012	Finished 31/12/2015
C.1	Restoration of 'Istragov' marsh completed Additional mesures – sealings of canals Additional mesures – Reconstruction of the object in the seepage canal	30/09/2011	Finished 04/2012 Finished 28/08/2013 Not realised
C.2	Restoration of 'Dunajské kriviny' river branch system completed	31/03/2012	Finished 07/2013
C.3	Construction of the fishway on two strategic points in river branch system completed Fishway I. Baka Fishway II. Velkolelske rameno river branch Fishway II. Velkolelske river branch – bridge construction	31/03/2012	Finished 06/2014 Finished 06/2014 Finished 09/2015
C.4	Restoration of selected dried and isolated river branches completed Rusovské rameno river branch 1 Ostrov orliaka morskeho island Rusovské rameno river branch 2	31/03/2012	Finished 02/2013 Finished 07/2013 Finished 02/2014
C.5	Restoration of 'Medved'ovské rameno' river branch system completed Additionally improved	31/03/2012	Finished 12/2012 Finished 12/2013
C.6	Restoration of 'Veľkolélske rameno' river branch system completed	31/03/2012	Finished 11/2013

Action	Deliverables and milestones	Deadline	Realisation
C.7	Grazing animals for restoration of lowland meadows purchased Sheep (100) and goats (20) purchased Cows (70) purchased Horses (8) purchased	30/09/2009	Finished 06/2009 Finished 07/2009 Finished 04/2010
C.8	Planting of native tree species completed Foreseen planting Additional planting	31/12/2012	Finished 02/2012 Finished 12/2014
C.9	Restoration of steep river banks completed Veľkolélsky ostrov Island, rkm 1 782 Chľaba, rkm 1 709	30/06/2011	Finished 05/2010 Finished 08/2011
C.10	Restoration of the 'Százazerdei' river branch completed New forest planted and secured	31/10/2011	Finished 31/10/2011 Finished 04/2014
C.11	Restoration of wetlands in 'Ásványi' river branch system completed. Enlargement - plus C.11 actions.	31/10/2011 31/03/2013	Finished 31/10/2011 Finished 29/03/2013
D.1	Project website launched	30/06/2009	Finished 30/06/2009
D.2	Leaflets	30/06/2010	Published 02/2009
D.2	Brochure Brochure second edition	30/06/2011	Published 12/2011 Published 2/2014
D.2	Calendars	31/12/2010	Published 12/2009
D.2	Stickers, postcards, posters	31/12/2010	Published 02/2011
D.2	Calendar 2011	31/12/2010	Published 12/2010
D.2	T-shirts and other promotional materials T-shirts second edition	30/06/2011	Produced 05/2012 Produced 04/2014
D.2	Layman's report published and distributed	30/06/2013	Completed 31/12/2015
D.3	Information panels installed	31/12/2011	Finished 09/2012
D.4	Bird watching towers installed	31/03/2012	Finished 03/2014
D.5	Communication and regular meetings with stakeholders carried out	31/12/2012	Finished 01/2011
D.6	The presentations and field excursions for students and public carried out	31/12/2012	Finished 09/2012
D.7	Interactive traveling exhibition – Bird life in Danube floodplains started	01/09/2010	Started 07/12/2009
D.8	Presentation book – Birds of Danube floodplains published and distributed	31/01/2013	Completed 31/12/2015
D.9	Copies of articles published and press releases distributed	31/12/2012	Fulfilled 30/06/2012 Continued till 10/2015
E.1	Project manager employed	31/01/2009	Finished 01/01/2009
E.1, E.5	Project office established	30/03/2009	Finished 15/01/2009
E.1, E.5	Office equipment purchased	30/06/2009	Finished 30/03/2009
E.2	Reports of the hydrological monitoring	31/12/2014	Finished 31/12/2014
E.	Reports of monitoring of bird populations	31/12/2014	Finished 31/12/2015
E.4	Reports of monitoring of other biota	31/12/2014	Finished 31/12/2014
E.6	Networking with other projects started	30/06/2009	Started 09/03/2009
E.7	External auditor nominated	31/12/2009	Finished 30/01/2010

2. Brief summary of each chapter of the report Administrative part

The project's implementation was divided into two phases: Inception phase (from 01/01/2009 to 31/09/2009) and Implementation phase (from 01/10/2009 to 31/12/2015). During the project the following reports were delivered to the European Commission: *Inception Report* (October 2009), *1st Progress Report* (March 2010), *2nd Progress Report* (March 2011), *Mid-term report* (May 2012, updated October 2012), *3rd progress report* (July 2014) and the Final report by 31/05/2016.

Project steering committee had 13 meetings during the project and agreed in advance all key project decisions. There was a withdrawal of the associated beneficiary Agravia by 31/12/2010 and three prolongations of the project. Original project end date was 30/06/2013, new extension dates were until 30/06/2014, 31/12/2014 and finally 31/12/2015.

Project realised number of pilot actions, which did bring model solutions in topics, where it was never realized in practice before in Slovakia or not in such a large scale – e.g. large scale restoration of wetlands or the major Danube River side branches. Lack of practical experiences with these issues contributed to delays of project actions, but the final results are really outstanding and often exceeding expected results.

2.2. Technical part

There have been 8 **Preparatory actions (A)** in the project. Aim of these actions was to prepare detailed and up-to date material for the practical realisation and implementation of C – actions. Mathematical hydrological model and calculations and number of expert studies have been elaborated and discussed with relevant experts, stakeholders and authorities and the best feasible alternatives were agreed and chosen from the proposals prior to elaboration of binding technical documentation. Also technical documentations of the major actions C.5 a C.6 were updated according actual needs and possibilities of effective budget spending. Based on studies and technical documentations construction permits and other agreements of the authorities were obtained and public procurement was realised.

Purchase and /or long-term lease of the land (B) realised within the action B.1 started from the early beginning of the project in 2009 in order to allow and support implementation of the project conservation actions and to secure preservation of the project achievements and results for future. **In total 102.8244 ha of land has been acquired during the project.** From the total size 16.1756 ha been long term leased and 86.6488 ha purchased or acquired by land swap.

Concrete conservation actions (C) contained 11 practical restoration and conservation actions, where key natural habitats of the target bird species were restored and their conservation status was improved. 8 C- actions included restoration of wetlands and river branches (C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4, C.5, C.6, C.10 and C.11) as birds feeding habitats, fishways, spawning areas for fishes and breeding areas of amphibians and birds nesting habitats. Restoration of lowland meadows as feeding and nesting bird's habitats was done by re-establishment of traditional land use practices – grazing by domestic animals, especially cattle (Action C.7). Long-term effect of restoration of natural bird's refugia and nesting areas was achieved by planting of native tree species in groups between hybrid poplar monocultures (Action C.8). Nesting habitats of Sand martin (*Riparia riparia*) and Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) were created by restoration of steep river banks (Action C.9).

2.3. Public awareness and dissemination of results (D)

High number of dissemination actions under **Public awareness and dissemination of results (D)** (D.1 – D.9) promoted conservation of endangered birds species, importance of Danube floodplains and Natura 2000 network as well as LIFE financial support for project actions. Project information leaflets “Danube Floodplains” in SK, EN, HU and DE languages were printed (7 000 pcs; the Annex 12 D.2 to 1st Progress report), stickers with 10 different themes (15 000 pcs; the Annex 17 D.2 to 2nd Progress report), postcards (5 000 pcs; the Annex 17 D.2 to 2nd Progress report) as well as the calendars 2011 (small and wall, 2 000 pcs; the Annex 17 D.2 to 2nd Progress report) were produced and disseminated. Project posters (3 200 pcs) coupled with calendar for the year 2012 (2 000 pcs, the Annex 21 D.2 to Mid-term report) were printed and disseminated. For general public and school kids the 3 500 copies of brochure were printed and disseminated (the Annex 22; D.2 to Mid-term report) in four language mutations (Slovak, English, Hungarian and German). The planned amount of pens with logos and project Slovak resp. English acronym title “Danube birds conservation” was produced and continuously was distributed as a promotional materials. Attractive brochure including the detailed tourist map of scale 1: 50 000 was produced as the tourist guide named “Danube floodplains – from Morava to Ipel’ rivers”. Because many actions for public and students have been realised, higher amount of information materials was needed, thus during 2012 were printed next stickers (each motive 3000 pcs) and map brochures (3 500 pcs, EN: SK: HU: DE, 1:1:1:0.5). LIFE+ logo and reference to the project are clearly visible on these deliverables. An intensive media campaign was carried out to raise public awareness on the topic. Project was presented at 7 press conferences and through more than 110 media outputs: 92 articles and press releases, 18 reports on TV and 12 reports on radio. The project web site was established during the inception phase. It is available at www.broz.sk/danubebirds and it is regularly updated. The most important information about the project and its results are available also in English, German and Hungarian languages.

Design of the exhibition *Bird life in Danube floodplains* was in the Annex 15 D.7 to Mid-term Report. It was presented on 34 venues (museums, schools, public libraries, premises of MoE, etc.) during the project.

In total 92 lectures and excursions were organized for public and at schools (more than 1 900 public in total).

Under dissemination also networking with other projects was carried out (Action E.6), 18 networking meetings with 204 participants were realised.

Project monitoring (E) included 3 E- actions, Hydrological monitoring (E.2), Monitoring impact of project actions on bird populations (E.3) and Monitoring impact of project actions on other biota (E.4). Detailed expert monitoring of different abiotic and biotic parameter and population characteristics of the target bird species confirmed success and effectiveness of project actions to achieve its objective. Some species react practically immediately, such as Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*). Suitable habitats were restored for another species as well, such as Black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and are used for feeding, but the conservative species need more time to react in growth of population.

2.4. Evaluation of project implementation

Immediately visible results are those, where significant change and improvement of the situation was caused by project actions. This means for example removal of barriers and bringing water to previously (long-term) dry areas. Actually most of the project actions are like this (C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4, C.5, C.6, C.10, C.11). Also bringing the grazing animals on abandoned meadows (C.7) did bring very quick visible results in look of the landscape and major vegetation cover of pastures. Planting of native tree species to restore natural refugia and nesting area (C.8) is the **action with long-term impact** and results will only become apparent after a certain time period. Also some of the target species react very quickly to well-designed project actions and like to occupy the pioneer stands such as Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and Sand martin (*Riparia riparia*). Other species are more conservative and need more time for their population to recover. More time is also needed for natural development of plant and animal communities in changed ecological conditions after implementation of the project's actions.

2.5. Analysis of long-term benefits

The LIFE project aimed to bring **direct conservation benefits** to the target species through restoration and improvement of quality of their natural habitats and thus to improve their conservation status according to the **Birds and Habitats Directives**. Most of the project conservation actions targeting the water habitats, especially large scale river branch restoration (Action C.5 and C.6) support also sound implementation of the **Water framework directive**.

Long-term / qualitative economic and social benefits include creation of jobs during the project and using supplies of local and regional companies. Some of the supplies had one-off character of supplies for individual constructions, some were longer – term, e.g. planting of trees and follow up maintenance and after planting care was realised during several years. Re-establishment of the traditional livestock grazing created several permanent jobs continuing also after the project end.

Project actions have high replication value and can be used in various area along the Danube River and in Danube River basin. The Danube River, as the largest and most international river in the EU, should be one of the priorities of the nature conservation and protection of the EU.

3. Comments on the financial report

Approved project total budget was **4 577 663 EUR**, in total **4 606 887.68 EUR** has been incurred as the project expenses. This represents 100.64 % of the total project budget.

The maximal EU contribution represents 50% of the total eligible costs of the approved project total budged.

4. Introduction

In the past, the **Danube inland delta** represented one of the largest and most diverse natural wetland complexes in Central Europe. Large parts of it have been destroyed during last decades; recently habitat loss and destruction continued as a result of former river regulations and poor area management. The decreasing habitat quality and several other factors (e.g. unregulated disturbance by man) have led to major decrease of populations of the typical floodplain bird species (black stork, night heron, little egret, sand martin etc.). Due to continuing pressure of the negative factors, urgent actions were needed to stop loss and to recover and/or maintain the quality and quantity of the floodplain avifauna.

General objective of the project LIFE07 NAT/SK/000707 Conservation of endangered bird species populations in natural habitats of the Danube inland delta was to improve the conservation status of the target floodplain bird species that are protected in SPA Dunajské luhy in Slovakia and SPA Szigetköz in Hungary. Project site covers international Danube inland delta, which includes the Danube River and adjacent floodplain and lowland habitats. For this purpose the most threatened natural habitats of the target species were restored and appropriate site management has been introduced; conditions for long-term sustainability of the conservation status of target species were created; and awareness of the key stakeholders and public on the conservation of floodplain habitats was raised.

Main conservation problems and threats were similar to other areas along the Danube River or other larger European rivers and their floodplains. Main threats therefore were: river regulation, changed water levels and changed water level dynamics, unsustainable and intensive forest management, abandonment of traditional use of meadows, excessive disturbance of sensitive species but also insufficient scientific data and lack of awareness of authorities, decision-makers and public.

Unique partnership of the project beneficiaries under flexible coordination and management of NGO BROZ was formed, which was able to tackle successfully long-term neglected conservation threats and issues. Expert potential of the project team and involved external suppliers prepared high quality proposals for restoration actions. Proposed solutions and proposals were always introduced and discussed in wider audience of experts, stakeholders and authorities. Proposals were supplemented and revised if requested in order to achieve the best quality and biggest conservation impact and also best value for money.

Number of project conservation actions introduced ambitious solutions for restoration of selected wetlands, dried-up river branches and oxbows including renewal of the water supply, elimination of fish migration barriers at two strategic points and restoring bird's food base, restoration of abandoned meadows, restoration of bird's refugia and nesting areas by planting of native tree species, etc. **Model solutions of project actions have high replication value** and can be used in various areas along the Danube River and in Danube River basin.

Most of project actions provided win-win solutions. For example increased water level in restored wetland – birds feeding and nesting area, supports also growing of adjacent forests, improves condition for fishing etc. Restrictions of land use of private land owners were solved by successful implementation of the action B.1 by purchase, swap or long-term lease of their lands. Together with intensive awareness activities and personal contacts with locals, stakeholders and authorities, this contributed to **wide positive acceptance of the project and its actions**.

5. Administrative part

5.1. Description of the management system

Project implementation period was originally set up for 4,5 years (01/01/2009 - 30/06/2014) and was divided into 2 main phases according to the project reports schedule. Project was repeatedly prolonged; the final project implementation period was 7 years (until 31/12/2015).

Phase 01 – Inception phase: Phase 01 started on 01/01/2009 and ended on 31/09/2009. During the Inception phase the project management team (PMT), including the project manager, financial manager and representatives of the project associated beneficiaries was established. Other project personnel were employed as well. Information about the project and its preliminary outcomes was presented via project web site that was established until 30/06/2009. Partnership agreements between the coordinating beneficiary and associated beneficiaries were signed during the Inception phase and attached to the Inception Report submitted to EC in October 2009.

Main issue for the project solved in the inception phase was providing the bank guarantee for the Commission. Providing the bank guarantee for the first project payment was a bit difficult, but finally it was solved by the Ministry of Environment of the SR in April 2009. This caused a short delay in the project realisation already in the first period.

More details about the project progress and activities carried out in this phase can be found in the Inception report submitted in October 2009.

Phase 02 – Implementation phase: Phase 02 started on 01/10/2009 and ended (after repeated prolongations) on 31/12/2015. During this phase the main focus was given to implementation of the project actions A (preparatory actions), B (land purchase and lease), C (conservation actions), D (dissemination and public awareness actions), and E actions (project monitoring and management).

A detailed work plan was developed to monitor the project's progress. The plan was discussed and updated during PMT meetings. PMT personal meetings were organised on a regular basis as often as needed. In addition an intensive communication between members of PMT was carried out via e-mail and phone, especially with the associated beneficiaries from Hungary.

There have been five project amendments. Major amendment to the Grant Agreement was related to the modifications of the project because since 1st of January 2011 the associated beneficiary Agravia withdrew from the project due to limited own personnel capacities and financial resources. BROZ as the coordinating beneficiary took over the full responsibility for implementation of all project's actions previously in responsibility of Agravia. Amendment to the Grant Agreement signed by EC was received in September 2011.

Amendment included shift of Agravia responsibilities to BROZ as well as changes in the project budget related to this shift.

Project steering committee meetings were planned regularly each three months. Members of the SC members have been nominated in written by project associated beneficiaries and other important stakeholders before the first meeting. At the second SC meeting the Statute and rules of procedure of SC have been adopted and translated into English and Hungarian languages. At each SC meeting the minutes are recorded and sent to all SC members in Slovak and English languages. Meetings were held in Slovak and Hungarian languages with a help of interpreter.

Members of the steering committee were representatives of following institutions:

- a) Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development (BROZ) – 1 member,
- b) Water Management Construction, state enterprise – 1 member,
- c) Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Natural Sciences in Bratislava – 1 member,
- d) Agravia, Ltd., until 31.12.2010,
- e) North-Transdanubian Environmental and Water Directorate – 1 member,
- f) Szigetköz Nature Conservation Association – 1 member,
- g) Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR for the Construction and Operation of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros System of Waterworks – 1 member,
- h) Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Department of environmental programmes and projects – 1 member
- i) Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Department of nature and landscape protection – 2 members from the Department of nature conservation, 1 for territorial protection and 1 for– species protection.
- j) Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Department of waters and energetic resources – 1 member,
- k) Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Department of legislation and environmental care – 1 member,
- l) Slovak Water Management Enterprise, state enterprise (Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Border Waters) – 1 member,
- m) State Nature Conservancy of the SR, Regional centre Bratislava – 1 member,
- n) State Nature Conservancy of the SR, Landscape protected area Dunajské Luhy – 1 member,
- o) Fertő-Hanság National Park – 1 member,
- p) Independent scientific authority – 1 member from the Slovak zoological society of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava

Project LIFE07 NAT/SK/000707 Conservation of Endangered Bird Species Populations in Natural Habitats of the Danube Inland Delta was the first such large and integrated Life project in Slovakia. Therefore also in the steering committee, a very serious representation of the key institutions was involved. Project steering committee meetings were planned regularly each three months. As gradually year by year, new LIFE+ projects started in Slovakia and had their steering committees established, some of the same SC members (e.g. from MoE and SNC) were meeting very often. Therefore later on, number of steering committee meetings was reduced (based on the decision of the steering committee itself) to one meeting per year.

During the whole project, steering committee had 13 meetings, three in 2009, three in 2010, two in 2011, one in 2012, one in 2013, two in 2014 and one in 2015. During all steering committee meetings all members were informed about progress in project actions and/ or

problems. Steering committee agreed all important decisions connected with project e.g. withdrawal of the associated beneficiary, prolongation of the project, etc.

List of Steering committee meetings:

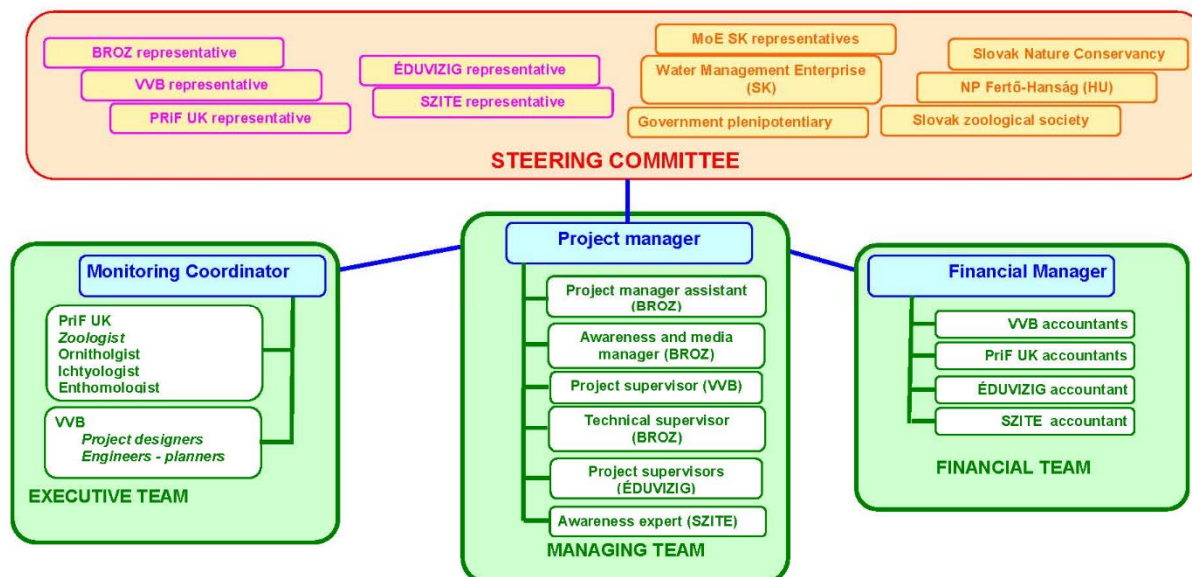
- 1st April 2009 at Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava
- 25th June 2009 in Zlatná na Ostrove, Slovakia
- 2nd October 2009 in Gabčíkovo, Slovakia
- 21st January 2010 at ÉDUKÖVIZIG in Győr, Hungary
- 18th May 2010 in Ökopark Dunasziget, Hungary
- 7th October 2010 in Zlatná na Ostrove, Slovakia
- 19th January 2011 at the Faculty of Natural Sciences , Comenius University in Bratislava
- 10th November 2011 in hunting association facility near the village Bodíky
- 28th November 2012 in the seat of City District of Bratislava – Čunovo
- 27th June 2013 on Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava
- 20th March 2014 in the building of Water Research Institute in Bratislava
- 3th December 2014 on Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava
- 17th September 2015 on Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava

5.2. Project reports

Since the project start we have sent the project Inception report covering the first 9 months of the project realisation to the EC. This report was sent in October 2009 and supplemented by a letter in January 2010. The 1st progress report was sent with the state of project actions up to 28th February 2010 and financial spending valid to 31 December 2009. Second progress report was sent to the EC in March 2011 with financial spending until 31st December 2010 and state of project actions up to 28th February. Mid-term report was sent to EC on 3rd May 2012 together with financial part. Request for second pre-financing refused by EC. Therefore we submitted new Mid-term was report submitted in October 2012. This report summarized all project period till 30th September 2012 including financial report. Due to project prolongation till 31st December 2014 we had to submit also 3rd progress report which have covered period since Mid-term report till 30th June 2014. Since that, only this final report has been submitted.

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

This organigramme represents the project management structure. Until the end of 2010, also the associated beneficiary Agravia Ltd. was acting in the project. Since 01/01/2011 remaining responsibilities of Agravia were taken over by BROZ.



Changes due to amendments to the Grant Agreement

There have been five amendments to the Grant Agreement, which were all positively accepted and approved by the Commission which helped us to achieve really significant conservation results. Reasons for amendments were modification of budget, withdrawal of associated beneficiary, and repeated including prolongation of the project duration.

5.4. Description of project management team

Within the long project implementation period of 7 years, numerous personnel and structural changes occurred. The BROZ coordinating beneficiary **project manager** was **RNDr. Tomáš Kušík** during the whole project period. **Project manager assistant** was employed full-time and the persons occupying this position were changed several times. There were also positions of the **awareness and media manager**, **accountant**, **technical supervisor** and **worker**. Except the project manager, persons on all positions were changed during the project, on some of the positions, persons were changed several times.

The **VVB project supervisor** was **Ing. Denisa Böhmanová** during most of the project implementation period. The **PriF UK coordinator** was **Mgr. Matúš Kúdela, PhD.** during the whole project. **ÉDUKÖVIZIG/ ÉDUVIZIG project supervisor** was represented by **M.Sc. Károly Gombás** the whole project.

SZITE awareness expert realised action D.7 Danube birds exhibition and was acting at the position of awareness expert on temporary service contract for guiding of the visitors of the travelling exhibition.

5.5. Evaluation of the management system

The project's beneficiaries together with the Steering committee members covered all technical and scientific know-how as well as necessary competences to achieve projects results. However 6 beneficiaries from two countries represented very different institutions and legal entities (2 NGOs, 2 state enterprises, Ltd. private company and University) with different management structures, administrative systems, decision making processes etc. Project's beneficiaries had also different level of experiences in implementation and administration of the EU funded projects.

Regardless of these differences, communication between BROZ and associated beneficiaries was good, as the key of the success we consider the frequent personal contacts and meetings.

Complications in cooperation were often beyond the impact of coordinating beneficiaries and line staff of the associated beneficiaries – personal changes at the TOP management of state institutions (e.g. VVB) or changes in legislation of public procurement.

Other challenges resulted from facts, that project was dealing with issues never realized before in Slovakia or not in such a large scale – e.g. restoration of grasslands by cattle on the whole Danube island, large scale restoration of the Danube river branches, etc. Although the project's beneficiaries were the most competent ones to realize these actions, there was lack of practical experiences with these topics in field of planning, permission processes and practical implementation as well. These facts contributed to delays of project actions, but the final results are really outstanding and often exceeding expected results.

Communication with EC and External monitoring team was done by BROZ as the coordinating beneficiary. During the project 7 monitoring missions were carried out, two of them with representatives of the Commission. Annual monitoring missions were attended by project beneficiaries, member of external monitoring team Dr. Ľuboš Halada and representatives of the MoE. During the field part of the missions, important stakeholders such as representatives of the SNC, Lesy SR, SVP, key municipalities, etc. took place as well.

At the monitoring mission 23.–24.5.2011 desk officer Juan Pérez Lorenzo and deputy head of the Life Unit Joachim Capitao were present. At the monitoring mission 22.–23.4.2013 desk officer Maja Mikosinska and the financial officer Paivi Rauma took part.

During the project's implementation there were numerous small and bigger problems and challenges, but all have been successfully overcome by the project management team. Withdrawal of one of the associated beneficiaries from the project and termination of the respective partnership agreement did not have negative impact on the further implementation of the project's actions. BROZ as the coordinating beneficiary took over the responsibilities to deliver expected results of the actions originally allocated to Agravia, Ltd. Problems related to implementation of the actions (e.g. administrative processes, communication with stakeholders, modification of technical documentations, etc.) and their solutions are described in details in description of the respective actions.

Project's partnership between BROZ, VVB, PRIF UK, EDUKOVIZIG/ EDUVIZIG and SZITE in this project was established for the first time. Since that time, also some new projects and partnerships of these institutions were formed. Existing relations and contacts – also with members of the Steering committee and other related institutions created a platform for further cooperation on nature and river restoration/ conservation in the Danube floodplain area in the future.

Gantt-chart – overall implementation of the project (01/01/2009 – 31/12/2015)

Action	2009				2010				2011				2012				2013				2014				2015			
No.	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
A – Preparatory actions																												
A.1			X	X	X																							
			X	X	X																							
A.2	X	X		X	X	X	X																					
			X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X												
A.3			X	X	X																							
			X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X											
A.4				X	X	X	X																					
				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
A.5			X	X	X	X	X																					
			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									
A.6	X	X	X																									
	X	X	X																									
A.7	X	X																										
	X	X																										
A.8	X	X	X	X																								
	X	X	X	X																								
B – Purchase/lease of land																												
B.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X														
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
C – Concrete conservation actions																												
C.1							X	X	X	X	X																	
										X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
C.2							X	X	X																			
																	X	X										

Action	2009				2010				2011				2012				2013				2014				2015			
No.	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
C.3								X	X		X	X																
											X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
C.4								X	X	X																		
																X	X	X	X	X								
C.5						X	X	X	X																			
															X	X	X											
C.6										X	X	X	X															
										X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X						
C.7			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
C.8				X	X			X	X			X	X			X												
				X	X			X	X			X	X			X												
C.9					X	X	X	X	X	X																		
					X	X	X	X	X	X	X																	
C.10					X	X	X	X																				
									X	X	X	X																
C.11							X	X	X	X																		
									X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X										
D – Public awareness and dissemination of results																												
D.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
D.2			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	
D.3					X	X	X			X	X	X	X															
					X	X	X			X	X	X	X															
D.4								X			X																	
								X			X						X	X	X	X								

Action	2009				2010				2011				2012				2013				2014				2015			
No.	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
D.5		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
D.6			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
D.7							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
D.8													X	X	X	X	X	X										
													X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
D.9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E – Overall project operation and monitoring																												
E.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E.2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E.3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E.4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E.5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E.6			X		X		X		X		X		X			X												
			X		X		X		X	X	X		X	X		X												
E.7				X				X				X				X		X										
				X				X				X				X		X					X				X	

X – proposed timetable

X – real timetable

6. Technical part

6.1. Technical progress, per task

6.1.1. A – Preparatory actions

Action A.1: Elaboration of mathematical hydrological model and calculations

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Deliverables of the action:

Mathematical model, part 2009, partial maps and tables were attached to the 1st Progress report as the Annex no.3.

Mathematical hydrodynamic model was attached to the 1st Progress report as the Annex no.4.

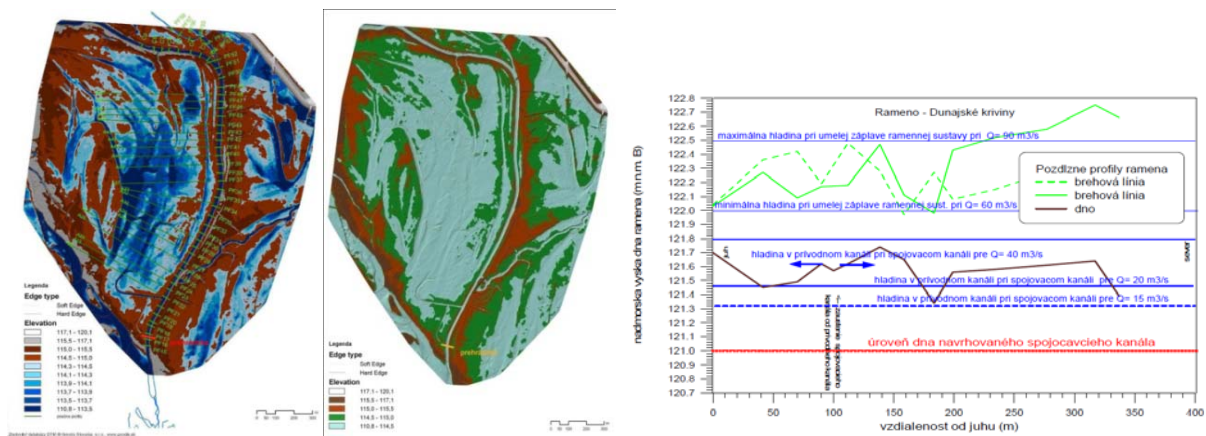
Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: The result of this action will be the mathematical hydrological model of the left-sided branch-system in the section Dobrohošť – Sap including 1D hydrodynamical numerical model in the ‘Istragov’ area that enables planning and realization of the several river branch restoration measures. Final results will also include application of the model to the actions proposed in the section targeted with the model – calculations defining all required technical parameters of hydrotechnical structures and suitable water regime.

Achieved results: As a result of this action mathematical hydrological model of the left-sided branch-system in the area of Dobrohošť and for the ‘Istragov’ area has been elaborated. For the ‘Istragov’ area 1D hydrodynamical numerical model has been elaborated. It was not necessary to create the model for the whole left-sided branchsystem for the implementation of project actions. To elaborate model for the whole left-sided branch system would take significantly more time and personnel works, therefore it was not effective to elaborate it in the time and budget available. Mathematical hydrological model and calculations as well as other detailed documentations elaborated within the preparatory A- Actions were realised only for the localities targeted by the Conservation C – Actions during the project.

Final results include also application of the model to the actions proposed in the section targeted with the model – calculations defining all required technical parameters of hydrotechnical structures and suitable water regime.

Action was finished in February and March 2010 according the schedule.



Problems and their solution:

No problems recorded during realisation of action.

Implementation of the action:

All results and outputs were provided by contracted supplier - Water Research Institute. Digital model of terrain was provided to calculate different scenarios of water level. 30 profiles of the Istragov marsh and 37 profiles of the main river branch along the Istragov marsh were measured. Simulation of natural seasonality by estimate of saturation during summer and winter regime was done by the model.

The mathematical hydrological model and calculations for Istragov marsh and Dunajské kriviny river branch system were finished in February and March 2010.

Based on results of this action, actions C.1 and C.2 have been realised.

Action A.2: Preparation of technical documentation for restoration of Istragov marsh

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Deliverables of the action:

Minutes from work meetings concerning VVB actions were attached to the 1st Progress report as the Annex 5.

Technical documentation was attached to the 2nd Progress report as the Annex 2.

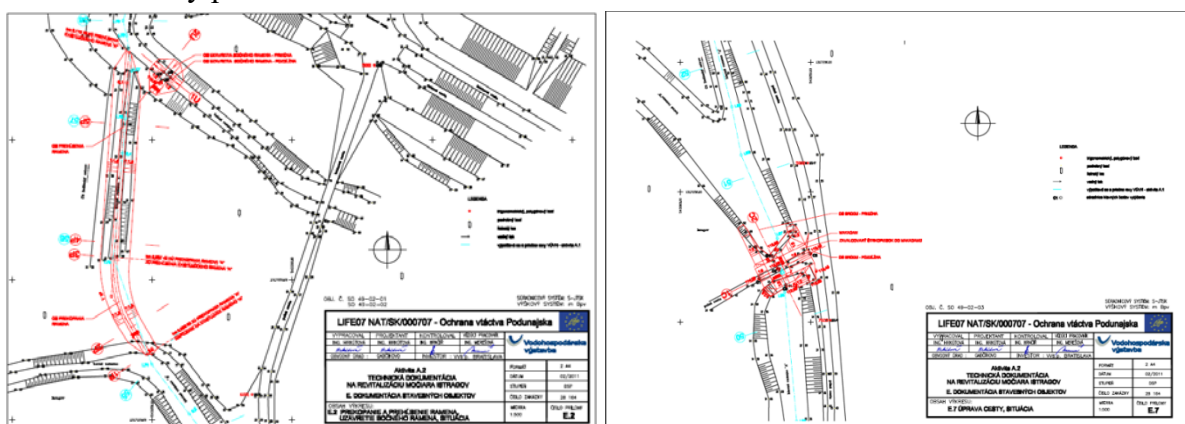
Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Technical set of project documentation elaborated for restoration of 'Istragov' marsh. Documentation for obtaining construction permit elaborated, submitted to responsible authorities and approved. All necessary permissions according to Act No 543/2002 on Nature and Landscape Protection provided.

Achieved results: All planned outputs - technical documentation for restoration of Istragov marsh and obtaining of construction permit and all necessary permissions according to Act No 543/2002 on Nature and Landscape Protection were achieved and provided but the action was delayed 5 months in comparison with the original timetable.

As the originally planned measures were not sufficient to achieve expected results of action C.1, several additional measures have been proposed, designed and realised. See description of Action C.1 for more details.

Based on results of mathematical and hydrological modelling (action A.1) and according to discussions with VVB, PriF UK, SNC SR, SVP and other experts variant with one weir was selected from proposed possibilities. The weir at the bottom part of the Istragovské rameno branch will keep the incoming water and also will keep the requested water level in the Istragov marsh. The weir contains sluice gate to allow possibility of regulation of water level in the marsh area. Another sluice gate to be constructed will allow connection of the Istragovské rameno branch with the adjacent river branch system. On this base technical documentation was prepared and consequently obtained construction permit as well as all other necessary permissions.



After realisation of the construction works and their testing and monitoring in field, further additional measures have been proposed and designed in order to increase amount of incoming water to the former Istragov marsh (see Action C1).

Action A.3: Preparation of technical documentation for restoration of Dunajské kriviny river branch system

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Technical documentation was attached to 2nd Progress report as the Annex 3

Supplement to technical documentation was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 3

Contract for supplying of works for C.2 and C.4 action was attached to 2nd Midterm report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 1

Construction permit was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 02

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Technical set of project documentation elaborated for restoration of 'Dunajské kriviny' river branch system. Documentation for obtaining construction permit elaborated, submitted to responsible authorities and approved. All necessary permissions according to Act No. 543/2002 on Nature and Landscape Protection provided.

Achieved results: Expected results were fully achieved. Technical documentation was finished by 09/2010, 6 months later in comparison to time schedule. In addition, supplement to technical documentation was completed on 2nd November 2011. All the permissions acquired for the first technical documentation were valid also for its supplement, because it was not a major change in technical documentation, however for technical reasons the change was necessary.

Delay was caused by the long-lasting public procurement process, which took more than 3 months.

Problems and their solution:

The completion of the action was declared in 2nd Progress report. The last consultation of technical documentation of Dunajské kriviny was on 16th June 2011 and consequently the public procurement started and was finished. This procurement was joint procurement for action C.2 and also action C.4. During July 2012 the public procurement was finalized and the contractor was selected through the electronic auction.

Implementation of the action:

Action was successfully implemented but delayed due to external factors. Technical set of project documentation for restoration of 'Dunajské kriviny' river branch system was elaborated. Documentation for obtaining construction permit was elaborated, submitted to responsible authorities and approved. All necessary permissions according to Act No. 543/2002 on Nature and Landscape Protection provided.

On the basis of field surveys which were taken in 2010, the technical documentation was elaborated and finished by 09/2010. Consequently the supplement to this technical documentation was needed. This supplement was completed and approved by representatives of associated beneficiary Vodohospodárska výstavba on 2nd November 2011.

During July 2012 second public procurement was finalized and the contractor was selected through the electronic auction – Eurovia SK was the winner of the auction with lowest price.

Realisation of construction works following the completed public procurement was delayed due to the early parliamentary elections in 2012. After personal and other changes in management of all state institutions and companies after parliamentary elections, including MoE SR and VVB, all the contracts with higher financial budget have to be controlled by MoE SR (if the contract is between state enterprise and private company), final signing of the contract was delayed.

On 11th September 2012 contract was signed by both parties. Construction permit was issued on 28th March 2013 (ZPS 2013/2151-GGL) by the Regional Environmental Office in Bratislava.

Action A.4: Preparation of technical documentation for construction of the fishway on two strategic points in river branch system

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Deliverables of the action:

Ichthyologic study was attached to 1st Progress report as the Annex 6.

Supplement to ichthyologic study was attached to 2nd Progress report as the Annex 4.

Technical documentation of fishway on Bakanské ramená river branch system was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 4

Technical documentation of fishway on Veľkolélske rameno river branch was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 5

Technical documentation of the bridge and updates of Velkolelske rameno fishway was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 03

Construction permits and other documents – Baka was attached to the 3rd Progress report as the Annex 04

Construction permits – Velkolelske river branch was attached to the 3rd Progress report as the Annex 05

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Expert study defining required parameters and location of the fishways. Two technical sets of project documentations elaborated for construction of the fishway on two strategic points in river branch system. Two sets of documentations for obtaining construction permits elaborated, submitted to competent building authorities and approved. All necessary permissions according to Act No 543/2002 on Nature and Landscape Protection obtained.

Achieved results: All expected results were fully achieved and also exceeded. First ichthyological study was elaborated 3 months ahead in comparison to time schedule. Action was delayed almost one year according to the original schedule due to supplementing of the first ichthyological study elaborated in 2009. Following technical documentation was therefore also delayed.

Fishway II - Velkoleske rameno river branch is significantly more extensive, costly and complicated and its preparation and realisation caused several delays.

Completing of the whole action was also delayed because of the strategy, when we were waiting for the information about spared money in electronic auction during procurement of all remaining actions of VVB. Thank to this approach, for the last object – bridge crossing the Veľkolélske rameno river branch – we could use the all remaining project resources and to maximise possible conservation effects of this action.

Public procurement of the bridge construction got also very complicated and caused delay of 3 months, where first two winning companies finally didn't sign the contract.

Problems and their solution:

Action was delayed according to the original schedule, first especially due to supplementing of the first ichthyological study elaborated in 2009. The first study introduced several technical options for construction of fishways. But after discussion of study results with SNC, SRZ and SVP, it was decided that more biological information and specifications for lowland waters is needed. This additional supplement study represents much better quality outputs and result which were accepted by all experts and institutions.

Implementation of the action:

The first ichthyologic study was completed in December 2009 by an external provider – Slovak Technical University. Different technical constructions of the fishways were presented in this first study, but regarding to consultations with experts it was concluded that such technical objects are rather not working in conditions of lowland rivers and their fish fauna and thus it was decided to elaborate supplement of this study. The supplement was prepared by external supplier AQ-BIOS and it was finished on 29th November 2010. Finally, as consensus of all experts and institutions, construction of fishway within Bakanské ramená river branch system was selected and proposed. Another potential place proposed by supplement of the ichthyologic study was the Veľkolélske rameno river branch system.

Fishway I – Bakanske rameno river branch:

Consequently to new ichthyologic study supplement, technical documentation was elaborated during 2011. In connection with preparing of documentation a few work meetings and meetings with stakeholders were realised in the office and also in the field. The last official negotiation, where the technical documentation was approved, was held on 28th July 2011 and all the documentation was completed and finished in August 2011.

After the permission process, construction permit was issued on 10th February 2014 (District Environmental Office in Dunajská Streda). At the same time public procurement was ongoing, in which 7 companies were involved. It was finished in December 2013. The contract with the company which offer the lowest price during electronic auction (Eurovia SK) was signed on 12th February 2014.

Fishway II – Velkoleske rameno river branch:

Veľkolélske rameno river branch system was next potential place proposed by the supplement of ichthyologic study as fishway. After permission from EC about possibility of realisation second fishway on the Veľkolélske rameno river branch (which is an important fish habitat, that time disconnected from direct contact with the Danube river) as effective combination of actions C.3 and C.6, VVB started with geodetic survey and consequently with technical documentation. This restoration will allow fish migration from Danube to Veľkolélske rameno, where they can find suitable spawning habitats. The last official negotiation, where the technical documentation was approved, was held on 30th January 2012 and all the documentation was completed and finished by February 2012. After elaboration of technical documentation, the process for obtaining of the construction permit started. The construction permit was issued together for the action C.3 and C.6 on 8th April 2013.

Following the conclusions and recommendations of expert study, as the last step to achieve maximal flow capacity and fish migration accessibility of the Veľkolélske rameno river branch and in order to maximize positive effect of the action, the bridge was planned as the replacement of dysfunctional culverts, which formed a barrier for water flow and fish migration. Therefore the construction of the bridge was planned as the latest major

conservation action, when amount of money which was spared thanks to use of electronic auctions in public procurement was known. After finalising and approving of the technical documentation for the construction of bridge by VVB and SVP, request for change of the construction before completion was prepared and submitted (30/01/2014) to Regional Environmental Office (KÚŽP) in Bratislava, which included also technical documentation for construction of the bridge through the Veľkolélske rameno river branch. The already issued construction permit from the 8th April 2013 was updated and the new construction permit including the Fishway 2 and the bridge and was issued on 4th April 2014.

Action A.5: Preparation of expert study and technical documentation for restoration of Medved'ovské and Veľkolélske rameno river branch systems

Responsible beneficiary: Agravia /BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Expert study for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system was attached to 1st Progress report as the Annex 7.

Expert study for restoration of Medved'ovské rameno river branch was attached to 2nd Progress report as the Annex 5.

First part of technical documentation for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system was attached to 2nd Progress report as the Annex 6.

Transboundary Slovak – Hungarian Water Commission - minutes and pictures from the meeting were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 24.

Technical documentation for restoration of Medved'ovské rameno river branch system was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 6

Updated and more detailed technical documentation for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 5

Updated technical documentation for restoration of Medved'ovské rameno river branch system was attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 2.

Documents of realized public procurement were attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 3.

Final construction permit for Medvedovske river branch was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 06.

Construction permit Velkolelske river branch was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 05.

Technical documentation for the construction of the bridge – Annex A5.1

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Expert study and two sets of technical project documentations elaborated for river branch systems 'Medved'ovské rameno' and 'Veľkolélske rameno'. Two sets of documentations for obtaining construction permits elaborated, submitted to competent authorities and approved. All necessary permissions and exceptions from the Act No 543/2002 on Nature and Landscape Protection obtained.

Achieved results: All necessary technical project documentations elaborated and approved:

Expert study for restoration of Medved'ovské rameno river branch system was elaborated in 04/2010.

Technical documentation of Medved'ovské rameno river branch system was elaborated in 11/2011.

Construction permit for restoration of Medved'ovské rameno river branch system was issued in March 2012.

The expert study for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system was completed in 02/2010.

Technical documentation for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system was completed in December 2010, according original time schedule.

Updated and more detailed technical documentation for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system was completed in 01/2012.

Technical documentation for the construction of the bridge elaborated and approved.

Construction permit for restoration of the Veľkolélske rameno river branch system was issued in April 2013 and was updated including the bridge on 4th April 2014. The same construction permit included actions C.3 and C.6 at the Veľkolélske rameno river branch system.

Problems and their solution:

Difficulties in smooth planning of this action resulted from the personal changes and changes of organizational structure (especially after parliamentary elections and follow up governmental changes) of the key organizations – Slovak Water Management Enterprise (SVP) and Vodohospodárska výstavba (VVB).

All this has caused partial delay of the action, causing consequently delay of actions C.5 and C.6.

After take-over of the action from the former AB Agravia, some time was needed for detailed orientation in the partial results of the action. Of course basic information were known from work meetings, reporting as well as from the meetings of Steering committee, but for detailed study of prepared technical documentation and the possibilities to continue in the action, devoting some time was necessary.

Despite the enormous effort it has caused partial delay of the completion of technical documentation, causing consequently delay of action C.5. Likewise the need of more detailed technical documentation for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch has caused partial delay of the action C.6.

The same engineers and designers from VVB elaborated technical documentation for second fishway in the Veľkolélske rameno river branch (A.4) and also updated and more detailed technical documentation for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system. General site description and many technical details are common for all sections, therefore both technical documentation were connected for only one administrative process and construction permit. But the technical plans of individual objects and restoration works are separate

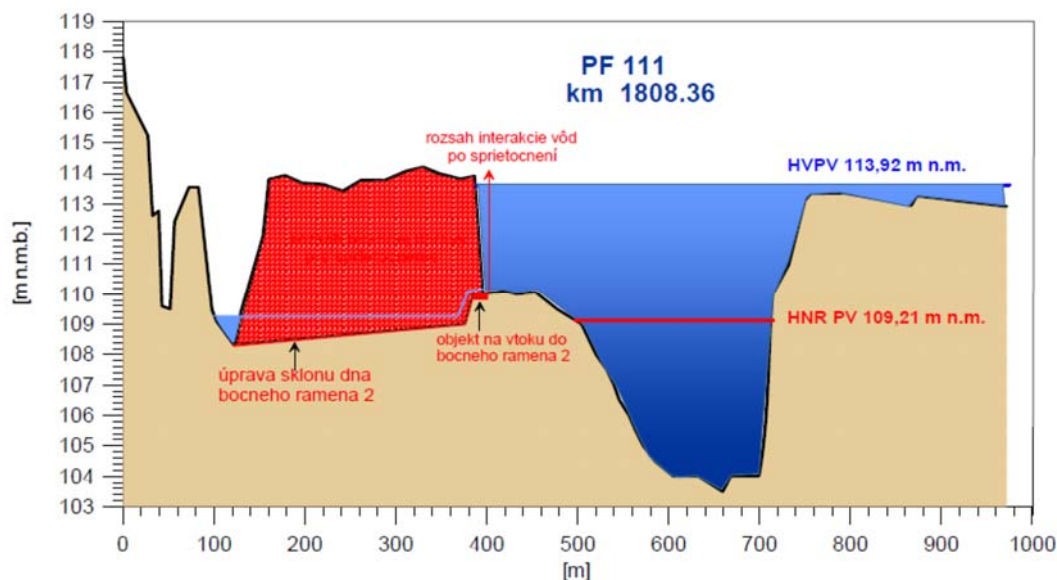
During the engineering process to update the construction permit with the bridge, the unexpected complication raised up from the municipality Zlatná na Ostrove. According their statement, the bridge is not in compliance with the local territorial plan and therefore amendment of the territorial plan must be elaborated and approved. This means a costly and especially time demanding process of about one year time period. As the statement of the municipality and their understanding of the territorial planning was completely wrong, after series of negotiations and explanations, they provided a positive statement where they agree with the bridge and no amendment of the territorial plan is necessary. But again, this complication caused a delay of several months' time.

Implementation of the action:

Medved'ovské rameno river branch system

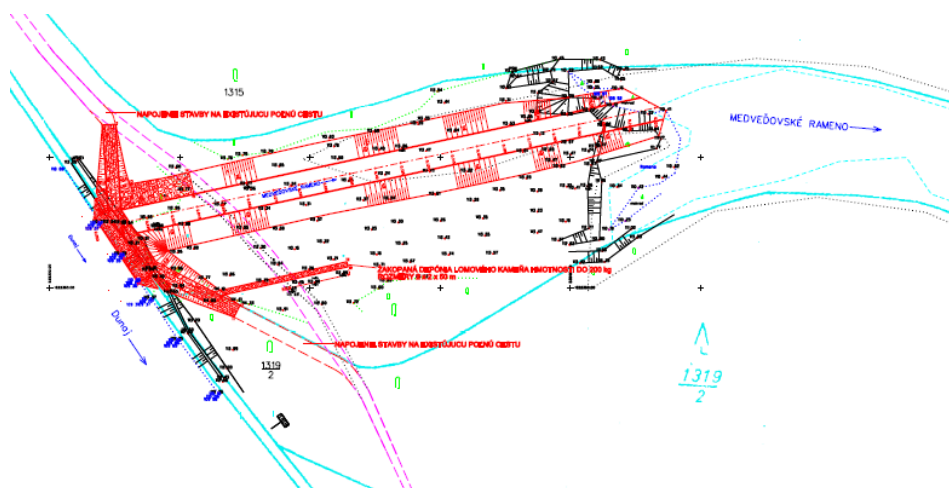
The expert study for restoration of Medved'ovské rameno river branch system was elaborated. Part of this study is morphological evolution of Danube River in the locality of Medved'ov, description of several original water influxes of the branch and selection of the influx to be open for the most effective restoration of the Medved'ovské rameno river branch system.

The selected influx is located at the river kilometre 1808. The study was consulted with the State Nature Conservancy of the SR, SVP – as the authority responsible for water management and Danube River corridor maintenance and Forests of the Slovak Republic, state enterprise, branch Palárikovo, as the land owner of the area targeted. Common field visits and negotiation have been carried out. After taking over the action from the former AB Agravia by the CB BROZ, next step was elaboration of technical documentation for restoration of Medveďovské rameno river branch system.



Documentation has been elaborated by the Slovak Water Management Enterprise (SVP). Number of work meetings took place, where details of the planned river branch restoration were discussed. The technical documentation for restoration of Medveďovského rameno river branch system was completed in November 2011. BROZ has obtained agreement of the land owner - Forests of the Slovak republic, state enterprise for restoration of the branch. Further obtained necessary agreements were – agreement of local municipality Sap for restoration of the branch, agreement of municipality Sap as land owner for temporary deposition of excavated material from the branch on their land, agreement of SVP on temporary deposition of excavated material from the branch in the Danube River inundation zone, etc.

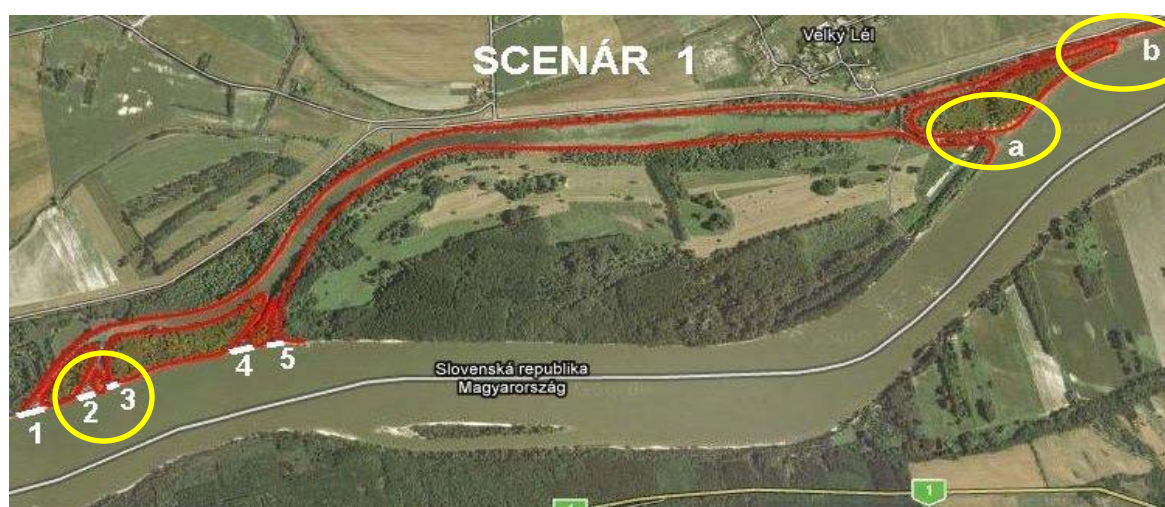
The responsible authority for construction permit on this action was the Regional Environmental Office (KÚŽP) in Trnava. All necessary agreements were obtained and the construction permit was issued on 26th March 2012. After that time the preparation of the public procurement started. On the basis of first technical discussions with experts and construction companies, it was found out, that the financial budget allocated for this action is not sufficient. Hence after consultation with independent technical expert several changes were added to technical documentation. These modifications did not compromise the restoration effect, but thanks to them necessary expected construction costs were decreased. Mentioned modifications had to be incorporated also to the construction permit, thus its updating was also needed and realised.



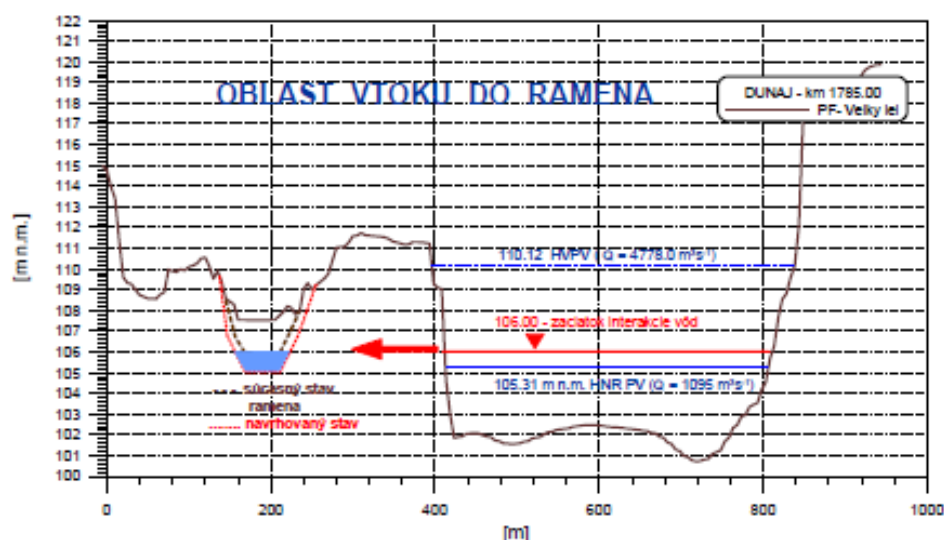
Public procurement including electronic auction was finished in October 2012. The final electronic auction selected contractor Nautilus, Ltd. The start of field technical works was planned on early November. The date for completion of works in the contract was end of March 2013 at latest.

Veľkolélske rameno river branch system

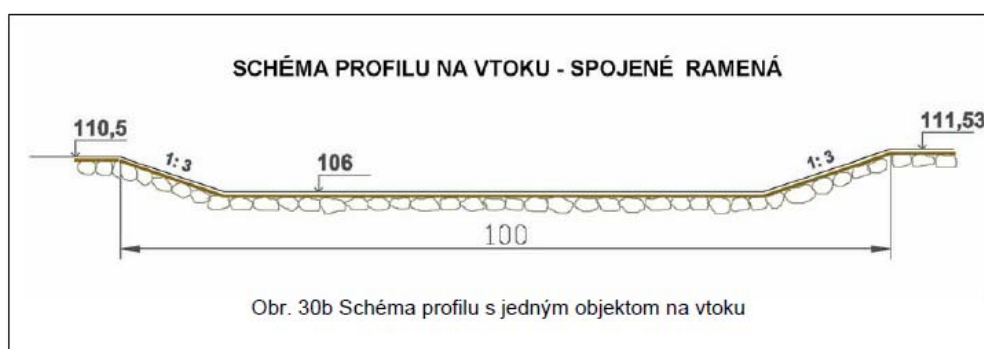
In the case of the Veľkolélske rameno river branch system the expert study for restoration was completed on 02/2010 and the first part of technical documentation was elaborated in December 2010. This study was presented and consulted with relevant institutions and experts, especially SVP, VVB and VUVH. In the past, there were 5 main inflows into the river branch system. Different scenarios for restoration of branch were presented, the most realistic and cost effective ones were selected to be realised within this project.



Therefore after taking over the action from former AB Agravia by BROZ next step was elaboration of more detailed technical documentation for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system, which was elaborated by VVB and finished in January 2012. The need for updated and more detailed documentation and supplementary geodetic surveys resulted from number of meetings and negotiations with different stakeholders and authorities in the meantime and from connection of the A.5/ C.6 action with second fishway (A.4/ C.3), which was newly planned in Veľkolélske rameno river branch. As a part of restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch, BROZ consulted also different technical solutions of the construction of bridge and obtained preliminary price calculations for these solutions.



Since the BROZ LIFE team of Danube Birds project didn't employ any technical expert, all the technical measures as well as engineering for actions C.5 and C.6 were discussed and consulted with the independent expert to avoid problems during realization. This expert also processed part of necessary work for construction permit obtaining.



All necessary statements and agreements were obtained according to Slovak legislation (from SVP, š. p., municipalities Veľké Kosihy and Zlatná na Ostrove, Slovak land fund, Západoslovenská energetika, a.s. – the manager of Slovak electricity, Slovak telecommunications, etc.). The responsible authority for the construction permit issuing on this action was the Regional Environmental Office (KÚŽP) in Bratislava.

Both technical documentations (Medved'ovské, Veľkolélske rameno river branch) were presented at the meeting of the Transboundary Slovak – Hungarian Water Commission. This commission gave its approval with proposed technical details and especially water level spot heights of the opening of “Medved'ovské rameno” and “Veľkolélske rameno” river branch systems.

There has been one construction permit for restoration of Velkolelske rameno river branch system (action A.5/ C.6) and for *Fishway II – Velkoleske rameno river branch* (action A.6/ C.3) issued on 8th April 2013 (ŠVS 2013/2153-66L/1).

Public procurement for restoration of Velkolelske rameno river branch – creating the inflow object by BROZ started on 27th June 2013 and was finished on 6th September 2013. The company which won in the electronic auction was Nautilus, Ltd. Contract was signed also in September 2013.

As part of the restoration of the Veľkolélske rameno river branch system a bridge had to be constructed to allow free flow of the water in the branch across the access road to the island, which is crossing the branch as a dike with only small culverts. We have summarised and compared several types of bridges. The main conditions – proven stability within inundation area during large floods appeared to be the most difficult. We have compared several technical solutions for construction of the bridge, and we have also re-considered the proposal of bridge like existing bridges in Danube inundation zone in Hungarian part of the project site. Even though such bridges are sufficiently tested in the field, they have relatively low water flow capacity. Therefore it was decided to construct the concrete bridge 40 m long with one pier in the middle. Technical study as a base for selecting a supplier of the technical documentation for such bridge has been prepared. During technical consultations, length of the bridge was even increased to 45 meters, with two supporting piers.

Technical documentation for the construction of bridge was ordered by coordinating beneficiary (CB) BROZ from the selected external supplier Mideas, Ltd. This procedure was agreed by BROZ and associated beneficiary (AB) VVB in order to save the time and speed up this process, as tendering the supplier by BROZ was much faster than in the VVB state enterprise. On 30th June 2014 terms of reference for public procurement for the bridge was published in state electronic journal of procurement.

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Finally the third winning company from the electronic auction of the public procurement Eurovia SK could provide all necessary documents and to sign the contract. In documentation of the bridge technical documentation, the construction period was counted for 3 months, from September to November 2014, to complete the whole project by the end of 2014.

Due to complications and delays in the public procurement process , the contract with the winner and works supplier Eurovia SK was signed only on 28th of November 2014. Handover of the construction site from VVB to Eurovia SK was realised only on 8th of December 2014.

For these reasons, the whole LIFE project had to be prolonged for another one year to allow completing of this significant project action.

Action A.6: Elaboration of expert study on restoration of lowland meadows bird habitats by grazing

Responsible beneficiary: **BROZ**

Deliverables of the action:

The expert study was attached in 1st Progress report as the Annex 8.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Expert study with proposals for lowland meadow restoration by grazing, including maps, elaborated.

Achieved results: Expert study was delivered on 15/11/2009, 1,5 months later according the time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

No problems recorded during realisation of action.

Implementation of the action:

External company elaborated the expert study with proposals for lowland meadows restoration by grazing, including maps. The study consists of specific chapters and annex with maps. First part is focused on general description of the natural conditions within the project area and especially on grassland habitats. Next chapters specified proposed natural management and restoration of grasslands as well as summary of various methods of grasslands management – mowing and grazing with explanation of benefits and advantages for each one. Ownership statuses of potential areas for lowland meadows restoration have been also surveyed.

Action A.7: Elaboration of expert study on planting of native trees to create refuges and nesting places for endangered bird species

Responsible beneficiary: Agravia

Deliverables of the action:

Expert study was attached to the 1st Progress report as the Annex 9.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Expert study including locations and proposals for native trees planting and measuring the possible effect of various alternatives on the target bird species.

Achieved results: The planned output was achieved, the study was elaborated 4 months later according the planned time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

No problems recorded during realisation of action.

Implementation of the action:

External company elaborated the expert study for planting of native trees to create refuges and nesting places for endangered bird species by 31/10/2009. The study is including locations and proposals for native trees planting and measuring the possible effect of various alternatives on the target bird species. The first planting of trees according to this study has been realised already in 2009.

Action A.8: Preparation of technical documentation for restoration of Szárazerdei river branch and restoration of wetlands in Ásványi river branch system

Responsible beneficiary: ÉDUKÖVIZIG/ ÉDUVIZIG

Deliverables of the action:

Final versions of technical documentations were attached to the 2nd Progress report as the Annex 7.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Two sets of updated technical project documentations elaborated for restoration of 'Szárazerdei' river branch and restoration of wetlands in the 'Ásványi' river branch system. EIA process carried out. Documentation for obtaining construction permit submitted to competent building authorities and approved.

Achieved results: Action was slightly delayed, due to problems with the bank guarantee at the beginning of the project. Action preparation started after signing the contract in June 2009. It was not necessary to apply the EIA process for these restoration actions.

Szárazerdei technical documentation was completed on 20/12/2009, 2 months, 20 days later.

Ásványi technical documentation was completed 20/12/2009, 10 days ahead according to the time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

During preparation of action, it was not possible to avoid targeting of private land on the size of 0,632 ha. The situation could be solved only by purchase of this land from private owners, although it was not envisaged in the project proposal. But without this land purchase, realization of action C.10 would not be possible. Without purchase of this land, the owners would not agree with the project action, nor would the competent authority issue the construction permit, see the Action B.1 for more details.

No other problems recorded during realisation of action, except the slight delay at the beginning.

Implementation of the action:

During first phase all the necessary geodetic data for planning have been collected by the company with the guiding help of ÉDUKÖVIZIG. Consequently the tender containing both construction work (C.10 and C.11), planning and authorizing activities was realised. Until the end of 2009 both technical documentations for restoration of Szárazerdei river branch and also Ásványi river branch system were elaborated. Two sets of updated technical project

documentations for restoration of 'Százazerdei' river branch and restoration of wetlands in the 'Ásványi' river branch system were elaborated.

Documentation for obtaining construction permit was submitted to competent construction authorities. During 2010 necessary permissions were issued and consequently public procurement for both restoration actions was realized.

6.1.2. B – Purchase/lease of land

&Action B.1: Purchase and /or long-term lease of the land

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Land purchase, land lease and land swap contracts, land ownership certificates and maps.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: It is expected that 95 hectares in total will be acquired, 62 ha purchased and 33 ha long-term leased.

Achieved results: As the project was prolonged, the action was implemented by the end of the project, i.e. by 31/12/2015, with agreement of the Commission. The objective of acquiring 95 ha of land was achieved and also exceeded. First lands were purchased already in 01/2009, two months ahead of the time schedule. **From the total of 102.8244 ha of land acquired during the project, 16.1756 ha been long term leased and 86.6488 ha purchased or acquired by land swap.** More land was purchased and smaller area was leased as expected. We consider this as success, as purchase of the land gives definitive guarantees of using the land for nature conservation purposes.

Problems and their solution:

Land ownership in Slovakia and its organization is one of the most difficult ones in Europe due to several historical reasons: Theresian heritage system – land divides to all descendants and heirs from the Austro- Hungarian era until now (from generation to generation causing further comminution of the property and increasing numbers of co-owners); change of the state borders and resettlement of inhabitants between Slovakia and Hungary in the project area in the past (2nd world war); confiscation of private property by the communist state of Czechoslovak republic and complicated long-lasting restitutions of lands back to original owners or their heirs, often still not completed etc.

This has resulted in high number of rather small land parcels often with many co-owners. Land with the sole ownership 1/1 is rather rare and therefore more difficult and costly to be obtained. As majority of private land in project site is represented by small land parcels and with many co-owners, it is not possible to avoid such lands if we want to protect and restore certain compact area. In more cases, we were able to gain the sole ownership of the land (1/1) by progressive purchase of the ownership shares of the individual co-owners.

Implementation of the action:

Action was successfully completed. Number of land purchase contracts has been signed with individual land owners. One long-term land lease contract has been signed with the Land association in Dobrohošť.

The land was purchased from the early beginning of the project in January 2009 in order to allow and support implementation of the project conservation actions and to secure preservation of the project achievements and results for future.

54 land purchase contracts have been signed with 72 individual land owners during the project. One long-term land lease contract has been signed with the Land association in

Dobrohošť for the total size of 16,1756 ha. 5 land swap contracts have been signed with the private agricultural companies and cooperatives as well as individual land owners.

Land has been acquired in several areas of the project site according needs of the project actions and willingness of land owners to make agreement with BROZ. During the project, the land was acquired in districts of Bratislava (cadastral area Ružinov), Dunajská Streda (cadastral areas Baka, Sap, Medveďov and Klúčovec) and Komárno (cadastral areas Čičov, Klížska Nemá, Veľké Kosihy and Zlatná na Ostrove).

The land has been purchased, swapped and leased by the non-governmental organisation and the project coordinating beneficiary BROZ. Only the land located within borders of project site and Natura 2000 area is reported in this report. Reported lands fulfil all LIFE requirements for eligibility of incurred costs:

- All purchase prices are based on market terms.
- All purchased lands are assigned definitively to nature conservation activities according the land purchase contracts
- Nature conservation clause to confirm assignement definitively to nature conservation purposes is included also in ownership certificates (LV) but only on those with the sole ownership of BROZ (1/1). It was not possible to insert this clause in ownership certificates with other co-owners, however, it is part of all land purchase contracts, which is sufficient.
- Land purchase contracts include a guarantee that the land property will be transferred to a legal body primarily active in the field of nature protection, in case of dissolution of the non-governmental organisation BROZ or its incapacity to manage the land according to nature conservation requirements.
- This guarantee is included also in statutes of BROZ, in case of dissolution of NGO.
- Duration of the land lease contract is significantly exceeding minimal period of 20 years, the contract has been signed for the period of 30 years and 10 months (from 1. 3. 2015 until 31. 12. 2045).

The small size of the land was purchased also by the associated beneficiary EDUVIZIG from Hungary. During preparation of C.10 action the need to purchase 0,632 ha of land from private owners did emerge. This selected part of the land is situated on the place, where the new river bed was dredged. This land was private and it was absolutely necessary to buy it in order to realize restoration of Szárazerdei river branch. Therefore the land purchase contract has been signed with number of private land owners (former private forest land owners association). Such costs were not foreseen in the original project budget of EDUVIZIG, but this necessity has resulted from the preparatory stage of action C.10 (action A.8). However, without this land purchase, realization of action C.10 would not be possible. Without purchase of this land, the owners would not agree with the project action, nor would the competent authority issue the construction permit.

All land which is declared for LIFE funding in this report has been acquired in order to allow and support implementation of the project conservation actions, to secure preservation of the project achievements and results, to allow after-LIFE nature conservation management of these lands and also to prevent any negative development of these lands in future. On the acquired lands, project restoration/ conservation have been realised and/or land use has been changed in favour of nature conservation.

6.1.3 C – Concrete conservation actions

Action C.1: Restoration of Istragov marsh

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Deliverables of the action:

Timetable of the field works was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 9.

Pictures from the field works were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 10.

Pictures and maps from test filling of Istragov marsh were attached to 2nd Midterm report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 6.

Technical documentation for sealing the critical section of canal was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 10.

Permits and documents for sealing the critical section of canal were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 11

Technical documentation for reconstruction of the object in the seepage canal was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 12

Pictures of works were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 13.

Pictures of restored habitats – Annex C1.1

Technical documentation for the reconstruction of the impoundment weir in the seepage canal – Annex C1.2

Technical documentation for the provisional impoundment of the seepage canal – Annex C1.3

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Large complex marshland of 770 000 m² area restored – feeding, nesting and resting place for target bird species. Significant improvement of conservations status of target bird species in the whole project site achieved. Adjacent 700 000 m² of floodplain forest with improved water supply. Area of about 55 ha with reduced possibility of human disturbance.

Achieved results: Despite of additional measures realised, expected results couldn't be reached in this action. Wetland birds habitats were restored at 21,4 ha/ 214 000 m² (from this 16,4 ha of permanent water bodies and 5,4 ha of temporary water bodies). Permanent water surface of river branches and canals was restored at the length of 6 600 m. Water supply was improved for the 250 000 m² of adjacent floodplain forests. Possibility of human disturbance was reduced on 15 ha.

The long lasting winded process of construction permit acquirement and long time-consuming public procurement caused the delay of the action. Construction of the originally planned measure was completed in 04/2012, 7 months later according the time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

Main problem which has occurred during realisation of C.1 action is insufficient amount of water flowing from seepage canal towards the Istragov marsh. This was solved by planning and implementation of the additional measures.

Last of the proposed additional measures – reconstruction of the impoundment weir (sluice gate to regulate the water flow and water level) in the seepage canal was first delayed and finally even not realised due to problems with the public procurement process.

The public procurement for this second additional measure started on April 2013. For maximum saving of time, tendering of technical documentation for reconstruction of the object was connected with the technical works in one procurement. Although many companies have applied for the competitive conditions, finally this public procurement has to be cancelled, because no company delivered quotation (price offer). Consequently long process of cancelling the public procurement followed and second public procurement with modified specifications, taking into account main comments of companies which planned participating on first tendering, started in September 2013. Unfortunately, the situation was similar as in the first case – no quotation was delivered to Water management construction and in November 2013 also second public procurement for reconstruction of the object had to be cancelled. In both cancelled public procurements tender criteria were clearly specified and met all statutory requirements. During first phase of the tendering processes several companies were directly interested in details of the tender, but in the case of public procurement it is not even possible to estimate how many companies will really deliver their quotations/ price offers in the scheduled time. Referred situation in tendering occurred in the case of the project actions for the first time without any apparent cause. Hence the AB VVB initiated several negotiations with companies, which expressed interest during any phase of both cancelled tenders. Based on these negotiations comments of companies were summarized and evaluated and as the only two relevant causes of failure were detected (1) connection of preparatory (technical documentation for reconstruction) and construction works to the one procurement and (2) frequent changes in the Act on public procurement (no. 25/2006), which considerably complicated the situation. Based on these negotiations, the companies also assured that separation of preparatory and technical works to two tenders will allow their participation in public procurement. In connection with these conclusions two new separate tenders were prepared in VVB during March 2014 (first of them for the technical documentation published in early April and the second for the construction works in May).

For technical documentation, the company Vodotica, jsc. was contracted (as a part of framework contract with VVB). Technical documentation was elaborated on 9th June 2014. Public procurement for realization started with expected end in 08/2014. Consequently realization of this measure was planned till 11/2014. Again, this public procurement was not successful. Although number of companies asked for the competitive conditions in the early stage of the public procurement, finally only one company submitted their offer. But as this offer was more expensive than the estimated costs of the order, the public procurement had to be cancelled.

Implementation of the action:

During the summer of 2011 the water filling test was realized. The test has shown some problems on the water way to Istragov marsh in the part of canal between the right side seepage canal and the Istragov marsh itself. Therefore the modifications on the canal (which is outside of inundation zone and has a crucial importance for success of this restoration action) and also increasing of sluice gate of the right side seepage canal were planned. In this way discharge of water to the canal could be significantly increased. Handling regulation – the manipulation order of the right side seepage canal has been updated for this reason.

During the winter period, December 2011 – February 2012, the canal was cleaned from vegetation and sediments in order to allow maximum water discharge and flow capacity.



The last meeting and approval of technical documentation was on 10.6.2011. Tendering via public procurement for the realization of the action took place in July and August 2011. The winning company of the public procurement became Eurovia SK, Joint Stock Company. Contract was signed by both parties in January 2012 and the construction permit was issued on 7th February 2012. The construction works in field started than immediately. Works have been completed in April 2012.





Realisation of construction works started in 02/2012 and was finished by 30/04/2012, what is 7 months later according to the planned timetable. Immediately the realised works were used for restoration of Istragov marsh by subsidising and keeping the water in the area. Significant improvement of the situation has been achieved very quickly on the whole corridor of canals and river branches bringing water into Istragov marsh area, see the pictures.

Regarding to results from filling of Istragov marsh by water since 2012 (after the first restoration works) the lack of inflowing water was identified for central part of the former Istragov marsh area. The problem of insufficient water supply and enormous infiltration of water along the water supply canal was identified. On the basis of expert analysis (VVB) additional measures were proposed: (1) sealing the critical section of canal by appropriate material to reduce water infiltration into the ground and (2) reconstruction of the object placed in the end of seepage canal.

1) *Sealing the critical section of canal by appropriate material* – for first phase of additional measures technical documentation was elaborated by experts from VVB. Final negotiation of this technical documentation was carried out on 7th March 2013. Then on 20th March permission for technical works was issued by District Environmental Office in Dunajská Streda. Public procurement process was finished in June 2013. The winner company of electronic auction was Nautilus, Ltd. Contract was signed on 17th July 2013 (no. 2013/5200/2209). Sealing of the critical section of the canal was successfully realised in August 2013. Technical works were finished on 28th August 2013.

2) *Reconstruction of the object in the seepage canal*

Other proposed measure was the reconstruction of the sluice gate in the seepage canal. As this object is located outside of the Natura 2000 area, the permission from the Commission was asked in 2012 to invest the infrastructure costs from the LIFE budget into this object, which has a crucial importance for the success of action C.1. After agreement of the Commission, the AB VVB started the process of public procurement of the technical documentation for reconstruction of the object. There have been numerous unexpected problems, as described above in the part *Problems and their solution*. Finally this reconstruction was not realised during the project due to problems with the public procurement process.

In the meantime, remaining resources from the project budget had been allocated and subsequently contracted (after results of another public procurement) for another project action – construction of the bridge crossing the Velkolelske rameno river branch (actions C.3, C.6). Management of VVB has decided that they will realise and pay the reconstruction of the object in the seepage canal from their own resources, apart from the project budget. Unfortunately, due to low income of VVB during 2015 (very low water discharges in the

Danube for extremely long period of the year caused significantly lower income of VVB from the electricity production), this measure was not realised until the end of the project.

In 2015 VVB ordered another technical documentation for the provisional impoundment of the seepage canal by using the iron-concrete plates in the existing impoundment weir to increase the water level in the seepage canal without overall reconstruction of the whole impoundment weir. This documentation was completed in August 2015 and was paid fully from the own resources of VVB, apart from the project budget. Unfortunately, nor this measure was not realised during the project due to unfavourable financial situation of VVB at the end of 2015.

However, very positive conservation results have been achieved on the whole system of canals and former river branches, bringing water to Istragov marsh. Permanent water level has been established on these areas. Remnant of the old river branch Veľký háj, which used to be completely dry during the summer periods, has been filled in by water of about 2 m deep. Between the aquatic and wetland vegetation of water lilies and reed beds, nesting of the Ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*) has been recorded in 2014. This extremely rare bird species (listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive) hasn't been recorded in the area for more than 25 years and it's the only recent recorded nesting in the whole western Slovakia.



Formerly dry Istragov river branch surrounding the former marshland has been filled in by water. Regular monitoring of biota has confirmed that new important habitat for amphibians was restored here. New feeding habitats of kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) were created.

In the core area of the Istragov marsh with partially restored water regime, a pair of project target species white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) started to nest since 2012. White-tailed eagles from this nest regularly visit the restored localities of the C.11 as their feeding habitats are at the opposite side of the Danube River, in the Hungarian part of the project site.

Action C.2: Restoration of Dunajské kriviny river branch system

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Deliverables of the action:

Pictures of river branch system and restoration works were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 14.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Alternative 1: The culvert pipe at the intake canal to 'Dunajské kriviny' oxbow reconstructed, water supply to the oxbow possible. Alternative 2: Spring fish belly gate installed at the fixed weir 'A', water level above the weir increased by cca 40 cm. Restored dried-up wetlands, oxbows and river branches in the section above the fixed weir 'A'. Restored feeding habitats of target bird species: in alternative 1 – 5 000 m², in alternative 2 – 19 600 m² + 1 400 m of river branches. In both alternatives also improved conservation status of adjacent forest habitats due to increased ground water levels will be achieved (alt. 1: 15 ha, alt. 2: 40 ha).

Because the alternative no. 1 was chosen as most appropriate for realisation, there are following expected results: the culvert pipe at the intake canal to 'Dunajské kriviny' oxbow will be reconstructed, what allows water supply to the oxbow. Restored feeding habitats of target bird species in alternative no. 1 will be 5 000 m². Improved conservation status of adjacent forest habitats due to increased ground water levels will be achieved on 15 ha.

Achieved results: Dried river branch (as the water birds habitat) was restored at the length of 1 200 m (7 000 m²). Improved conditions of adjacent forest habitats due to increased ground water at 20 ha. Reduced human accessibility and disturbance at the area of 13 ha.

Action was completed in 07/2013, which is 16 month later comparing to time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

Complications which led to the delay are described in action A.3.

Implementation of the action:

The project documentation was prepared and later on updated as re-construction of the inflow object, and the engineering and planning phase was fully completed.



Regional Environmental Office in Bratislava issued construction permit (no. ZPS 2013/2151-GGL) on 28th March 2013. The process of public procurement was carried out in 2012 and on 11th September 2012 the contract (no. 2012/2100/2039) between the AB VVB and Eurovia SK (winner of the electronic auction) was signed. Realization works started in May 2013 and original end date was 30th June 2013. During the works newly build object was destroyed by strong flood and had to be rebuild few weeks later. Hence the restoration works were finalized on 27th July 2013.



Successful restoration of Dunajské kriviny river branch system was promoted to media by celebratory event organised on 18th July 2013 together with representatives and inhabitants of the local community of Dobrohošť.

Action C.3: Construction of the fishway on two strategic points in river branch system

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Deliverables of the action:

Pictures of Fishway I – Bakanske rameno river branch and restoration works were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 15.

Pictures of Fishway II – Velkolelske river branch and restoration works were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 16

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Two fishways will be constructed and both operating on the areas with maximum impact on reducing the barrier effect for fish species. Distribution of fish in the river branch system improved. Access to fish spawning grounds restored. Availability of food source for target birds increased.

Achieved results: Administrative part of the action started on time but the completion was delayed due to difficulties described above in action A.4. Action has significantly exceeded planned outputs – both by the range of restoration measures and areas targeted and also by achieved conservation results.

Fishway I – Bakanske rameno river branch:

Aquatic habitats restored at the whole length of the fishway - 2800 m plus additional 800 m at the additional fishway on the land purchased by BROZ (action B.1).

Construction works started in April 2014 and were completed in June 2014, which is 15 months later according the time schedule.

Fishway II – Velkolelske rameno river branch:

Aquatic habitats restored at the area of 38,6 ha. Velkolelske rameno river branch and its flow capacity restored at the length of 5 260 m² (main branch 4 280 m, plus small branch at the outflow 980 m).

Problems and their solution:

Delay of the action was partly caused also by the time-consuming process of excluding the land from the Forest Land Fund/Resources (FLR), as part of the fishway was designed on previously forested area. The process had included elaboration of expert testimonies and signing the contract between VVB as the investor and the Forests of the SR as the owner of respective land.

Usually when excluding land from the FLR – a fee for excluding the land as well as fee as compensation of the financial loss from the lost forest production in future has to be paid. Finally, the District Forestry Office (OLÚ) in Dunajská Streda has decided, that no fees for land excluding need to be paid, because construction of the fishway is an environmental project.

Implementation of the action:

After ichthyological studies, numerous meeting and negotiations with different involved experts and stakeholder, it was decided, that both fishways will be realised in a form of fish

by pass. This means overcoming of artificial barrier for fish migration by passing by/ around through the natural habitats of former river branches and canals connected for this purpose, or restoring the natural river branches as whole.

Administrative part of the action started on time but the completion was delayed due to difficulties described in the action A.4. After completion of technical documentation of fishway on Bakanské ramená river branch system VVB prepared materials for the public procurement and construction permit.

Fishway I – Bakanske rameno river branch:

Construction works started in April 2014 and were completed in June 2014. Fishway I – or fish bypass at the Bakanske rameno river branch consist of fragments of existing river branches, which were connected with the main river branch, barriers were removed and crossings with the forestry roads were rebuilt in order to allow free migration of fish.



Four crossings of the fishway with the forestry road were solved by the double line of concrete prefabricate of the 2,2 x 2,2 m clear space. This allows enough space and light above the water level, as fish do not prefer to go to small and dark pipes and similar artificial structures. These objects allow passing also for heavy loaded forestry vehicles on the road. On the 2 crossings of the fishway with the forestry road, there is a possibility to regulate the water level in the sections above these road crossings. Water level regulation is done by putting wooden damming into the metal grooves fixed on the concrete prefabricate.

In one section of the fishway – new artificial canal with the length of 500 m was excavated which connects the continuous fish way with the main river branch at the bottom part. On this section of the fishway, excluding the land from the Forest Land Fund was necessary. In the new artificial canal, several steps from wood and large stones were built in order to slow down the water flow and to create refuge and resting places for migrating fishes.

Although the main goal of this action was the improvement of feeding habitats and food offer of several of the target bird species, the action created also four new breeding places of kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), what is almost 10% of the estimated breeding population within SPA Dunajské luhy.

Fishway II – Velkolelske rameno river branch:

Opening of the inflow of the Velkolelske rameno river branch was realised in 2013 by BROZ as the action C.6 Restoration of Vel'kolélske rameno river branch system.

In 2014, remaining three from four parts of the objects described in technical documentation for actions C.3 and C.6 were finished by VVB. Field works started on 27th March 2014 and within 3 months, the planned objects were constructed and excavation works realised. Completed works were taken over and accepted on 29/05/2014. According the technical documentation, sediments were removed from the part of the river branch to allow free water flowing also during lower water level in the river branch.



Works on opening of two outflows from the Vel'kolélske rameno river branch were realised simultaneously. Large amount of sediments and excavated material was removed from the corridor of the restored river branch. First – the area in direct contact with the Danube River was dredged to the level agreed in the technical documentation. Then the watercourse of the inner part of the river branch had to be newly excavated in the length of about 150 m, as it was intentionally almost fully filled in by soil and remaining of forestry operations (roots, stumps, etc.) pushed into the watercourse of the cut-off river branch in the past. As the last step the stone fortified weirs blocking the river branch from the Danube were taken apart and removed. At both ends of the branch, fixed outflows objects (overflow weir) were created from the remaining stone material to fix the permanent level of the bottom (as agreed by the SK – HU Commission for border waters) and shape and size of the banks and river branch at the direct contact with the Danube River.

The width of the bigger outflow object (overflow weir) on the main outflow branch is 80 m and the second on the smaller one, closer to flood protection dike, is 45 m wide.

Shortly after finalization of the works, water level in Danube increased. During this time results of restoration works were significantly visible, since the migration of many fish species was allowed.

Excessive restoration works took a lot of attention of local inhabitant, who were visiting the area and watching the works in large numbers. Temporary information tables were informing visitors about the works and its purpose in Slovak and Hungarian language. Usually people are very concerned about machines in protected areas, “destruction like” looking works and they use to complain to different places. But thank to good communication, we have received only lots of very positive words and feedback from the locals. Finishing of works was promoted also in media – from the very local ones to main news of national TVs – with very good media coverage, see action C.9 for more details.

Action C.4: Restoration of selected dried and isolated river branches

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Deliverables of the action:

Technical documentation for restoration of Ostrov orliaka morského Island was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 11.

Technical documentation for restoration of Dolný rusovský ostrov Island was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 12.

Technical documentation of additional work within Rusovske rameno river branch was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 17.

Permits and contracts for Rusovske rameno river branch were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 18.

Pictures of restoration works – Rusovske rameno river branch were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 19.

Pictures of restoration works – Rusovske rameno river branch- additional works - were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 20.

Pictures of restoration works within Ostrov orliaka morského Island were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 21.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Barriers in the river branch system removed, water regime and continuity of river branch system improved on 6 localities. It is expected that minimum of 2 500 m of river branches will be re-connected and 180 000 m² of target bird habitats restored. Migration barriers for water organisms removed. Population increase of fish species and amphibians – food base of target birds species. Due to restricted access to some places after restoration also significant decrease of human disturbance will be achieved on 16 ha.

Achieved results: Action was delayed in comparison to the original timetable, but the goal of the action was fulfilled and even significantly exceeded. Barriers were removed and water regime improved on 8 localities – 7 localities at the area of Rusovske rameno river branch and Nature reserve Dunajske ostrovy and 1 large locality represented by Ostrov orliaka morského island (White-tailed Eagle Island).

Rusovske rameno river branch and Nature reserve Dunajske ostrovy:

4 major concrete and stone migration barriers and 3 smaller earth barriers for water organisms were removed and the river branch was restored at the length of 4 250 m.

Restored bird's habitats at the area of 23 ha. Reduced accessibility and disturbance at the area of 86,4 ha.

Ostrov orliaka morského island (White-tailed Eagle Island):

Restored birds habitats at the area of 16,3 ha.

Reduced accessibility and disturbance at the area of 33,5 ha.

Problems and their solution:

Public procurement for C.4 action was connected with the action C.2. From this reason and in connection with complications related to C.2 action (canceled public procurement referred in A.3) the start and realization of measures within C.4 action was delayed. Because the previous joint public procurement of the actions C.2 and C.4 has been cancelled, the new tender for supplier of construction works had to be started again.

Implementation of the action:

Proposed localities have been covered by two technical documentations. Both Technical documentation for restoration of Ostrov orliaka morského Island as well as Technical documentation for restoration of Dolný rusovský ostrov Island were completed by 06/2011. Consequently VVB started the process for obtaining of necessary permissions and comments. Needful engineering for construction works was finished and also all valid permissions were provided.

All planned measures were realized, as well as additional steps. During July 2012 second public procurement was finalized and the contractor was selected through the electronic auction. The company Eurovia SK was the winner of the auction with the lowest price. On 11th September 2012 contract was signed by both parties (no. 2012/2100/2039). Procurement and the contract included also the action C.2.

Rusovské rameno river branch:

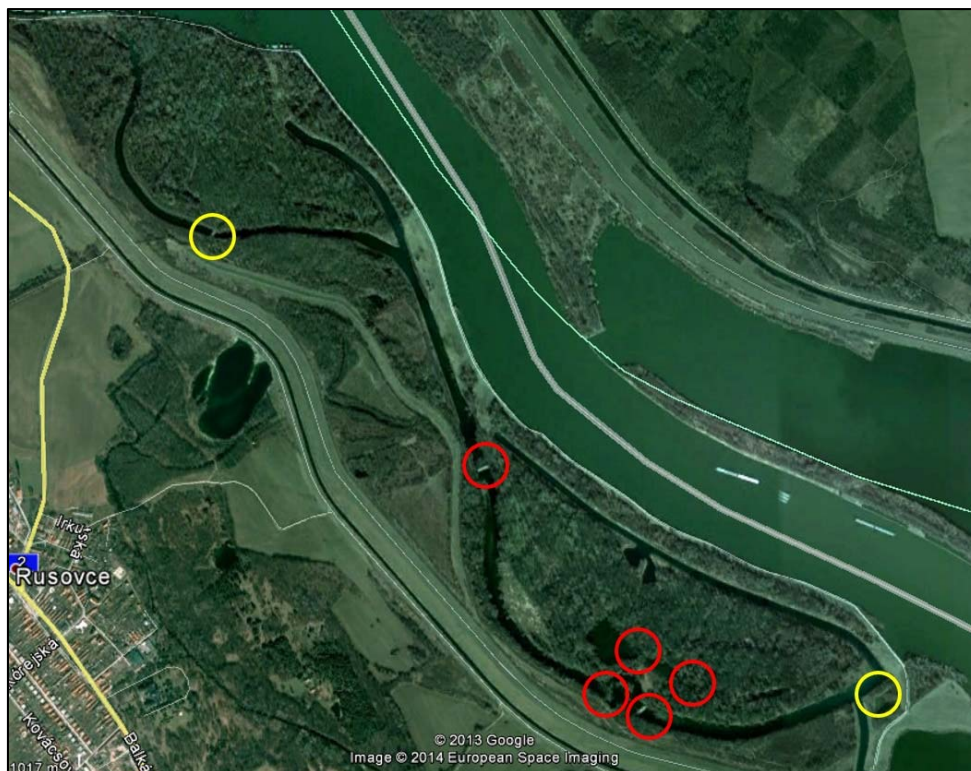
Restoration works started on 7th January 2013 and were completed at the end of February 2013. Technical works had to be interrupted for few days because of higher water level in Danube (the whole location is the polder, filled in by water during higher discharges in the Danube River). Restorations within the Rusovské rameno river branch have been carried out during the first phase of technical works – three weirs in river branch at the place of Dolný Rusovský ostrov Island were removed in full length. These weirs represented major barriers in the connectivity and flow capacity of the Rusovské rameno river branch. During the floods, flowing wood, waste and sediments had been trapped on the weirs and filling the water body of the river branch. By removal of the weirs, the connectivity of four isolated sections was restored. Massive concrete weirs were used also as possible access roads for illegal access of vehicles to the island, which represents the Nature reserve Dunajské ostrovy with the highest level of protection (the fifth degree). Off road cars and quads driving kept illegal roads in Nature reserve still functioning, causing intensive disturbance for sensitive birds species. These illegal activities were completely excluded from the area by removing of the possible access roads.



As the part of this action was also (a) restoration of water regime within small wetlands located on island as well as (b) reconnection of smaller parts of river branch system located inside the island.

Following the comments and recommendations of the State Nature Conservancy focusing on increasing of restoration results and achievement of the favorable conservation status of the targeted area and species, it was proposed to remove also another barrier situated in upper part of the Rusovské rameno river branch and to secure water inflow into adjacent section of river branch and wetland system. After agreement from EC the technical documentation for this step of action was elaborated and finally discussed and agreed with SVP on 2nd May 2013. Consequently the public procurement for realization of additional works including electronic auction was carried out and on 28th January 2014 the contract was signed with the winner of public procurement Nautilus, Ltd.. Necessary permits were issued by Regional office of Environment on 17th December 2013 (no. OU-BA-OSZP-2013/03548-GG). In January 2014 restoration works started in field. The last weir (and also entrance to Island from the south part) located in Rusovske rameno river branch was fully removed as it was recommended. Simultaneously water regime in wetland located on south-east part of the island was restored. Works were finished on 28th February 2014.

Localities targeted in first phase in 2013 are marked in red circles, localities targeted in the second phase in 2013 are marked in yellow circles.



Thanks to original as well as additional measures we have achieved significantly better ecological results for target bird species and more project success, since on the island there are now highly appropriate conditions for breeding of endangered and/ or sensitive bird species. Also after more than 20 years there are many places which are re-available for fish spawning, more wetlands for amphibians reproduction and thus more available feeding habitats for birds.

Due to restricted or physically excluded access to major part of Nature reserve Dunajské ostrovy after restoration works, also significant decrease of human disturbance was achieved on total area of 86,4 ha: Dolný (lower) rusovský ostrov island 50 ha, wetland at the Dolný (lower) rusovský ostrov island 0,9 ha and Horný (upper) rusovský ostrov 35,5 ha.

This conservation state improvement was confirmed by the increased frequency and abundancy of several sensitive species of birds, like the red kite (*Milvus milvus*), great white heron (*Ardea alba*), pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*) and red-crested pochard (*Netta rufina*). This indicates the improved conditions also for several target species that are expected to return to this site in future.

Ostrov orliaka morskeho island (White-tailed Eagle Island):

In the case of planned restoration action within the White-tailed Eagle Island it was necessary to realize temporary and consequently permanent excluding of wooded areas from "forest land resources". Statement was issued by District Forestry Office in Dunajská Streda city on 14th May 2013 (no. L/2013/00055–3). Technical works started in July 2013 and were completed on 30th July 2013. Technical works included construction of the inflow object from the adjacent river branch end excavation of a new canal 250 m long, which allows water to reach area of former wetlands. The inflow object is crossing the forestry road and allows passing also for heavy loaded vehicles. There is a possibility to regulate the amount of water

flowing from the river branch into the inflow object by putting wooden damming into the metal grooves fixed on the concrete inflow object prefabricate.



Realized restoration measure within the White-tailed Eagle Island was highly effective – reconnection of large terrain depressions with branch system had visible positive effect once during first season, when many fishes comes after long term period of dry wetland to this location. Next seasons of 2013 - 2015 the effect was even greater, since many amphibians as well as fishes had opportunity to reproduce within large restored and reconnected wetland. At the same time an extensive area of about 33.5 ha without any human disturbances has been created.

Handling regulation (manipulation order) defines three regimes – vegetation period, increased water level period, autumn – winter period.

Nesting of kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) was recorded in the bank of newly excavated inflow canal. Extensive wetlands suitable as feeding areas of water birds have been restored at the area of 16,3 ha.

Targeted area represents the active nesting site of the White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and the abandoned nesting site of the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*). After finishing the action, regular feeding of black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) was observed in the site.

Action C.5: Restoration of Medved'ovské rameno river branch system

Responsible beneficiary: Agravia/ BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Permissions and agreements from relevant authorities were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 13.

Pictures of restoration works and restored river branch were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 22.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Medved'ovské rameno river branch system restored on its whole length. Together ca 4 000 m of river branches will be restored and human disturbance of sensitive species will be reduced on 50 ha. Natural water flow regime and dynamics will be restored. Conservation status of ca 10 ha of 91E0* improved, habitat 3270 restored at 2 ha. Population increase of rheophilous fish species.

Achieved results: Medved'ovské rameno river branch system was restored on the length of 600 m of newly restored side branch with the new inflow and 2 100 m of the main branch. Natural water flow regime with strong dynamics was restored at 600 m, water flow of the remaining part of the main branch restored at 2 100 m. 19 ha of the birds habitats restored. Human accessibility and disturbance of sensitive species was reduced on 71 ha.

There was a delay of the action in comparison with the original timetable, what was caused mainly by the takeover of the action by the CB BROZ from the AB Agravia. This important change markedly influenced the continuity of all processes connected with actions. During the year 2011 we have invested a lot of effort and time to minimize delay, but in general we had to newly establish contacts and relationships with stakeholders and organisations/ authorities relevant for smooth realization of the action in field. Despite mentioned complications the realization of the action started in field in October 2010 and was finished in December 2012.

Problems and their solution:

We have solved problems with finding the place for deposition of dredged materials and we have obtained the agreement for this temporary deposition from SVP (administrator of the Danube River). During the year 2011 we have also changed the project budget including budget of this action with significant increasing of costs for restoration of Medved'ovské river branch system. These changes were agreed by EC.

On the basis of first technical discussions with experts and construction companies, it was found out, that the financial budget allocated for this action is still not sufficient. Hence after consultation with independent technical expert several changes were added to technical documentation. These modifications did not compromise the restoration effect, but thanks to them necessary expected construction costs were decreased. Mentioned modifications had to be incorporated also to the construction permit, thus its updating was also needed. This procedure again has caused some time delay, but it made the action realistic and also financially feasible.

Implementation of the action:

The action started in field in October 2010. In season of 2011, the woody vegetation was completely removed from the targeted area and first earth works on overburden removal were realised. These works have been inspected also by monitoring mission with representative of EC in May 2011.

In 2011 overburden was completely removed from the part which was later dredged and prepared the free construction site. Just after SVP finished technical documentation for restoration of branch system (11/2011) we started communication with authorities in connection with needed permissions. As a part of source material for target authorities we needed agreements for placing of dredged materials on proposed places. Individual solutions were discussed with the representatives of the SVP, because the area is located within Danube inundation zone and there was high amount of material of 40 300 m³. Land parcel near the place of restoration, where the owner is the Sap municipality, was chosen as a place for the temporary depositing of dredged material. This was approved by the mayor of Sap and also by SVP.

BROZ had submitted technical documentation together with all agreements to Regional Environmental Office (KÚŽP) in Trnava and the construction permit was issued by KÚŽP in Trnava in March 2012.

Public procurement including electronic auction was finished in October 2012. The date for completion of works in the contract with the selected contractor Nautilus, Ltd. was end of March 2013 at latest.

Technical works focused on reconnection of Medvedovske rameno river branch to main Danube started in field in November and were finished on 17th December 2012. After completion of restoration works following technical documentation, the width of inflow was 10 m at the bottom.



After several events of the higher water level in Danube and floods, the width of inflow to Medvedovske rameno copies original inflow to river branch with steep river banks on one

side and gravel deposits on the opposite side. After the biggest ever recorded flood on the Danube River (06/2013) the excavated and restored river bed has been partly filled in by gravel sediments and in technical parameters it did not fulfil the conditions of the construction permits. Also there was a request from the State nature conservancy, Administration of the PLA Danube floodplains for further intervention in order to improve ecological functioning of the restored river branch. Therefore the inflow part of the branch just beyond the object had to be partly excavated again to the original altitude planned in technical documentation, because of final inspection in the restored river branch inflow. After several meetings and discussions with experts for hydromorphology, proposed modifications were done during December 2013. Now thanks to restoration action this area provides appropriate breeding and feeding habitats for target bird species. Reconnection of side arm to Danube allowed natural changes in river branch and created natural mosaic of microhabitats which are fluently changing during season and depending on the water level in Danube. Within the isolated pools appearing after water level decrease many amphibians reproduce as well as several types of insects which are good foodbase for target bird species. Steep river banks naturally recreated along the upper part of side arm provide suitable habitats for breeding of Kingfisher. Simultaneously gravel which is again coming to river branch provides appropriate conditions for fish spawning.

Actually, the river branch is fully flowing for the major part of the year, what contributes to its overall restoration and natural maintenance of the steep river banks and open gravel areas.



By restoration of the flowing water and natural river dynamics, steep banks have been naturally created and started to be occupied by the nesting pair of kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*). Restored river branch is used as the feeding habitat of black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), which is nesting in the adjacent area.

Action C.6: Restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system

Responsible beneficiary: **Agravia/ BROZ**

Deliverables of the action:

Pictures of restoration works and restored river branch were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 23.

Pictures of Velkolelske rameno river branch, construction of the bridge – Annex C6.1

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Flow capacity of Veľkolélske rameno river branch restored at the length of 5 500 m. Main barriers (the concrete weir, bank embankment of the Danube River) partly eliminated. Migration of fish to spawning habitats enabled. Restored breeding and feeding habitats for target bird species. Reduced human disturbance of sensitive species on 263 ha.

Achieved results: Veľkolélske rameno river branch restored at the length of 5 260 m (4 280 m of the main river branch + 980 m of the smaller branch of the second outflow). Main barriers of Danube bank embankment fully eliminated at the 1 inflow and 2 outflows, barrier of concrete weir/ road significantly eliminated by construction of bridge. Migration of fish to spawning habitats fully enabled. Restored breeding and feeding habitats for the target bird species at the area of 38,6 ha. Reduced access and human disturbance of sensitive species achieved on 245 ha (235 ha the big Veľkolélsky ostrov Island + 10 ha small Zlatý ostrov Island at outflow part of the branch).

Problems and their solution:

The problems of the actions C.6 are mostly similar with that described in action C.5. There was a problem with the planned budget proposed originally by Agravia, which was too low for successful realisation of this action. But the budget modification realised and approved by EC during 2011 improved this situation. And also confirmation by the EC of possibility to realize the second fishway in the place of outflow of the Veľkolélske rameno branch system allowed this very effective solution how to combine project actions and resources for maximal positive restoration and ecological impact.

Despite of our effort in the action C.6 as well as in C.5, takeover of the action from Agravia to BROZ was a serious complication, which caused delay of the realisation of whole action.

Implementation of the action:

In 2011, number of meetings with relevant stakeholders and authorities took place directly on Veľkolélsky ostrov Island, inspecting and presenting areas of planned restoration.

The procedure for restoration of the Veľkolélske rameno river branch was planned as following:

1. Opening of the branch outflow = construction of fishway 2. Start in 12/2012, completion by 03/2013, responsible beneficiary VVB.
2. Construction of the bridge. Start in 2/2013, completion by 05/2013, responsible beneficiary VVB.
3. Opening of the branch inflow. Start in 4/2013, completion by 06/2013, responsible beneficiary BROZ.

As there were significant delays in implementation of this actions, BROZ could not wait with the action under its responsibility until the other steps will be realised. Therefore after all necessary administrative and preparation processes field works on restoration of Velkolelske rameno river branch - opening of the branch inflow by BROZ started in September 2013 and were finished on 21st November 2013. Overall width of reconnection of side arm to Danube is 100 m, what represents opening of two original inflows to river branch. Thus also the small isolated island was preserved inside of the inflow.



Fortunately, very long periods of low water discharges in the Danube River during the years of 2014 and 2015 allowed realising also steps 3 and step 2 in the opposite order as originally planned, without major technical difficulties and without compromising the possible conservation benefits of this action.

Works for restorations of the Vel'kolélske rameno river branch were joined together with the action C.3 construction of fishway 2 on one large river branch system. Therefore ambitious restoration as well as large and functional fishway/ bypass could be realised. The full flowing capacity of the branch could be only achieved by construction of the bridge, which is described also in Actions A.4, A.5 and C.3.



Removal of the barrier – the road and fixed weir crossing the branch, and construction of the bridge to allow free water flow and fish migration started in December 2014. The start was delayed due to many difficulties, as described above in action A.5. The bridge was made of concrete with the steel reinforcement. First foundation piles had to be drilled out into the existing road and to underlay stable clay layers. Drilled holes were reinforced by steel and filled in by concrete. These piles created basement of the future bridge. Further works included demolition of the concrete formations, removal of existing culverts, excavation works, removal of excavated material out of the project site, etc. Works were interrupted for number of times due to weather (low temperature), Christmas holidays and Danube high water level events. During winter months, work with the concrete was not possible due to

freezing. Also there were periods of no freeze, but the local and regional suppliers of the concrete were not in operation. High water interrupted the works and flooded the construction site for several times as well. The bridge was officially completed and put in operation in September 2015.

The big media event to open the new bridge “Bridge into the fairy tale” was organised in October 2015 with very good media coverage, see action C.9 for more details.



Action C.7: Restoration of lowland meadows as feeding and nesting bird habitats

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Pictures of newly restored areas on the Veľkolélsky ostrov Island were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 14.

Pictures of newly restored area near Iža were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 15.

Pictures of restored area in Dunaszeg were attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 7.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Minimum of 150 ha of meadows restored. Traditional grazing of animals restored. Grazing, animals purchased – cows (70), sheep (100), goats (20) and horses (10) and functioning grazing system established. Movable electric fences, fixed fences and watering places purchased. At least 150 ha of habitats of target species created.

Achieved results: Total size of the restored lowland meadows is 184.6 ha, which is more than originally expected. All grazing animals and grazing infrastructure purchased. Sustainable grazing regime established on the Veľkolélsky ostrov Island. The action was running according to the planned timetable.

Minimum of 150 ha of meadows was restored by 30/03/2013.



Problems and their solution:

We had not encountered any serious problems affecting realisation of this action. Years 2011 and 2012 were positive for grazing from one point of view, because animals could stay on Veľkolélsky ostrov Island during whole season – typical floods were missing. On the other hand the dry year with no flood with nutrients and lack of rain fall negatively influenced quality of pastures. At the end of summer and in autumn, the grass was poor and suffering for water shortage. Hence animals had to leave the Island earlier in comparison with years before. During the winter months the animals are sheltered in the local farm – old barns and yards.

On the other hand, during the floods, all grazing animals have to be removed from the Island. As there are no grasslands outside of the project site in the adjacent area, the animals have to be artificially fed by hay or other forage.

In 2015, access on the island with the grazing herds was difficult due to ongoing construction work on the bridge and removed access road. It made difficulties especially during unexpected high water events, when animals had to leave the island. Thank to early warning and cooperative approach of the bridge supplier, this problem was solved by temporary access road during the bridge construction.



Restoration of lowland meadows by grazing started already in 2009 and grazing is still ongoing on Veľkolélsky ostrov Island. All the animals are situated on Island during whole grazing season, whereby the electric fences are gradually shifted around the whole areas which are possible for grazing. Cows were used especially for restoration in the parts where the vegetation is high and dense and terrain is badly accessible, therefore restoration and/ or maintenance by machines would be extremely costly or impossible.

In the past, the Island was covered by grasslands from much larger part than it is now. Some decades ago, part of the meadows was artificially afforested by plantations of hybrid poplars. Even when some of the older plantations were removed (about 15 years ago), the areas were overgrown by invasive trees and shoots from hybrid poplars. Continuously we were removing the trees from such areas and re-introduce grazing on these areas in order to keep them open and to restore original meadows there.

During the year 2011 the areas overgrown by high amount of invasive trees and shrubs were attentively selected. These places were milled with removing of woody vegetation after breeding and vegetation season. In this way 15 ha of meadows were restored, which were being managed by grazing from the spring 2012.



3,5 ha of lowland meadows were restored at the Veľkolélsky ostrov Island by grassing of arable land by seeding mixture of natural grasslands species in 2011. It was possible mainly thank to purchasing part of the land parcels located directly at this place in action B.1.

Since 2011 we have started cooperation with agricultural cooperative in Iža, which breeds charolais cows near the place with known grazing from the past. The locality is between Danube River and the dam with few channels and terrain depression which are temporarily flooded. Hence it is potentially proper feeding and nesting habitat of birds. After consultations with the State Nature Conservancy, we have decided to restore and improve conservation status of this grassland by removal of invasive trees. Permission for removing of invasive trees was obtained from relevant authorities. Invasive species of trees, especially *Fraxinus americana* and *Fraxinus pensylvanica* were consequently marked and cut during February 2012. In this way new meadows, which were then managed by grazing of cows, were restored and are further regularly being managed by grazing on the area of 14,6 ha.

The negotiations with Hungarian private farmer connected with grazing in SPA Szigetköz have been realised. Several work meetings and visits of the possible grazing localities were realised and experience and know how on meat cattle grazing in protected areas was mutually exchanged. In 2012 we have directly supported grazing in SPA Szigetköz in Hungary by purchase and providing of grazing infrastructure for grazing in the area of Dunaszeg and Ásványráró.

Restoration of lowland meadows located near the municipality Číčov, was realised by grassing of the arable land during 2011. The seeds of natural grassland species carefully selected for the particular location in Danube floodplains were used (purchased from other sources than LIFE). During the year 2011 were these restored meadows largely exploited by birds – especially high amount of Ardeidae and Ciconiidae family members start to use this locality as feeding habitat. Grassing of arable land is very difficult to achieve with the land users. It means loss of their agricultural production. In addition, if the farmer doesn't have also the animal production (and very most of the do not keep any animals), he has no use for the grass or hay produced from this area.

Directly on this area, nesting of project target species Common redshank (*Tringa totanus*) was recorded in 2013 and in 2016 again.

Lowland meadows restored:

- Veľkolélsky ostrov Island – 70 ha + 15 ha (grazing and combination of removing of invasive trees, milling and grazing) +3.5 ha (grassing of arable land by seeding mixture of natural grasslands species)
- Číčov – 16.5 ha
- Iža – 14.6 ha
- Dunaszeg, Hungary – 65 ha.

Total size of the restored lowland meadows is 184.6 ha, which is more than originally expected.

164.6 ha of lowland meadows were restored by grazing in combination of removing of invasive species of herbs and woody vegetation by milling and mulching of shoots of previously removed trees and shrubs. Major part of this size was done at the Veľkolélsky ostrov Island. 20 ha was restored by grassing of arable land by seeding mixture of natural grasslands species.

Action C.8: Planting of native tree species – restoration of natural birds refugia and nesting areas

Responsible beneficiary: Agravia/ BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Pictures from tree and seeds planting and the map of planted areas were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 16.

Map of planted areas – Annex C8.1

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Minimum of 150 000 m² of the residual alluvial forests (91E0*) and 200 000 m² of riparian mixed forests along great rivers (91F0) restored on the areas currently occupied by plantations of hybrid poplars. At least 25 groups of native trees planted inside of hybrid poplar plantations. Together 30 000 young trees planted.

Achieved results: Objective has been reached. Expected results – number of planted trees and size of planted area have been achieved. Planting of 30 000 trees of native species was finished in 02/2012, which is 10 months before planned date in timetable. In 2013 additional trees were planted and all together 44 900 trees were planted during the project, exceeding original plans by 50 %.

By planting of new forests on the places previously occupied by the hybrid poplar plantations, potential area of forest habitats of Community interest was restored. 207 600 m² of the residual alluvial forests (91E0*) and 150 000 m² of riparian mixed forests along great rivers (91F0) was restored. Native trees were planted in 83 groups of different size and shape between hybrid poplar plantations.

Problems and their solution:

No problems, influencing realisation of this action occurred.

Implementation of the action:

All the planned trees were planted by the end of February 2012 as it is shown in the table below. The planting via sowing of seeds was also applied. In this way 55 300 seeds (acorns) of European oak (*Quercus robur*) were planted. Planting was realised with new technology when small containers with special substratum, which provide special nutrition for growing are used. Unfortunately in the places where the population density of wild-boars is high, many of seeds were destroyed by them, so the success for sowing acorns was lower compared with young trees planting.

During the year following the planting, protection of planted native trees was realised, where it was needed. During the season of 2011, taking over the action from Agravia by BROZ as well as the environmental conditions (extremely low precipitations) didn't allow to continue in planting.



The rest of trees – 7 750 pieces were planted during winter 2012 (January – February) in the area of Gabčíkovo. When planting of trees was completed, after planting care for the young trees did continue until the end of the project as necessary. Numbers of planted native tree species until February 2012:

N.	Tree species planted	2009	2010	2012
1.	European oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	300	200	5 000
2.	European ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	500		
3.	White poplar <i>Populus alba</i>	350	950	
4.	Grey poplar <i>Populus x canescens</i>	600	14 350	
5.	Black poplar <i>Populus nigra</i>		2 000	2 400
6.	Sycamore maple <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>		200	
7.	White willow <i>Salix alba</i>		1 000	350
8.	European alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>		1 000	
9.	Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i>		800	
OVERALL NUMBER OF PLANTED TREES		30 000		

For planting of small trees two different methods were used: (1) planting groups of native tree species between and into the plantations of hybrid poplars and (2) planting of whole forest stands by native trees on the areas where hybrid poplars were logged and removed. In addition to foreseen number of trees planted, additional tree planting was realised during the project after 02/2012

In Hungary in connection with the action C.10, AB ÉDUVIZIG planted the new forest of 0,76 ha with 4 300 individuals of domestic poplars *Populus alba* and *Populus nigra*. Other 100 trees of *Alnus glutinosa*, *Fraxinus angustifolia* and *Quercus robur* species were planted alongside the restored branch as shading trees.

Another 10 500 trees were planted by BROZ in 2013. Tree species *Quercus robur*, *Fraxinus angustifolia*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Populus x canescens* and *Populus nigra* were planted on the lands going to be purchased, leased and swapped by BROZ, based on previous agreement with land owners. From the project budget, only costs for planting of these 10 500 trees were covered. Supplies of the trees were covered from other sources apart from the project budget. These trees were not reported in the 3th progress report, unless we were sure that agreement with land owner will be realised in practice.

All together 44 900 trees were planted during the project.

N.	Tree species planted	2009	2010	2012	2013
1.	European oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	300	200	5 000	533
2.	Narrow- leaved ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	500			
3.	European ash <i>Fraxinus angustifolia</i>				533
4.	White poplar <i>Populus alba</i>	350	950		2 150
5.	Grey poplar <i>Populus x canescens</i>	600	14 350		4 000
6.	Black poplar <i>Populus nigra</i>		2 000	2 400	5 650
7.	Sycamore maple <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>		200		
8.	White willow <i>Salix alba</i>		1 000	350	
9.	European alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>		1 000		2 034
10.	Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i>		800		
NUMBER OF PLANTED TREES PER YEAR		1 750	20 500	7 750	14 900
TOTAL NUMBER OF PLANTED TREES		44 900			

Numerous other trees were planted individually or in small groups or lines on the all land parcels acquired by BROZ and also in its surroundings from 2013 to 2015. Many of these trees were planted by volunteers and free planting material – young trees from natural regeneration in the project site - was used. For example young black poplars (*Populus nigra*) from dense natural regeneration at the gravel banks along the restored Medved'ovské rameno river branch were taken out and planted in the land parcels acquired within the action B.1. As for large part of these additional plantings no costs for the project have been incurred, number of these trees is not reported. Because of the individual or small scale planting, these additionally planted trees are not visible in the overall map of Action C.8, which is provided in larger scale.

Action C.9: Restoration of steep river banks as nesting bird habitats

Responsible beneficiary: Agravia/ BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Pictures of the restored steep river banks with the map of localization were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 17.

Pictures of nesting colony of Sand Martins in restored steep river banks were attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 8.

Map and pictures of restored nesting habitats in Bratislava – Ružinov – Annex C9.1

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Steep natural river banks restored at four sections of the Danube River (4 x 25 m at least) and nesting habitats of *Riparia riparia* restored. Conditions for significant increase of the species in SPA Dunajské luhy created.

Achieved results: Steep natural river banks were restored at three localities in total length of 260 m (50 m + 200 + 10 m). Conditions for significant increase of the *Riparia riparia* species in SPA Dunajské luhy were created and occupied especially in the nesting season of 2012. First section of 50 m at Veľkolélsky ostrov Island was restored ahead of the time schedule, second section of 200 m was restored 2 months later according to time schedule. Additionally two sections of 5 m were restored in Bratislava – Ružinov.

Problems and their solution:

No problems, influencing realisation of this action occurred

Implementation of the action:

Fifty meters of steep natural river banks for nesting of sand martin (*Riparia riparia*), which were identified as possible natural nesting habitat, were restored during May 2010. Existing bank embankments of Danube River were removed. Restored part of banks is located on Veľkolélsky ostrov Island (river kilometre 1 782) and represents traditional nesting places of sand martin.

The nesting wall is maintained continuously as needed by BROZ by removal of woody vegetation below the restored bank as well as on the upper part above the nesting wall, removal of weeds and litter flooded in by the Danube. Nesting of sand martin (*Riparia riparia*) was not recorded on this locality, but the restored steep river bank is regularly used for nesting by pair of kingfishers (*Alcedo atthis*).



Other section of steep river bank to be restored was identified near the confluence of Danube and Ipel' rivers (rkm 1709) with the length of 200 m. This locality was chosen from several potential places, because of high quality parameters of river banks which can provide very good nesting conditions after restoration. In this place large sand martins colony was known from the past, but due to bank degradation, no nesting has been recorded here already for several years. According our field inventories as well as literature data published, the larger is the section of the bank and the higher is the steep slope of the bank, thus the likelihood that sand martins will occupy the bank is higher.



The higher slope of river bank is good protection against predation and also disturbances. Additionally this place is appropriate for successful nesting of sand martins because of the combination of steep river banks and meadows and fields, which are at close quarters, what provides rich feeding opportunities for adult birds and nestlings. Nesting in larger colonies and higher banks is usually also more successful. As whole selected bank section of 200 m used to be occupied by nesting colony, and as restoration of the whole section was possible, it would be not reasonable to restore only part of it. The nesting habitat was during previous few years completely degraded by river regulation works, high sedimentation and quick ingrowths of invasive trees. As a part of the action C.9, selected section of this bank - 200 m long and 3 m high natural steep river bank and the nesting wall has been restored during August 2011.



This action has been extremely successful. In season of 2012 a breeding colony of 970 pairs of sand martins has been recorded on restored river bank! According international mapping of *Riparia riparia* on the whole Danube River (done by Danube Parks network members), it was that year the largest sand martin colony between the spring of Danube and Serbia!

This great success was widely presented by common media action of BROZ, Slovak Water Management Enterprise (SVP) and Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, which was realised directly in field under the nesting colony (see also action D.9).

The colony was occupied by smaller number of birds also for the second nesting of the same nesting season in 2012. In 2013, the highest ever flood on the Danube River has been

recorded in June. All possible nesting places at the Danube River banks were completely flooded and no nesting of sand martins on the Danube River in project site was recorded. However, this site was occupied by one breeding pair of kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) in 2015 and 2016.

After all experiences with the sand martin species and restoration of steep river banks, we assume that even larger sections of river bank should be restored. In larger sections without artificial bank embankment, natural erosion processes can better maintain existing bank and also to create/ restore new steep banks. Just very fresh opening of the new nesting walls is very attractive for sand martins nesting. Sand martin was used as flagship species, but restoration of natural banks is of enormous importance also for many others – from birds, to insects and also fishes (during floods and high water discharges).

In addition state of the banks was improved by hand tools and removal of woody vegetation and thus two new walls of 5 m were created at the land purchased by BROZ in Bratislava – Ružinov at the bank of Biskupické rameno river branch, with no costs charged for the project. Works were done in winter 2012 and immediately next breeding season, each site was occupied by one nesting pair of kingfishers (*Alcedo atthis*).

Significant increase of the size of the restored steep river banks and nesting bird habitats – 260 m instead of 100 m, caused only very minor increase of external assistance costs of about 2 000 Eur above the indicated sum in the approved budget for this budget line.

We believe that action C.9 is successful and of a very big importance. It was for the first time in Slovakia that the artificial stone embankment was intentionally removed away. It started the change in thinking of river managers and river management authorities, which did never allow such action before this project. It allowed us to plan such restoration measures for future in more ambitious range. For example restoration of more than 1 500 m of steep banks and nesting walls in already running project LIFE12NAT/SK/001137 Restoration of nesting and feeding habitats of Sand Martin, Kingfisher and European Bee-eater in Danube-Morava region.

Action C.10: Restoration of Szárazerdei river branch

Responsible beneficiary: ÉDUKÖVIZIG/ ÉDUVIZIG

Deliverables of the action:

Realization plan by Irányszög Bt. was attended to Mid-term submitted in May 2012 report as the Annex 18.

Pictures from the restoration of Szárazerdei river branch were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 19.

Pictures of planted trees were attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 9.

Pictures of fish monitoring, planted trees and the oxbow were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 24.

Fish monitoring result study, 2013 was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 25.

Complementary tree planting plan April, 2014 was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 26.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: 'Szárazerdei' river branch of the length 1 500 meters will be restored and 15 000 m² of the open water surface will be available in the area. Feeding and nesting conditions for targeted bird species will be restored. Status of the large area of continuing river branch system will be improved by increased water supply and supply of aquatic organisms breeding in the restored branch.

Achieved results: Szárazerdei' river branch restored in the whole length of 1 500 meters. About 13 000 m² of the open water surface was created in the restored branch water course as expected. Improved water regime restored feeding and nesting conditions for targeted bird species. Increased water supply improved conservation status of adjacent floodplain forest habitats along the whole river branch corridor.

Action was completed just according the time schedule by 31/10/2011.

Problems and their solution:

No significant problems with this action occurred. The property border change official procedure was time demanding, but did not delay realization of the action in field.

Implementation of the action:

The realization of the riverbed restoration was carried out from August to October 2011. As a first step the constructor company dealt with the old original riverbed part. They cleaned the vegetation from the slopes and banks plus from the dry bottom. EDUVIZIG had marked the valuable trees and those remained untouched during the whole work. The empty riverbed was shaped to the cross-sections that were indicated in the technical plan and the three spots in the branch were deepened at their certain location as possible refuges for fish and aquatic organisms during wintering and/ or dry summer periods. In one section, the original river bed was completely filled in and therefore had to be newly excavated again. In the second phase the existing forest was cut out where the new riverbed was planned to be placed. For the forest removed, the new forest had to be planted on the new area as it was required by the local forestry authorities and regulations. First the trees and tree roots were removed from the place. From the flat area they removed the humus and carried it to the new forest area. They

staked the centerline and dredged the new riverbed following the design of the master plan. The gravel and excavated material was deposited locally and used also to stabilize the transport routes.

During preparation of C.10 action the need to purchase 0,632 ha of land from private owners did emerge at the place, where the new river bed was dredged. This land was private and it was absolutely necessary to buy it in order to realize restoration of the branch. Therefore the land purchase contract has been signed with number of private land owners. Such costs were not foreseen in the original project budget of EDUKOVIZIG/ EDUVIZIG. However, without this land purchase, realization of action C.10 would not be possible. We are reporting these costs in the budget category B.1 – purchase and /or long-term lease of the land and new budget item was created for this cost for ÉDUVIZIG.



At the forestry road crossing the TUBOSIDER culvert was built with its concrete and wooden elements. In the downstream side a water level height measuring point was established. The culvert is prevented from the floating debris with iron rods on both ends. After the field works the final geometry was measured by geodetic survey. The realization plan was created by Irányszög Bt. Number: 2011/V/03.

Field works were finished until 31/10/2011. Until the riverbed was officially opened a temporal dam was left at the bank of the Szivárgó canal. It was removed during the official press event on 21st November 2011.



The new riverbed part was formed in a forest. Therefore the new forest planting took place few hundred meters away from the restored river branch. The authority decision was to plant a new forest, which was accomplished in spring 2012. The contractor had to replace the dried trees and maintain the land fully afforested until spring 2014. The forestry authority obliged

the Directorate to build a fence around the new forest. Size of the new forest is 0,76 ha and 4 300 individuals of domestic poplars *Populus alba* and *Populus nigra* has been planted there. The realization – after the procurement procedure – was done in spring 2014, together with planting shading trees at the bank of the Szárazerdei branch, which was necessary due to the facts that are described below. 100 trees of *Alnus glutinosa*, *Fraxinus angustifolia* and *Quercus robur* species were planted alongside the restored branch.

During 2012 also new manipulation manual for Szárazerdei river branch was completed.

Ichthyological monitoring took place in the restored Szárazerdei river branch in September 2012 – April 2013 to see the result of the measure, the settlement of fish species. The sampling of the living mass was done with electric fish sampler from a boat. The survey counted the caught fish and defined their species, in the same time recording the location within the side arm (17/09/2012, 23/11/2012, 15/04/2013). Valuable results were derived and they were published in a study and in a scientific article in the Hungarian “Fishing” magazine. The conclusion of the survey was that the habitat has a nice population but more shades would be helpful for further settlement. The Directorate planted selected types of trees to the left bank in groups to improve the diversity of the area.

The Directorate managed to publish article in the local media about the opening of the Szárazerdei branch (C.10) and the previously mentioned fish study were disseminated in the professional paper.

Action C.11: Restoration of wetlands in the Ásványi river branch system

Responsible beneficiary: ÉDUKÖVIZIG/ ÉDUVIZIG

Deliverables of the action:

Realization plan by Irányszög Bt. was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 18.

Pictures of restored places were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 20.

Habitat survey was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 27.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: After restoration of the periodic inundation of the selected islands, 345 000 m² of temporal open water surface will be created. Fish and other aquatic animals spawning areas restored and feeding and nesting grounds of the target bird species created.

Achieved results: Field works of the original action were finished until 31/10/2011 in accordance with the time schedule. The water regime was improved at the area of 345 000 m². Open water surface was created on the area of 89 000 m², functioning as fish spawning areas and birds feeding and nesting areas. 410 m of the canals with permanent water were created.

Field works of the action enlargement were finished by 29/03/2013. Further 214 000 m² of habitats were improved and 25 000 m² of permanent water bodies were created in action enlargement.

Altogether, the water regime was improved at the area of 559 000 m² and 114 000 m² of permanent water bodies were created in action C.11. We can conclude, that much more was achieved in this action than it was expected, the results are very visual and tangible.

Problems and their solution:

No problems, influencing realisation of this action occurred.

Implementation of the action:

This activity was realized in field in the same period as C.10, summer – autumn 2011. Firstly access routes were cleaned and the vegetation from the target area was relocated. The small riverbed centerlines were staked out and the excavator formed the final shape of the cross-sections.



After the field works the final geometry was measured by geodetic survey. The realization plan was created by Irányszög Bt. Number: 2011/V/03 (the Annex 21). The selected constructor company was ÉPFU-Móvár Kft, the same company as in action C.10.

Completing of this action improved water inflow and communication of the islands inner lakes and wetlands with the river branch system. Dried out depressions within the island have been filled with water, creating small lakes and wetlands and thus creating vital habitats for spawning of fish and optimal birds feeding and nesting habitats. Improved water regime is positively influencing also neighboring floodplain forest habitats.

Sum of the results achieved in C.11

Name of the target area	C11 project application	C11 RESULT		Constructed canals in C11		
	Improved area [ha]	Affected habitat area [ha]	Open water surface [ha]	Length [m]	Average depth [m]	Average width [m]
Szurke sziget	8,0	9,6	1,6	100	2,0	7,0
Kalap sziget	1,5	7,0	1,7	75	1,5	5,0
Also ujsziget K	25,0	18,4	3,1	115	2,5	9,0
Also ujsziget NY			2,5	120	2,0	5,0
SUM	34,5	35,0	8,9			

After successful completion of actions C.10 and C.11, EC agreed with suggested enlargement of the action C.11 since some financial means were left in the budget of EDUVIZIG (66 000 Euro). In this context several meetings were held with forestry and nature conservation (FHNPI). During a field trip all the target areas were visited and the consensus about proposed measures was reached. ÉDUVIZIG defined the technical description (content) of the work to accomplish the public procurement procedure.

The Contractor had the task to measure the actual conditions, design and realize the field interventions in the Ásványi side branch system (autumn 2012 – spring 2013). These were mostly consolidated relocation of deposited fine sediment and dense vegetation from the shallow areas. As a result the fresh water support and obstacle-free moving of the fish species have been established in 2 new locations and 2 of the former ones were improved. ÉDUVIZIG in the preparatory phase proposed the measures based on field visits and visual engineering experiences of the targeted localities. “Szürke sziget” and “Gombócós szigeti tó” localities have been taken out of the target areas based on prior field measurements, which were the “first steps” of the contracted company. At “Szürke sziget” only cleaning actions were enough to take place. At “Gombócós szigeti tó” the geodetic survey proved that the improvement of the water conditions could have only been carried out by massive excavations that are unfavorable from the nature-conservation aspect. Therefore this locality was finally not targeted for restoration. Aerial photos were taken from the area that recorded the actual conditions.

Sum of the results achieved of C.11 enlargement

Name of the developed area	C11+ restoration		
	Improved nesting and feeding habitats (temporary wetlands) [ha]	Restored permanent water bodies [ha]	Estimated extension of open water surface [ha]
Kalap sziget (C11_2)			2,1
Also ujsziget NY (C11_3)			2,9
Pókmacskási alsó tó (C11_4)	15,0	1,7	
Pókmacskási felső tó (C11_5)	6,4	0,8	
SUM	21,4	2,5	5,0

Fortunately the financial conditions allowed ÉDUVIZIG to include in this contract an additional 14 km survey of the riverbed in the Szigetköz that influences the habitat conditions the most. Furthermore a habitat-cadaster was generated based on field surveys, which discovered the nesting possibilities with registering all vertical walls. The report describes the locations from the birds' nesting viewpoint and defines improvement possibilities. In two locations minor cleaning took place to see how it influences the population. In addition to the original plans ÉDUVIZIG carried out – by contracted company - the operation manual of the newly restored locations, which can easily be attached to the horizontal operation manual of the whole Szigetköz floodplain water supply system, including the survey of the surrounding streams (spring 2014).

6.1.4 E – Project monitoring

Action E.2: Hydrological monitoring

Responsible beneficiary: VVB

Deliverables of the action:

Hydrological report 2009 was the Annex 19 in the 1st progress report.

Hydrological report 2010 was the Annex 28 in the 2nd progress report.

Results of hydrological and hydrobiological monitoring 2011 was the Annex 32 in Mid-term report submitted in May 2012.

Hydrological report was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 40.

Final hydrological report for 2009 – 2014 – Annex E2.1

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Results of the hydro-morphological, physic-chemical and biological quality elements will be evaluated and processed in the form of Final hydrological monitoring report including maps of the ecological status.

Achieved results:

Annual hydrological monitoring reports elaborated. Final hydrological monitoring report for 2009 - 2014 provided by 31/12/2014.

The monitoring was delayed, but it did not have any effect to the quality of results of the pre-realisation monitoring, as the observed areas of Istragov and Dunajské Kriviny have been dried for a long time (so no hydrological monitoring could be realised there anyway).

Problems and their solution:

Original contract for realisation of the hydrological monitoring was valid till the envisaged end of the project 06/2013. On 6th May 2013 VUVH elaborated and delivered report for the period 2012 and until 05/2013. Because of project prolongation new public procurement for realization of the hydrological monitoring till 06/2014 was initialized. VUVH was contracted again and on 30th June 2014 the report for the period 06/2013 till 06/2014 was delivered. The same situation was processed, since the project was prolonged till 31/12/2014. Also VVB will provide from own resources the hydrological and hydrobiological monitoring to record changes after restoration actions not covered sufficiently by monitoring during the project.

Implementation of the action:

This action was realised by an external provider (VUVH, National reference laboratory), which started the monitoring in September 2009 and continued during the whole project. The action was focused on documentation and assessment of current situation of water formations in the location of left-side branch system of Danube – Istragov and Dunajské Kriviny. The sampling frequency was from 2 (selected biological quality elements) to 12 sampling per year (other elements of quality).

In September 2009 the pre-realisation monitoring started. Results were described in the summary. Consequently yearly summarization of hydrological monitoring was elaborated and attached to each report.



Action E.3: Monitoring impact of project actions on bird populations

Responsible beneficiary: PriF UK

Deliverables of the action:

Biota and birds monitoring report 2009 was attached to 1st progress report as Annex 20.

Biota and birds monitoring report 2010 was attached to 2nd progress report as Annex 29.

Biota and birds monitoring report 2011 was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as Annex 33.

Biota and birds monitoring report no. 5 (2013 and 2014) was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 41.

Biota and birds monitoring report 2012 attached as the Annex E3.1.

Final biota and birds monitoring report attached as the Annex E3.2.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

End of the action was delayed compared with the planned schedule as the result of the delay of several C-actions. We considered being important to continue with the monitoring and to collect as much as possible of reliable data on the sites after implementation of the C-actions, therefore the action finished at the end of the project. The Biota and birds monitoring report no. 5, attached to 3rd Progress report contains also preliminary data from the 2014 season and the Final biota and birds monitoring report includes also data from the previous reports to facilitate the orientation within the results from the entire project period.

Problems and their solution:

There were no significant problems in implementation of the action.

Implementation of the action:

Action successfully finished. All target species (*Alcedo atthis*, *Anas querquedula*, *Anas strepera*, *Ardea purpurea*, *Ciconia nigra*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Dryocopus martius*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Milvus migrans*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Riparia riparia*, *Sterna hirundo* and *Tringa totanus*) in the project area during the breeding season were monitored. Impact on bird communities at C.1 and C.4 action sites was studied in detail.

To be able to evaluate the output of the concrete conservation actions in long-term perspective, we included monitoring programmes also in the After-LIFE conservation plan.

Based on the extensive outputs of the monitoring, we are able to provide the following summary on the state of the target bird species during the project period as well as the impact of project activities on them.

Alcedo atthis was found to be the first species that responded to the positive changes in habitats at the majority of localities of project action implementation. We found new breeding places at the localities of actions C.3 (4 pairs), C.4 (1 pair), C.5 (1 pair), C.9 (2 pairs). This represents about 20% of the estimated *Alcedo atthis* population in SPA Dunajské luhy. The actions C.1, C.2., C.3, C.4, C.5, C.6, C.10 and C.11 created new feeding habitats and improved the quality of the existing ones. On the land purchased within B.1 action one new breeding site is present and another breeding site status was improved and secured for the future.

The species *Anas querquedula* and *Anas strepera* are not known to breed within natural habitats of SPA Dunajské luhy since more than two decades and this did not change during project implementation. However, actions C.1 and C.4 created habitats potentially suitable for these species, and future monitoring of them is needed. The recent breeding population of *Ardea purpurea* is constricted to the oxbow system at Lipót in SPA Szigetköz. The population was estimated as 25-50 breeding pairs and its size seems to be stable. The most important feeding habitats of the species are within the river branch system in the surroundings of the breeding site, up to about 5 km and include the sites of the actions C.3, C.4 and C.11. All these three actions contributed to the improvement of the habitat quality for *Ardea purpurea*.

The situation of the breeding population of *Ciconia nigra* within SPA Dunajské luhy was critical before the start of the project. Of the former 12-15 breeding pairs known here from the late 1980-ies and early 1990-ies the number decreased to just 1-4 breeding pairs during project implementation (2009-2015). The lowest number counting just a single pair was achieved in 2012, in 2013-2015 two breeding pairs were present – therefore we can state that the long lasting decrease has been stopped. This critical decline, which went even against the overall increasing trend of this species within Slovakia, was caused by the cumulative effect of three major negative factors: increasing disturbance by humans on breeding and feeding sites, intensive forestry connected with elimination of the forest stands suitable for breeding and inappropriate changes in water regime that caused lack of suitable feeding habitats within large parts of the project site. Implementation of all project C-actions (except of C.9) and especially the B.1 action contributed to lowering of the impact of all three major threats for this species. However, the actual low population number probably does not allow direct increase of breeding pair numbers. During breeding period, we regularly observed feeding individuals at the sites of C.3, C.4 and C.5 actions.

The breeding population of *Circus aeruginosus* slightly decreased during project period because some of the former breeding places were abandoned. The feeding habitats were improved especially by C.7 action (regular observations of the species) and potential new breeding site was created within C.1 action.

Dryocopus martius can profit only from the results of the actions B.1 and C.8, however, only in long-term measure. The species depends on presence of old trees, and is breeding in old forest stand, especially in silver poplars. Land purchase will enable to secure the presence of such forest stands for the future and planting of native trees creates natural forest stands that will be attractive for this species after 20 years at least.

Egretta garzetta is the species with largest relative population increase during the project period. Before the project started and in the first year 2-3 breeding pairs occurred within SPA Dunajské luhy and SPA Szigetköz, the population continuously increased up to 28 breeding pairs in 2014. Until now, the breeding population is concentrated to a single site located not

closely to our C-actions, however, after breeding period the birds moved also to the sites of C.3 and C.6 actions.

The breeding population of *Haliaeetus albicilla* was stable during the period 2009-2015 in SPA Dunajské luhy (4 breeding pairs), few times new pairs appeared, however, at the same time also other nesting sites were abandoned. One of the new nesting pairs established its territory at the C.1 site, and used the C.11 sites for feeding.

Monitoring of *Ixobrychus minutus* has showed that nesting sites of this species are limited to large reed beds with densely growing reeds, which are permanently flooded during vegetation period. Potential nesting habitats have been created on the sites of C.1 and C.4 action. The reed bed structure at these sites is not yet favourable for *Ixobrychus minutus* but we expect, that it will develop during the next seasons and breeding sites of *Ixobrychus minutus* will originate.

The population of *Milvus migrans* strongly decreased already before the start of the project. The last breeding of *Milvus migrans* within SPA Dunajské luhy and SPA Szigetköz occurred in 2009, since that time no breeding attempts were recorded. During the 1980-ies the breeding population was about 25 pairs in this territory and decreased contiguously. Practically all project C-actions with exception of C.9 improved both, breeding and feeding habitat offer for *Milvus migrans* within the project site. However, restoration of breeding population might be a long-term process and general improvement of conservation of the project site will be needed.

The situation of *Nycticorax nycticorax* was similar as in *Egretta garzetta* – *Nycticorax nycticorax* was the species with highest absolute number increase during project period within SPA Dunajské luhy. The breeding population increased from 65 pairs before the start of the project up to more than 200 breeding pairs since 2012.

The number of *Riparia riparia* within SPA Dunajské luhy was changing dramatically during the project period. In 2009 (first season of the project) there were 115 breeding pairs, in following two seasons no breeding was recorded, in 2012, mostly as a result of restoration action C.9 the number increased to 1000 breeding pairs. In 2013 there was no breeding of the species mostly due to unfavourable high water levels. However, in 2014 and 2015 again no breeding of the species was recorded.

The breeding sites of *Sterna hirundo* are located exclusively on artificial islands of the Hrušovská zdrž water reservoir. However, feeding habitats of *Sterna hirundo* are present close to the sites of implementation of actions C.1, C.3, C.4, C.5, C.10 and C.11 and the breeding population can profit from the improved food offer.

Before the project started, *Tringa totanus* was known to be breeding only on one artificial habitat in Hrušovská zdrž water reservoir. In 2013 breeding of one pair was found on the site of C.7 action, and breeding attempts in 2016 again. Land purchase of this site should secure the favourable state of the breeding site in the future.

Action E.4: Monitoring impact of project actions on other biota

Responsible beneficiary: PriF UK

Deliverables of the action:

Biota and birds monitoring report 2009 was attached to 1st progress report as Annex 20.

Biota and birds monitoring report 2010 was attached to 2nd progress report as Annex 29.

Biota and birds monitoring report 2011 was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as Annex 33.

Biota and birds monitoring report no. 5 (2013 and 2014) was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 41.

Final biota and birds monitoring report attached as the Annex E3.2.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

End of the action was delayed compared with the planned schedule as the result of the delay of several C-actions. We considered to be important to continue with monitoring and to collect as much as possible of reliable data on the sites after implementation of the C-actions, therefore the action finished at the end of the project. The Biota and birds monitoring report no. 5, attached to 3rd Progress report contains also preliminary data from the 2014 season and the Final biota and birds monitoring report includes also data from the previous reports to facilitate the orientation within the results from the entire project period.

Problems and their solution:

There were no significant problems in implementation of the action.

Implementation of the action:

Action successfully finished. Higher plant communities, fish, amphibian and insects have been monitored at the places where C-actions were implemented.

To be able to evaluate the output of the concrete conservation actions in long-term perspective, we included monitoring programmes also in the After-LIFE conservation plan.

Conclusions of biota monitoring supplement the data obtained during monitoring of the target bird species. Action C.1 created or renewed aquatic habitats that were quickly occupied by water plants, dragonflies, water beetles and amphibians. Rich communities of amphibians were present on several parts of the site, together 10 species were recorded and reproduction of all of them was confirmed. On the other hand, the dragonflies were represented mostly by common species with broad ecological valence and the beetle community was quite poor. Before 1993, when the natural water regime was preserved, there was a rich water beetle community consisting of 110 species and including several rare and threatened species. In 2015 only 18 species of water beetles were present there, all these species are widely distributed and have a broad ecological valence. This indicates the following combination of factors: (i) the actual water regime is not optimal, (ii) the communities need more time for recovering and natural development, and (iii) the general state of the Danube floodplain area is not favourable and several species lost their source populations. Action C.2 also created a new water habitat – before the action there were no amphibians, dragonflies and water beetles present here. In 2014-2015 the site was inhabited by those three groups, however, the numbers of species were quite low and no rare species were recorded here. This is consequence of small size of the area and missing water level dynamics. Restored wetlands of the action C.4 were immediately (2013-2014) colonized by six species of amphibians reproducing in the central part of the wetland. There is high potential for further increase in species number and their populations, which was hindered by the slow filling of the wetlands with water and by the rich terrestrial vegetation, which still covers large parts of the site and drops shadow. Botanical monitoring of the restoration of meadows (C.7) pointed out different assessment of the meadows when ornithological and botanical views are compared. High diversity of plants and rare plant species are present in places that are mowed (1-2 times annually) or extensively grazed. The intensively grazed parts – important habitats for birds – are occupied by fewer plant species and occurrence of nitrophilic and ruderal species increases here. Therefore the best solution is a mosaic of areas with different use, what is exactly the situation on Veľkolélsky ostrov Island.

6.2. Dissemination actions

6.2.1 Objectives

Overview on progress regarding the project's deliverables and milestones:

Deliverable and Milestones	Associated action	Deadline	Progress / Adjustments
The mathematical hydrological model of the left-sided branch-system in the section Dobrohošť – Sap including 1D hydrodynamic numerical model in the 'Istragov'	A1	28/02/2010	finished ; Annex A1.4 to 1 st progress report (01/03/2010)
Technical documentation for restoration of Istragov marsh	A2	30/09/2010	finished ; Annex A2.2 to 2 nd progress report (01/03/2011)
Technical documentation for restoration of Dunajske kriviny river branch system	A3	31/03/2010	finished ; Annex A3.3 to 2 nd progress report (01/03/2011)
Technical documentation for construction of the fishway on Bakanske ramena river branch system	A4	30/09/2010	finished ; Annex A4.4 to mid-term report (31/05/2012)
Technical documentation for construction of the fishway on Velkolelske river branch system	A4	30/09/2010	finished ; Annex A4.5 to mid-term report (31/05/2012)
Technical documentation of the bridge and updates of Velkolelske rameno fishway	A4	30/09/2010	finished ; Annex A4.03 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)
Technical documentation for restoration of Velkolélske rameno river branch system	A5	31/12/2010	finished ; Annex A5.5 to mid-term report (31/05/2012)
Technical documentation for restoration of Medvedovské rameno river branch system	A5	31/12/2010	finished ; Annex A5.5 to mid-term report (31/05/2012)
Technical documentation for restoration of Szárazerdei river branch and restoration of wetlands in Ásványi river branch system	A8	31/12/2009	finished ; Annex A8.7 to 2 nd progress report (01/03/2011)
Technical documentation for sealing the critical section of canal by restoration of Istragov marsh	C1	30/09/2011	finished ; Annex C1.10 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)
Technical documentation for reconstruction of the object in the seepage canal by restoration of Istragov marsh	C1	30/09/2011	finished ; Annex C1.12 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)
Technical documentation for restoration of Ostrov orliaka morského Island	C4	30/06/2011	finished ; Annex C4.11 to mid-term report (31/05/2012)
Technical documentation for restoration of Dolný rusovský ostrov Island	C4	30/06/2011	finished ; Annex C4.12 to mid-term report 31/05/2012)
Technical documentation of additional work within Rusovske rameno river branch	C4	30/06/2011	finished ; Annex C4.17 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)
Restoration of Medvedovské rameno river branch system	C5	31/03/2011	finished ; Annex C5.22 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)
Restoration of Velkolélske rameno river branch system	C6	31/03/2012	finished ; Annex C6.23 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)
Restoration 188 ha of lowland meadows as feeding and nesting bird habitats	C7	30/06/2013	finished ; Annex C7.14 to mid-term report (31/05/2012)
Planting of 44 900 native tree species	C8	31/12/2012	finished ; Annex C8.1 to final report (31/05/2016)
Restoration of 260 m steep river banks as nesting bird habitats	C9	30/06/2011	finished ; Annex C9.17 to mid-term report (31/05/2012 and Annex C9.1 to final report (31/05/2016)
Restoration of Szárazerdei river branch in the length of 1500 m	C10	31/12/2010	finished ; Annex C10.18 to mid-term report 31/05/2012)
Restoration of wetlands in the Ásványi river branch system – improving of water regime at	C11	30/06/2011	finished ; Annex C11.27 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)

Deliverable and Milestones	Associated action	Deadline	Progress / Adjustments
the area of 345 000 m ²			
Final hydrological report for 2009 – 2014	E2	30/06/2013	finished; Annex E2.1 to final report (31/05/2016)
Project website established	D1	30/06/2009	finished; regularly updated
Promotional materials – leaflet, booklet, calendar, stickers	D2	30/06/2013	finished; published according the table in final report (31/05/2016)
20 information panels	D3	30/09/2012	Finished
Installation of two bird watching towers	D4	30/09/2011	finished; Annex D4.31 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)
49 meetings with stakeholders	D5	31/12/2012	finished; Annex D5.10 to Inception report (01/10/2009), Annex D5.13 to 1 st progress report (01/03/2010), Annex D5.19 in 2 nd progress report (01/03/2011), Annex D5.25 in Mid-term report (31/05/2012), Annex D5.12 in 2 nd Mid-term (30/09/2012), Annex D5.32 in 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014)
14 presentations for students	D6	31/12/2012	finished; 399 participants
22 guided excursions for students	D6	31/12/2012	finished; 400 participants
32 presentations for public	D6	31/12/2012	finished; 1907 participants
25 guided excursions for public	D6	31/12/2012	finished; 380 participants
Exhibition Bird life in Danube floodplain	D7	31/12/2012	finished; installed on 34 places
Book – Birds of Danube floodplain	D8	30/06/2013	finished;
Promotion of project on 19 conferences	D9	31/12/2013	finished;
Promotion of project in media	D9	31/12/2013	finished; 7 press conferences, 34 press releases, 50 articles, 12 radio interviews, 18 TV shots
Project manager	E1	01/01/2009	Finished
Other project personnel employed	E1	30/09/2009	Finished

Dissemination: overview per activity

6.2.2 D – Public awareness and dissemination of results

Action D.1: Web site development and maintenance (BROZ)

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Several screenshots of the website were attached to the Inception report as the Annex 9.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Project web page developed, maintained and promoted.

Achieved results: Project web page was developed by 30/06/2009 in accordance with the time schedule and was being regularly updated.

Problems and their solution:

No problems, influencing realisation of this action occurred.

Implementation of the action:

Project website www.dunaj.broz.sk/vtaky has been launched during June 2009. Continuously the content was updated and all four language versions (SK, HU, EN, DE) have been fully developed. The website was transformed during 2013, which was connected with change of the whole design and structure of BROZ webpage. New project website interface is available on the address: <http://www.broz.sk/danubebirds>. The original website address www.dunaj.broz.sk/vtaky was transferred to the new one. Website was being updated on the regular basis, immediately when something new is on place.

Action D.2: Publishing of information, educational and promotional materials (BROZ)

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Project posters, small calendars, pens and graphic design for T-shirts and mugs were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 21.

Updated map brochure including results of project actions was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 28.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Information, educational and promotion materials produced and disseminated: brochure (3 500 copies), layman's report (1 000), leaflets (7 000), stickers (15 000), postcards (5 000), posters (3 000), calendars (8 000), T-shirts (500), pens (1 500), mugs (300), plush toy animals (500).



Achieved results: All materials were produced in the planned numbers. Number of brochures and T-shirts was exceeded due to second edition. Achieved results are listed in the table below. The original time schedule as well as date of publication/ production is provided for comparison.

Item	Pieces	Plan	Published
Calendar 2010	2 000	12/2009	12/2009
Project leaflet	7 000	12/2009	12/2009
Brochure	3 500 + 3 200	06/2011	12/2011, 02/2014
Stickers	15 000	12/2010	02/2011
Postcards	5 000	12/2010	02/2011
Poster	3 200	04/2011	05/2011
Calendar 2011	2 000	12/2010	12/2010, 05/2014
T-shirts	500 + 350	06/2011	05/2012, 04/2014
Pens	1 500	06/2011	06/2011
Mugs	300	06/2011	05/2012
Plush toys	500	06/2011	06/2012
Calendar 2012	2 000	12/2011	06/2011
Layman's report	1 000	05/2013	12/2015

Some of the educational and promotional materials were produced in time (calendar 2010, project leaflet, calendar 2011 and pens), others were slightly delayed. Delay of the Layman's report was caused by the overall project prolongation.

Problems and their solution:

No problems, except slight delays, influencing realisation of this action occurred.

Implementation of the action:

All planned informational, educational and promotional materials have been published or created during the project. Gradually they were distributed during individual public events and/ or work meetings. Project information leaflets in SK, EN, HU and DE languages and little calendars with project title, LIFE and Natura 2000 logo were printed in December 2009. Consequently project stickers, postcards as well as the calendars (small and wall) 2011 were printed in December 2010 – February 2011. Project posters coupled with calendar for the year 2012 were prepared and printed in 2011 as well as small calendars. Also the project brochure was finalised and printed in four language mutations (Slovak, English, Hungarian and German). The planned amount of pens with logos and project Slovak resp. English acronym title "Danube birds conservation" was produced and continuously was distributed as a promotional materials. Attractive brochure including the detailed tourist map of scale 1: 50 000 was produced as the tourist guide named "Danube floodplains – from Morava to Ipel' rivers". So far, there was no such map tourist guide available for the whole targeted Danube area, covering also Slovak and Hungarian floodplains along the Danube. This brochure was very positively accepted by most of the people who received one of the published language versions (SK, HU, EN, DE). Project materials like leaflets and brochure are really good way how to inform general public about project activities and widely about LIFE programme. Because many actions for public and students have been realised (including very successful interactive exhibition) higher amount of information materials was needed. Because the printed amount of leaflets from 2009 was distributed in 2010, next package of project leaflets was ordered. In the case of brochure and project stickers (materials suitable for small

children) the situation is similar and the public is interested in them really intensively. Thus during 2012 next stickers were printed (each motive 3 000 pcs) and map brochures (3 500 pcs, EN: SK: HU: DE, 1:1:1:0.5). In May 2012 also project T-shirts and mugs were produced and since that time they have been distributed.



In connection with project prolongation higher amount of information materials was needed. Thus in 2013 new map brochures were printed, where the official maps were changed in cooperation with author and provider of the maps – the Military Cartographic institute (VKÚ). Thanks to this people can see the locations and the range of realized restoration actions as well as locations where the project bird-watching towers are placed.



The same reason was for re- production of project T-shirts, the new ones were produced again in 2014. Mostly these promotional materials were distributed on meetings with stakeholders or with representatives of individual villages etc. One month later also bird toys were finalized as attractive handmade toys of several sizes. Birds are used for example during popularization actions for public (with children) or as a reward for good answers during interactive exhibition. All promotional material is superior for popularization of the project goals as well as LIFE and Natura 2000.

All the informational, educational and promotional materials were distributed also during events for students, public and stakeholders (excursions, presentations of project, conferences, meetings, etc.). Also materials were available for visitors of interactive excursions.

Action D.3: Installation of information panels (BROZ)

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Map of potential places for installation of information panels was attached in the 2nd progress report as the Annex 18.

Graphic design and pictures of two installed panels were attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 23.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: 20 information panels installed along the project site.

Achieved results: Action started on 03/2010 and it was finished by September 2012. All 20 information panels were installed, 9 months later according the time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

No problems, influencing realisation of this action occurred.

Implementation of the action:

All planned information panels were prepared and located along the Danube River and the project site. The locations for information panels were directly places of visible restoration actions or strategical points and places of access to protected areas, where maximum people can see the panels.

Information panels were made of wooden construction with metal roof against rain and metal underlay, where the exterior sticker with the graphical design is placed. This construction is rather damage resistant. Also positive messages for readers of panels (no prohibitions or warnings from fine due to breaking of regulations) prevented intentional damaging of the panels. The summarization of information about panels is in the table below.



No.	Location of infopanel	Topic
1.	Bratislava – Petržalka (PA Hrabiny), SR	SPA Dunajské luhy
2.	Bratislava – Jarovský ostrov Island, SR	Floodplain forest, forest-steppe
3.	Hrušovská zdrž reservoir, SR	White-tailed Eagle
4.	Ostrov orliaka morského Island, SR	Restoration action C.4
5.	Bakanské ramená river branch, SR	Fishways, restoration action C.3
6.	Bodíky, SR	SPA Dunajské luhy
7.	Százazerdei river branch, HU	Restoration action C.10
8.	Ásványi wetlands, HU	Restoration action C.11
9.	Istragov, SR	Istragov, restoration action C.1
10.	Medved'ovské rameno river branch – Medved'ov (outflow)	Restoration action C.5
11.	Medved'ovské rameno river branch – Sap (intake)	Restoration action C.5
12.	Klížská Nemá I – near the village	Danube river
13.	Klížská Nemá II – dam	Danube floodplain forest's inhabitants, action C.8
14.	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island – Veľké Kosihy	Restoration of river branch, grazing and pollarded willows, actions C.6, C.7
15.	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	Restoration actions C.3, C.6, C.7, C.9
16.	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	Management and plans
17.	Komárno	Fishes of the Danube river
18.	Moča – Močiansky ostrov I	Birds of the Island
19.	Moča – Močiansky ostrov II	Danube River dynamics
20.	Chľaba	Steep river banks, restoration action C.9



Information panels have the same construction and similar graphical design. All of them include also reference to this LIFE project and logos of LIFE and Natura 2000. Maintenance of the panels and small repairs is done regularly by BROZ.

Action D.4: Installation of bird watching towers

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

The permission from Čunovo - city district of Bratislava capital was attached to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 24.

Pictures of the place where high birdwatching tower will be placed were attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 11.

Technical documentation of towers was attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 29.

Permits and land lease contract for towers were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 30.

Pictures of towers were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 31.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Two observation towers for bird watching (and other wildlife observation) installed and used by visitors.

Achieved results: Both observation towers were installed and are frequently used by visitors. Action started to run in 2010 and it was finished in March 2014, which is two year later comparing to project time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

No significant problems, influencing realisation of this action occurred. The realisation of the action was running slower as we assumed what is connected mainly with obtaining of permissions from land owners and target authorities.

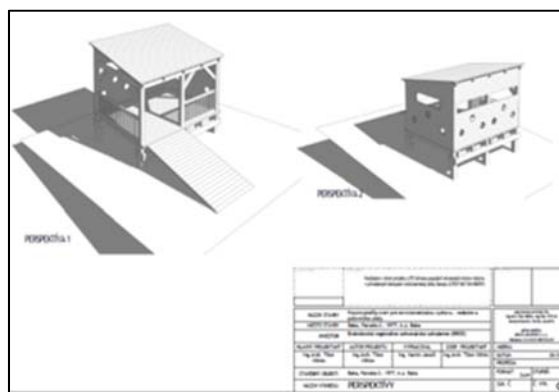
Small complication was long term increase of water level on the place where the placement of the first tower in Čunovo was originally planned. Due to this situation it was necessary to find new place where the construction of birdwatching tower was possible. In that time all necessary permits were issued. Fortunately there was possibility to install the tower on other spot within the same large land parcel and use valid permits provided.

Implementation of the action:

The locations for installation of bird watching towers were chosen very carefully. The originally proposed locations for installation of bird watching were re-considered and new locations were checked. The potential location at Hrušovská zdrž water reservoir near Bratislava was checked from the hydraulic lift provided free of charge by the electricity company. We have realised, that in this location, installation of bird watching tower of the minimum altitude of 8 – 10 m would be needed to have the reasonable overview of the area. Such big tower would be beyond financial possibility of our project budget and construction permit would be necessary. Another location of the bird watching towers at the Istragov marsh area was excluded after consultations with the State Nature Conservation and local hunting association, which prefer to leave this area as wilderness zone, without increase of the visitors.



Finally, 2 final places were chosen and agreed with all parties involved. Both towers did not exceed the maximum height of 5 meters and the size of up to 20 m². For such small- scale, construction permit was not necessary, just agreement of the land owner and the notification duty was applied.



Bird watching tower 1 - Bratislava - Čunovo

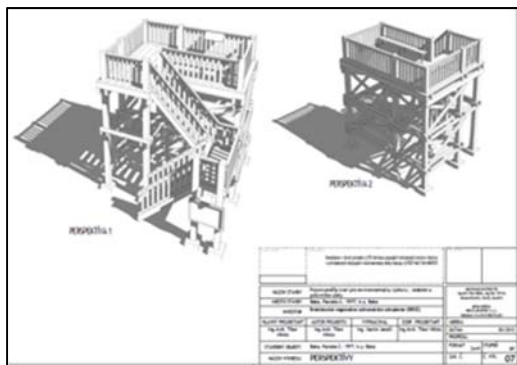
The first one is a low construction placed in Bratislava - Čunovo near marsh (model of wildlife watching hide similar to the National park Neusiedler See – Seewinkel, Austria).

Plan of location and construction of watching tower was presented in the meeting of municipal council of Čunovo on 9th February 2012. Then we have got permission from land owner (Magistrate of the Bratislava city) for location and building of watching tower on this place. The smaller bird watching tower near Čunovo is situated close to oxbow with beautiful view and high possibility to see many bird species including project target species. This observation point is in the edge part of the Bratislava city and near frequently visited marked tourist route.

Bird watching tower 2 – Baka

Second tower is situated near oxbow of the Bakanské rameno river branch (cadastral area of Baka) close to the water area with reed and with comfortable entry from the dam (model

similar to the National park Fertő Hanság, Hungary). Agreement of land owner Agricultural cooperative (PD) Jurová for placing of watching tower on their land parcel has been provided in a form of the land lease contract for this purpose. It was signed on 15th March 2013. The tower is 5 m high and located close to frequently visited tourist and cycle route. It is also very comfortably accessible from the near distance of car parking.



All necessary permits were issued in 2012 for small birdwatching tower, and in 2013 for high bird watching tower. The technical documentation for both towers was finished in March 2013. The Public procurement for both towers started on May 2013 and the supplier (Atyp – Pružinec) was selected in August 2013. The construction and installation of both towers in field was finished in March 2014.

Both towers have great response of public as well as ornithologists and are used for public awareness purposes. From the tower in Baka it is possible to visit the place of C.3, C.4 and C.1 action. Also very close to this point are several project information panels. Therefore it was and still is the usual stop of the different field excursions.

Action D.5: Communication and regular meetings with stakeholders

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Attendance records and pictures were attached in Inception report as the Annex 10, in 1st progress report as the Annex 13 and in 2nd progress report as the Annex 19, in Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 25.

Attendance records and pictures from meetings were attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 12.

Attendance records and pictures from meetings were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 32.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Constant communication with stakeholders and 15 meetings with stakeholders will be organized. In average, each meeting attended by 6 representatives of stakeholders. Topics of the meetings: existing regulations and their enforcement in selected localities, importance of selected localities for nature and birds conservation, promotion of functioning nature conservation models from other protected areas, coordination of stakeholders activities to tackle conservation problems, regulation of visitors flow in information of protected areas visitors including local inhabitants.

Achieved results: The objective of this action to realise 15 was fulfilled by 26/01/2011, 23 months ahead according to time schedule (31/12/2012). Meetings with stakeholders further continued and the objective was largely exceeded. 49 meetings with stakeholders realized by 30/06/2014 with 514 participants are recorded and presented in this action. Actually numerous other meeting were realised until the very end of the project.

Problems and their solution:

No problems, influencing realisation of this action occurred.

Implementation of the action:

Many meetings with stakeholders were realised from the project start and during the whole project duration. We find this action as crucial for success of project actions and the project itself. Between our main stakeholders belonged Slovak water management enterprise, state enterprise (SVP), State Nature Conservancy, Ministry of Environment, Forests of Slovak Republic, state enterprise, SOS – Birdlife Slovakia, nature and water management experts from different institutions, municipality representatives, authorities issuing agreements and permits for implementation of project actions, land owners, land users and other important people from the places where we realised individual actions.



The meetings were sometimes organised during special events, when the people are together, or when some special problem or question is issued. All reported meetings are recorded with an attendance record. Totally we have realised 49 meetings with stakeholders with 514 participants by 30/06/2014.

N.	Date	Topic of meeting	Organisations	Place	Participants
1.	5.3.2009	Meeting with Slovak State nature conservancy	SNC, BROZ	Dunajská Streda	6
2.	13.3.2009	Negotiation about the spring artificial flood	SNC, VVB, SVP, BROZ	Gabčíkovo	7
3.	16.-17.3. 2009	Meeting of Slovak-Hungarian workgroup for nature and landscape protection	MoE SR, MoEW HU, NP Aggtelek, SSJ, SNC, SRZ	Lesnica, Pieniny	15
4.	4.5.2009	Carpathian presentation	BROZ, PRIFUK, MoE SR, SAV	Svätý Jur	11
5.	14.5.2009	Meeting with the Commision for border waters	BROZ, SVP , VVB and others	Dunajský Klátov	10
6.	21.5.2009	Excursion to the project area for MoE SR	BROZ, MoE SR	Medveďov, Bodíky	5
7.	27.8.2009	Excursion to the project area for VVB high management	BROZ, PRIFUK, VVB, Agravia	Dunajské Kriviny, V. Lél	5
8.	5.5.2010	Summer excursion for state administration	MoE SR, REO, SNC, VVB	Veľkolélsky Island	29
9.	17.- 21.5.2010	Meeting with Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Border Waters	SVO OZ BA, KvVM, ÉDUKÖVIZIG	Hungary - Harkányi	11
10.	27.5.2010	Presentation for Slovak and Czech state administration	AOPK ČR, MOSR, MOČR, MoE SR, SNC, VLM ČR, VTSÚ	Senica	26
11.	9.9.2010	Excursion – educative forest trail	SNC, REO	Gabčíkovo	21
12.	23.11.2010	Meeting about fish-ways realisation	SNC, VVB, BROZ	Bratislava	11
13.	23.11.2010	Work meeting about conservation of the White-tailed Eagle	SNC, BROZ, RPS, SOS, PRIFUK	Bratislava	13
14.	17.12.2010	Meeting with experts for fish ecology and river morphology	BROZ, ŠOP SR, FHNPI, EDUKOVIZIG, Pisztráng Kör, Szent István University, Tavirózsa egyesület	Lipót	10
15.	26.1.2011	Meeting with representatives from VVB and visit of river branch system (C.4)	BROZ, VVB	NR Dunajské ostrovy islands	6
16.	29.1.2011	Meeting with stakeholders on the Winter counting of <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	BROZ, Živica, PRIFUK, SOS - Birdlife, UKF, ŠOP SR, OÚŽP Šaľa	Dunaj, Gabčíkovo	52
17.	2.3. 2011	Meeting with representatives of Forests of SR – restoration of Medveďovské rameno river branch system	BROZ, Lesy SR	Medveďovské rameno	6
18.	11.3.2011	Meeting with representatives of SVP, Forests SR, SNC	BROZ, SVP, Forests SR, SNC	Kľúčovec, Medveďovské rameno	9

N.	Date	Topic of meeting	Organisations	Place	Participants
19.	29.6.2010	Meeting of the action C.4	BROZ, VVB, Forests SR	Gabčíkovo	9
20.	28.7.2011	Meeting of the action C.3	BROZ, Forests SR, VVB, SVP	Gabčíkovo	9
21.	29.7.2011	Meeting with stakeholders of the action C.8	BROZ, SNC, Forests SR, OUZP	Kľúčovec	5
22.	11.8.2011	Meeting with stakeholders of the action C.3	BROZ, Forests SR, VVB, SVP	Gabčíkovo	9
23.	11.10.2011	Meeting with stakeholders of Medveďovské rameno river branch system (C.5)	BROZ, SVP	Bratislava	7
24.	16.10.2011	Meeting of the Transboundary Slovak – Hungarian Water Commission	SVP, EDUKOVIZIG, BROZ	Oščadnica	14
25.	21.03.2012	Meeting with stakeholders focused on protection of NR Dunajské ostrovy Islands	BROZ, ŠOP SR, MŽP, VVB	Bratislava	9
26.	23.03.2012	Meeting regarding to restoration of Istragov	BROZ, Lesy SR, Eurovia, VVB, SVP	Istragov	9
27.	30.03.2012	Meeting with stakeholders regarding restoration of Dolný Rusovský ostrov Island	BROZ, VVB, Doprastav	Dunajské Kriviny, Ostrov orliaka morského, Dolný Rusovský ostrov	5
28.	21.08.2012	Meeting with representatives of SRZ regarding construction of fishways	BROZ, SRZ, ŠOP SR	Gabčíkovo	5
29.	28.09.2012	Meeting with representatives of VUVH regarding action C.6	BROZ, VVB, VUVH	Bratislava	6
30.	10.-11.10.2012	Meeting with stakeholders focused on fishways in lowland streams	BROZ, SVP, VUVH, CHKO Ponitrie	Kozárovce - Štúrovo	17
31.	16.10.2012	Discussed comments on the order SPA Danube floodplains	BROZ, ŠOP SR, KÚŽP TT, OÚŽP KN, KÚŽP NR, SOVS/Birdlife Slovakia	Komárno	13
32.	5.11.2012	Meeting connected with construction of Medveďovské rameno river branch (C.5)	BROZ, Lesy SR, ŠOP SR, SVP, VVB, NAUTILUS	Sap	9
33.	6.11.2012	Rusovské ostrovy islands– inspection before construction works (C.4)	BROZ, VVB, EUROVIA	Bratislava - Rusovce	12
34.	9.11.2012	Meeting with Slovak fisherman society (C.3)	BROZ, VVB, SRZ	Bratislava	5
35.	13.11.2012	The white-tailed Eagle island - inspection of terrain (C.4)	BROZ, EUROVIA, VVB, ŠOP SR	White-tailed eagle Island	7
36.	16.11.2012	Dolný Rusovský ostrov island – inspection before construction works (C.4)	BROZ, ŠOP SR, EUROVIA	Bratislava - Rusovce	5
37.	22.11.2012	Transfer site Rusovský ostrov island (C.4)	BROZ, VVB, EUROVIA, SVP, ŠOP SR, BVS	Bratislava - Rusovce	21
38.	17.12.2012	Meeting connected with Medveďovské rameno river branch (C.5)	BROZ, NAUTILUS, VVB, SVP, Lesy SR	Sap	9

N.	Date	Topic of meeting	Organisations	Place	Participants
39.	18.01.2013	Meeting regardint to restoration of Rusovce-Čunovo channel	BROZ, ŠOP SR, SVP, VVB, Vodotika	Bratislava – Čunovo, Rusovce	13
40.	6.2.2013	Meeting with stakeholders on Rusovské rameno river branch (C.4)	BROZ, SVP, PriF UK	Bratislava - Rusovce	6
41.	18.2.2013	Acceptance of construction of Rusovské rameno (C.4)	BROZ, EUROVIA, ŠOP SR	Bratislava - Rusovce	6
42.	26.2.2013	Meeting with stakeholders	BROZ, VVB	Bratislava	7
43.	27.2.2013	Meeting with stakeholders (C.4)	BROZ, Lesy SR, ŠOP SR, VVB	The White-tailed Eagle Island	8
44.	20.3.2013	Meeting with stakeholders (C.4)	BROZ, VVB, SVP, EUROVIA	Rusovský ostrov island	4
45.	3.6.2013	Bird watching towers – inspection of terrain (D.4)	BROZ, M-wood, Šinko, Remako	Baka, Bratislava-Čunovo	7
46.	17.9.2013	Veľkolélske rameno river branch – transfer site (C.6)	BROZ, NAUTILUS	Veľkolélsky ostrov island	6
47.	3.10.2013	Veľkolélske river branch – reconstruction of bridge (C.3)	BROZ, VVB, SVP, MIDEAS	Bratislava	6
48.	5.12.2013	Inspection of Rusovské rameno river branch, The white-tailed eagle island, Dunajské kriviny (C.4, C.2)	BROZ, VVB	Rusovce, The white-tailed eagle island, Dunajské Kriviny	4
49.	29.5.2014	Acceptance of construction of Veľkolélske rameno (C.3)	BROZ, NAUTILUS, VVB	Veľkolélsky ostrov	9
				TOTAL:	514

After the first project prolongation, the date 30/06/2014 was planned as the end date of the project and most of project actions were completed by this time. There was no personnel of BROZ paid by this project from this date. Although numerous other meetings were realised until the very end of the project, they are not recorded with an attendance record and reported in this table.

Action D.6: Presentations and field excursions for students and public

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Attendance records and pictures were attached to Inception report as the Annex 11, to 1st progress report as the Annex 14, to 2nd progress report as the Annex 20 and to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 26.

Attendance records and pictures from actions were attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 13.

Attendance records and pictures were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 33.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: 10 presentations for students (together 200 people expected), 20 guided excursions for students (together 150 people expected), 10 presentations for the public (together 200 people expected) and 15 guided excursions for the public carried out (together 100 people expected).

Achieved results: Planned number of presentation and excursions was realised by 09/2012, which is three months ahead of the time schedule. Action lasted also further and in total, the objectives were largely exceeded.

Event	Planned number	Cumulative number	%	Planned participants	Realised participants	%
presentations for students	10	14	140	200	399	200
guided excursions for students	20	22	110	150	400	267
presentations for public	10	32	310	200	cca 1 907	954
guided excursions for public	15	25	167	100	380	380

Problems and their solution:

No problems influencing realisation of this action occurred.

Implementation of the action:

Excursions, lectures, trips, or practical care for nature field actions were realised for children, students and public. During each such event we presented the project itself, its objectives, actions and the LIFE+ programme and also different related environmental topics. During these actions participants get some of present materials (posters, calendars, stickers, pens etc.). Excursions were realised for example for students from Slovak and Czech Universities. With all of them we visited project localities– for example Veľkolélsky ostrov Island where several restorations were carried out as well as NR Dunajské ostrovy, where barriers removal and restoration measures were implemented. Students as well as public had a strong interest in the project actions, individual restoration measures and the most of them expressed support and appreciation of these activities.

Presentations for students

N.	Date	Topic	Place	Participants
1.	17.3.2009	Lecture "Wildernes at the Danube and LIFE+ project", Zoological circle PriFUK	PriFUK Bratislava	22
2.	4.7.2009	Project presentation for secondary school students at the Biological field station of PriFUK	Jurský Šúr	18
3.	8-9.9.2009	Presentation of project for international AEGEE students	Bratislava, Hotel Rapid	25
4.	13.1.2010	Project presentation for students of the CITY University Bratislava	City University Bratislava	14
5.	16.3.2010	Wet meadows and pastures – a hidden treasure of Slovakia	Faculty of Natural Sciences	14
6.	28.4.2011	Conservation of birds within Danube inland delta	Faculty of Science, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic	23

N.	Date	Topic	Place	Participants
7.	31.5.2011	Danube inland delta	High School Pankúchová, Bratislava	23
8.	16.6.2011	Danube inland delta – endangered species of birds	Dúbrava (Prašník)	34
9.	17.6.2011	Danube inland delta – habitats	Dúbrava (Prašník)	34
10.	18.6.2011	Danube inland delta – restoration actions	Dúbrava (Prašník)	34
11.	7.9.2011	Danube Birds Conservation + exhibition	Local Library of Petržalka, Bratislava	24
12.	16.11.2011	Danube Bird Conservation project	Comenius University, Faculty of Natural Sciences	23
13.	11.9.2013	Presentation for students on conference SONDAR Soil and water	Bratislava – Čunovo	66
14.	25.4.2014	River ecosystem - presentation for students	Zohor	45
			TOTAL	399



Excursions for students

N.	Date	Topic	Place	Participants
1.	14.3.2009	Excursion for students to Pečňa forest "Unknown wilderness"	Bratislava-Pečenský les	9
2.	7.4.2009	Tree planting – importance of the floodplain forest	Rusovce - PR Dun. ostrovy	7
3.	26.6.2009	Excursion for pupils of Basic school Dúľovce, Danube Day 2009	Veľký Lél, Čič. rameno	40
4.	23.7.2009	Excursion for secondary school students to the SPA Szigetköz	Dunasziget, Hungary	18
5.	27.4.2010	Excursion to Danube for primary school from Kolta	Kolta	93
6.	30.9.2010	Excursion for foreign students of MPA program in Klagenfurt	Dunajské luhy	21
7.	13.10.2010	Excursion for children participating the Danube Art Master international contest	Veľký Lél	21
8.	6.5.2011	Excursion for students of elementary school Stupava	Biskupické luhy	11
9.	11.5. 2011	Excursion for students of elementary school Stupava to the project localities – presentation of the action C.8	Čunovo, Slovanský island	20
10.	24.5.2011	Excursion for students of elementary school Stupava	Veľkolélsky Island	19
11.	25.-26.8.2011	Excursion – Chľaba, Veľkolélsky island (restoration of steep river banks	Chľaba, Veľkolélsky island	5
12.	14.10.2011	Excursion for students – restoration of Rusovský ostrov Island	Rusovský ostrov Island	13
13.	26.-27.4.2012	Excursion for students from Constantine the Philosopher University (UKF) in Nitra	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	13
14.	11.-14.5.2012	Excursion for Czech students from MASARYK UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF SCIENCE	Veľkolélsky ostrov	13
15.	18.5.2012	Excursion and presentation for students of Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava	NR Dunajské ostrovy – Dolný Rusovský ostrov, PriF UK	14
16.	20.09.2012	Excursion for students of Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava	NR Dunajské ostrovy - Dolný rusovský ostrov	10
17.	21.09.2012	Excursion for students of Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava	NR Dunajské ostrovy - Dolný rusovský ostrov	9
18.	24.09.2012	Excursion for students of Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava	NR Dunajské ostrovy - Dolný rusovský ostrov	12
19.	25.09.2012	Excursion for students of Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava	NR Dunajské ostrovy - Dolný rusovský ostrov	9
20.	26.09.2012	Excursion for students of Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava	Nature Reserve Starý háj	11
21.	3.10.2013	Excursion for the school from Rohožník	Bakanské river branches	24
22.	06.06.2015	Excursion for students of Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava	Dolný rusovský ostrov	8
			TOTAL	400



Presentations for public

N.	Date	Topic	Place	Participants
1.	24.1.2009	Meeting with ornithologists – yearly counting of the White- tailed Eagle 2009	Gabčíkovo	29
2.	7.3.2009	Presentation for local people – Starý Háj – jewel of floodplain forests	Bratislava – Petržalka	6
3.	15.10.2009	Field project presentation for Hungarian water engineers	Győr, Bratislava, Gabčíkovo	49
4.	17.11.2009	Presentation of BROZ and project in the programe of the Pontis foundation Dobrá krajina, at concert „Koncert pre všímavých“, organised by the Agentúra Pohoda and Alliance Fair Play.	Bratislava PKO	36
5.	18.11.2009	Presentation of project for the Department of defence	Záhorie	13
6.	10.12.2009	Presentation for bird-watching public	PriFUK Bratislava	30
7.	30.1.2010	Meeting with ornithologist - White-tailed eagle census 2010	Gabčíkovo	42
8.	11.3.2010	Opening of a new nature reserve – project presentation	Bratislava	41
9.	23.-25.4.2010	Pannonian Bird Experience 2010 – international exhibition, information stand	Illmitz, NP Neusiedler See	
10.	24.4.2010	Samove hry 2010 – project presentation at public fair, information stand	Devínska Nová Ves	
11.	8.-10.7.2010	Music festival Pohoda 2010 – project presentation, information stand	Trenčín	150
12.	11.11.2010	Project presentation for the Microsoft employees	Bratislava	47
13.	13.1.2011	Presentation of project for public	IKEA Bratislava	19
14.	14.1.2011	Presentation of project for public	IKEA Bratislava	27
15.	15.1.2011	Presentation of project for public	IKEA Bratislava	45
16.	16.1.2011	Presentation of project for public	IKEA Bratislava	34
17.	11.6.2011	Danube day	Gabčíkovo	118
18.	13.6.2011	Presentation of the project	Gabčíkovo	27

N.	Date	Topic	Place	Participants
19.	5.11.2011	Open day of MoE SR	Bratislava	124
20.	21.11.2011	Opening of Szárazerdei river branch system, presentation of the project action	Dunakiliti-Szárazerdei	32
21.	31.3.2012	Project presentation on meetings of South-Moravian Czech Ornithological Assosiation (CSO)	Brno	45
22.	21.4.2012	Presentation of project actions and results during Pannonian Bird Experience	Illmitz	40
23.	9.6.2012	Danube day	Gabčíkovo	112
24.	17.4.2013	Presentation of project for Transboundary water commission SK-HU	Kőszeg, Hungary	15
25.	20.4.2013	Presentation of project actions	Illmitz, Austria	cca 500
26.	1.6.2013	Open Day MŽP SR	Bratislava	21/300*
27.	22.6.2013	Danube day	Bratislava	6/300*
28.	24.5.2014	World fish migration day	Bratislava	cca 200*
29.	17.04.2014	Presentation of project for public	BBC Bratislava	13
30.	21.6.2014	Danube day	Devín	155
31.	01.12.2014	Presentation of project for city of Wien representaives	BSK Bratislava	11
32.	25.04.2015	Restoration actions along the Danube from Bratislava to Velky Lel Island	Illmitz, NP Neusiedler See	55*
			TOTAL	1 907

* the no. of participants is informative. Presentation was realised in information stand as the part of bigger public action. Only few people were signed to attendance record (first number in cell). Real no. of people for whom were project results presented was higher (there are no official no. of participants from the action)



Excursions for public

N.	Date	Topic	Place	Participants
1.	11.4.2009	Tree planting – importance of the floodplain forest	Rusovce - PR Dun. ostrovy	14
2.	17.4.2009	Excursion to Nature reserve Dunajské ostrovy	Bratislava - Rusovce	4
3.	28.3.2009	Cleaning of the Nature reserve Dunajské ostrovy	Bratislava - Rusovce	20
4.	2.5.2009	Excursion for Austrian nature conservationists	Bratislava - Pečenský les	25
5.	3.10.2009	Excursion „Wildness around Gabčíkovo Water dam“ for Naturschutzbund from Austria	Gabčíkovo	24
6.	10.11.2009	Excursion for various environmental representatives	Veľkolélsky ostrov	12
7.	24.2.2010	Excursion to Danube floodplains	Gabčíkovo	24
8.	25.5.2010	Excursion for German nature conservationists	Veľkolélsky ostrov	12
9.	29.5.2010	Excursion for nature conservationists from Vienna	Donau-Auen	11
10.	30.7.-1.8.2010	Excursion with canoeing at the Moson Danube	Rusovce, Čunovo	14
11.	10.1.2011	Excursion + nests monitoring	CHKO Dunajské luhy	12
12.	17.1.2011	Excursion + vegetation mapping	Mosonmagyaróvár-Győr	11
13.	10.05.2011	Excursion for employees of IKEA company	Biskupické luhy	28
14.	17.05.2011	Excursion of the action C.9 for delegates of SVP, PriF UK	Gabčíkovo – Chľaba	9
15.	04.06.2011	Excursion for employees of BVS	PR Dunajské ostrovy Islands	15
16.	14.06.2011	Excursion for representatives of different environmental organizations	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	28
17.	17.06.2011	Excursion for employees of HP	Čunovo, Rusovce	21
18.	03.08.2011	Meeting and excursions for project partners and public	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	8
19.	05.08.2011	Excursions for stakeholders	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	11
20.	24.09.2011	Excursion for public	Veľkolélsky ostrov island	8
21.	21.10.2011	Excursion for public	Dunajské ostrovy islands	10
22.	7.09.2012	Excursion for public	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	12
23.	14.-15.5.2014	Excursion “Restoration is fun”	Danube floodplains	18
24.	22.5.2014	Excursion for public	Veľkolélsky island	18
25.	19.6.2014	Excursion for public	Veľkolélsky island	11
			TOTAL	380



Action D.7: Interactive travelling exhibition – Bird life in Danube floodplains

Responsible beneficiary: SZITE

Deliverables of the action:

Photos of panels preparation were attached in Inception report as the Annex 12.

Presentation of interactive exhibition was included as the Annex 15 in 1st progress report. Pictures were attached also in Inception report as the Annex 10, in 1st progress report as the Annex 13 and in 2nd progress report as the Annex 19.

Photos of presentation of interactive exhibition and letter of the Minister of Environment, providing patronage for the exhibition were attached in 2nd progress report as the Annexes 21 and 22.

Pictures from interactive exhibition were attached also to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 as the Annex 27.

Summary table of visited places since the project start was attached to 2nd Mid-term report as the Annex 14.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: 30 exhibitions with at least 150 guests in average.

Achieved results: Expected results were highly exceeded. Exhibition was prepared, the celebratory opening was on 07/12/2009 in Győr in the premises of ÉDUKÖVIZIG, which is 9 months ahead according to time schedule. By 15/06/2013 the exhibition was installed at 34 places and visited by more than 20 396 visitors.

Problems and their solution:

There were no problems in implementation of the action.

Implementation of the action:

Interactive travelling exhibition was very popular activity of project promotion for children, students and all the public. The exhibition was installed on different places in Hungary, Slovakia and Austria – museums, schools, libraries, national parks visitor's centres, etc. Timetable with concrete places and number of visitors during last reported period is in the table below.

N.	Date	Place	Participants
1.	7-17 December 2009	Gyor (Hungary)	354
2.	15-30 January 2010	Dunaszeg (Hungary)	271
3.	1-15 February 2010	Ajka (Hungary)	1 162
4.	16-21 February 2010	Dunaujváros (Hungary)	1 640
5.	22-28 February 2010	Menfőcsanak (Hungary)	453
6.	1-7 March 2010	Kimle (Hungary)	327
7.	7-14 March 2010	Hegyeshalom (Hungary)	232
8.	14-21 March 2010	Hédervár (Hungary)	359
9.	22 March – 20 April 2010	Rajka (Hungary)	279
10.	20-24 April 2010	International Water Day Danube Museum in Esztergom (Hungary)	2 762
11.	25-30 April 2010	Csobánka (Hungary)	540
12.	May-Aug 2010	Debrecen (Hungary)	398
13.	5 September – 4 October 2010	Dunasziget (Hungary)	1 750
14.	4-29 October 2010	Donauauen National Park Visitor Center, Orth (Austria)	650
15.	15-30 January 2010	City Gallery, Rožnava, (Slovakia)	470
16.	30 October 2010 – 30 January 2011	School of Nature Protection, Varín (Slovakia)	
17.	1-28 February 2011	Dunajská Streda (Slovakia)*	
18.	1-30 March 2011	Aggteleki Nemzeti Park, Aggtelek National park directorate (Hungary)	545
19.	1 April - 5 May 2011	Museum Michalovce (Slovakia)	210
20.	6 May - 20 May 2011	Körös-Maros NP, Réhely (Hungary)	332
21.	22 May - 25 May 2011	PriF UK, Bratislava (Slovakia)	75
22.	26 May - 30 June 2011	SEV SAŽP Dropie, Zemianska Olča (Slovakia)	620
23.	10 Jun - 11 Jun 2011	VE Gabčíkovo (Slovakia)	500
24.	1Jul - 25 August 2011	Duna-Ipoly National Park (Hungary)	cca 400*
25.	2 September - 12 October	Public library, Bratislava – Petržalka (Slovakia)	710
26.	15 October - 16 November	Municipal office , Bratislava - Staré Mesto (Slovakia)*	910
27.	24 November 2011 - 9 January 2012	MoE SR (Slovakia)	447
28.	9. – 31. January 2012	Primary school and Gymnazium Narnia, Bratislava (Slovakia)	420
29.	8th February – 12th March	Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia)	190
30.	1 May - 31 August 2012	Ökopark, Dunasziget (Hungary)	1 900
31.	1 st September – 23 th October 2012	Ökopark, Dunasziget (Hungary)	350
32.	23 th October – 15 th November 2012	Eco center Dropie (Slovakia)	450
33.	15 th November 2012 – 15 th March 2013	Ökopark, Dunasziget (Hungary)	150
34.	15 th March – 15 th June 2013	National Museum Komárno (Slovakia)	540
TOTAL			20 396

*for the exhibition in Dunajská Streda (Slovakia), the personal patronage of the Minister of Environment Mr. József Nagy was provided.

**the accurate number of visitors from this place is not known.

During the exhibition placement at the MoE SR in 2011, the exhibition was officially opened by the Minister of Environment Mr. József Nagy together with representatives of project beneficiaries BROZ, PRIF UK and SZITE.



Action D.8: Presentation book – Birds of Danube floodplains

Responsible beneficiary: PriF UK

Deliverables of the action:

Final copy of the book published – the Annex D8.1

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Presentation book “Birds of Danube floodplains” published at the end of the project, 800 copies of 300 pages with text, tables, graphs, maps and photographs.

Achieved results: Presentation book “Birds of Danube floodplains” was published and distributed by the end of the project in the target region of Danube floodplains. Because this action was covering outputs of the all project conservation actions, with prolongation of the project, the completion of the book was also postponed.

Problems and their solution:

General text and data chapters of the book, including photographs were prepared in time. Existing data about target bird species were summarised and complemented also with the new outputs reached during the monitoring. But as several of the C project actions have been delayed, this influenced also the finalisation of the book. As we decided to have as much as possible of the project actions included and their results presented in the book of 276 pages, we decided to postpone the date of book publishing as well. In that way, the book could not include more results of the project actions and also from monitoring of biota.

Implementation of the action:

Main objective of the book is to provide a complex look on birds of the project site and their conservation. During the project, summarizing of existing data about Danube floodplain bird species and complementing them with new outputs reached during the monitoring was realised. External collaborators were involved in the book preparation.

Action D.9: Promotion of project on conferences and in media

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Media outputs and photos were attached in each report: Inception report – the Annex 13; 1st progress report – the Annexes 16-18; 2nd progress report – the Annexes 23-27, Mid-term report submitted in May 2012 – the Annexes 28-31.

Materials from conferences, project press releases and articles were attached to 2nd Mid-term report submitted in September 2012 as the Annex 15.

Materials from conferences were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 34

Materials from press conferences were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 35

Articles were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 36

Press releases were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 37

TV shots were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 38

Radio shots were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 39

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Project presented on at least 5 conferences, 4 press conferences organized, 10 press releases distributed, 50 articles covering the project published, 10 radio interviews broadcasted, 5 TV shots broadcasted.

Achieved results: All results were achieved and largely exceeded. Action was completed ahead of the time schedule (31/12/2012), but continued until the end of the project.

Event	Planned number	Realised number	%
Conferences	5	19	380
Press conferences	4	7	175
Press releases	10	34	340
Articles	50	58	116
Radio interviews	10	12	120
TV shots	5	18	360

Problems and their solution:

No problems, influencing realisation of this action occurred.

Implementation of the action:

Promotion of project started by the first official press conference, which was realised already in February 2009, at the occasion of the World wetland day (2nd of February). The press conference took place at the European Commission Representation facilities in Bratislava.

Most of the press conferences, articles and media events were connected with finalization of actual restoration actions (restoration of river branch systems and/ or fishways) and therefore were realised mostly in the second half of the project.



D.9 activities were realized during whole project duration. During project we have participated on 19 national or international conferences in Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Serbia and Slovakia where the goals and partial results of the project were presented. In September 2012 results of the project were presented also on the European conference on Ecological Restoration (ECER). Few promotional activities were connected with completion of action C.10 and C.11 by project AB EDUVIZIG. The opening of the Szarazerdei river branch system was organised as public and also press event. Thus there are several medial outputs – articles, press releases as well as radio interviews. During 2012 also few articles about restoration of Istregov (in National Geographic Hungary) as well as about successful restoration of steep river banks near Chľaba were published.

Conferences

N.	Date	Title	Place
1.	30.4.2009	Conference Žitný Ostrov hunters fest	Báč, Slovakia
2.	24-27.9.2009	20th jubilee conference „Danube - River of Cooperation“	Belgrade, Serbia
3.	25.6.2010	Flussbausymposium Donau	Vienna, Austria
4.	2.-4.6.2010	TFM Sand Martin & Little-ringed Plover	Vác, Hungary
5.	11.-12.11.2010	Landscape in the town, town in the landscape	Banská Bystrica, Slovakia
6.	29.11.-1.12.2010	River Morphology Workshop	Ingolstadt, Germany
7.	2. – 5.2.2011	Wetlands and climatic changes (40. anniversary of Ramsar convention)	Blansko, Czech Republic
8.	17. – 18.2.2011	Zoological days Brno 2011	Brno, Czech Republic
9.	30.-31.1.2011	Inland Delta of Danube – the wealth of Slovak nature	Ružomberok, Slovakia
10.	25.-27.5.2012	Conference Žitný Ostrov hunters fest	Báč, Slovakia
11.	9.-14.9.2012	The 8th European Conference on Ecological Restoration	České Budejovice, Czech Republic
12.	10.2.2012	NATURA 2000 conference	Topoľčany, Slovakia
13.	24.-25.10.2012	20. anniversary of Gabčíkovo	Bratislava, Slovakia
14.	22.-24.11.2012	Zoology 2012 congress	Zvolen, Slovakia
15.	17.-18.1.2013	Biology in school today and tomorrow	Ružomberok, Slovakia
16.	11.9.2013	SONDAR – Soil and water	Bratislava – Čunovo, Slovakia

N.	Date	Title	Place
17.	18.-19.11.2013	Side-arms and floodplains along large rivers	Mohács, Hungary
18.	25.-27.11.2013	12th Sanitary constructions – small waterworks – landscape and water management	High Tatras, Slovakia
19.	28.5.2014	Solutions for Danube River – international conference	Győr, Hungary

Press conferences

N.	Date	Topic	Place	Media	Participants
1.	30.1.2009	World Wetland Day – opening of project	EC Representation Bratislava	STV, SITA, TASR	13
2.	1.2.2011	Press conference to 40th anniversary of Ramsar convention	Rudá, Sobeková	STV	7 http://www.stv.sk/online/archiv/spravy-stv/?id=44001&date=2011-02-01&section=6644#1325
3.	27.6.2012	Press conference concerning to restored steep river bank	Chľaba, Slovakia		6
4.	12.12.2012	Restoration of Medveďovské river branch	Sap		25
5.	18.7.2013	Restoration of Dunajské Kriviny river branch sytem	Dobrohošť		100
6.	22.5.2014	Restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch	Veľký Lél		65
7.	27.10.2015	Restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch – opening new bridge	Veľký Lél		500

During the project, 7 main press conferences and media events were realised. Press conferences were focused especially on successful project action, e.g. action C.9 - breeding colony near village Chľaba, which was occupied by nearly 1 000 of Sand Martins' breeding pairs, C.5 - Medvedovske rameno river branch, C.2 - Dunajské Kriviny river branch system, C.3 and C.6 - Veľkolélske rameno river branch. All of them were attractive for media, thus there were good promotions for project actions, objectives as well as LIFE program and NATURA 2000 network. Representatives of MoE SR as well as project ABs , SVP, SNC participated at these press events. The information was subsequently published in several online and print media.

Press releases

N.	Date	Title	Media	Author
1.	30.1.2009	World Wetland Day – opening of project	Distributed to media	BROZ
2.	30.1.2009	Na ochranu vzácného vtáctva Dunajských luhov poputuje 4,5 milióna eur <i>4,5 mil EUR will</i>	TASR	Alena Klepochová

N.	Date	Title	Media	Author
		<i>go for protection of rare birds of Danube floodplains</i>		
3.	1.2.2011	Press release to 40th anniversary of Ramsar convention	http://www.changenet.sk/?section=spr&x=519666	Andrej Kovarik
4.	21.11.2011	Press release to Szárazerdei river branch restoration (Hungarian)	http://www.agromonitor.hu/index.php/videk/39-videk/5395-evtizetek-utan-ismet-oesszekapcsoltak-a-dunat-a-szarazerdei-holtaggal	
5.	22.11.2011	Press release to Szárazerdei river branch opening event (Hungarian)	http://www.edukovizig.hu/node/2149	
6.	22.11.2011	Press release to completion of the Szárazerdei river branch restoration	http://www.firemnespravy.sk/v-madarsku-bola-slavnostne-dokoncena-revitalizacia-dunajskeho-ramena-szarazerdei/	Karolína Sobeková
7.	29.11.2011	Press release to beginning of exhibition The life of birds within Danube floodplains on MoE SR (Slovak)	http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2011/tlacove-spravy-november-2011/zacala-vystava-zivote-vtakov-dunajskych-luhoch-3.html	Beatrice Hudáková
8.	30.1.2012	Press release to beginning of the field works of Istragov marsh restoration	http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2012/tlacove-spravy-januar-2012/zacala-obnova-rozsiahleho-mociara-dunaji.html ,	Beatrice Hudáková
9.	31.1.2012	Press release to beginning of the field works of Istragov marsh restoration	http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2012/tlacove-spravy-januar-2012/zacala-obnova-rozsiahleho-mociara-dunaji.html ,	Karolína Sobeková, Beatrice Hudáková
10.	31.01.2012	Terjedelmes mocsár revitalizációjába kezdtek a Dunán (Hungarian)	http://uj szo.com/online/kozelet/2012/01/31/terjedelmes-mocsar-revitalizaciojaba-kezdtek-a-dunan	
11.	31.01.2012	Začala sa obnova rozsiahleho močiara na Dunaji (Slovak)	http://enviroportal.sk/clanok/zacala-sa-obnova-rozsiahleho-mociara-na-dunaji	
12.	27.6.2012	K dunajským brehom sa vrátila brehuľa hnedá (Slovak)	http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2012/tlacove-spravy-jun-2012/k-dunajskym-brehom-vratila-brehula-hneda-3.html	Beatrice Hudáková
13.	20.11.2012	Jedno z ramien Dunaja opäť oživa	Piešťanský týždeň (source SITA)	
14.	20.11.2012	Cez Medveďovské rameno začne vďaka ochranárom opäť tiecť Dunaj	http://www.topky.sk/cl/1000076/1331574/Cez-Medvedovske-rameno-zacne-vdaka-ochranarom-opat-tiect-Dunaj	
15.	22.11.2012	Jedno z ramien Dunaja - Medveďovské - opäť oživa	http://trnava.sme.sk/c/6609609/jedno-z-ramien-dunaja-medvedovske-opat-oziva.html	

N.	Date	Title	Media	Author
16.	12.12.2012	V sprietočnom ramene Dunaja sa zlepšia podmienky pre pôvodné druhy rýb	http://novezamky.sme.sk/c/6635947/v-sprietocnenom-ramene-dunaja-sa-zlepsia-podmienky-pre-povodne-druhy-ryb.html	
17.	13.12.2012	Sprietočnenie Medveďovského ramena	http://indymedia.sk/index.php/spravodajstvo/domace/323-sprietonenie-medveovskeho-ramena-tlaova-sprava	
18.	9.1.2013	Začali sa práce na obnovu vodného režimu Rusovského ramena	http://bratislava.sme.sk/c/6661166/zacali-sa-prace-na-obnovu-vodneho-rezimu-rusovskeho-ramena.html#ixzz2HUZvEHjL	
19.	6.2.2013	Na mokradiach nám záleží!	http://www.reporter24.sk/clanky/na-mokradiach-nam-zalezi/	
20.	18.7.2013	Dvadsaťročné obdobie sucha sa v ramennom systéme Dunajské Kriviny čoskoro skončí	http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2013/tlacove-spravy-jul-2013/dvadsatrocne-obdobie-sucha-ramennom-systeme-dunajske-kriviny-coskoro-skonci.html	
21.	18.7.2013	Oblasť Dunajských Krivín sa po rokoch opäť naplní vodou	http://trnava.sme.sk/c/6873517/oblast-dunajskych-krivin-sa-po-rokoch-opat-naplni-vodou.html	
22.	28.2.2014	Vodohospodári a ochranári obnovili dunajské ramená	http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2014/tlacove-spravy-februar-2014/vodohospodari-ochranari-obnovili-dunajske-ramena-rusovciach.html	
23.	22.5.2014	Najväčšia revitalizačná akcia na slovenskom úseku Dunaja vrcholí	http://www.teraz.sk/regiony/dunaj-revitalizacia-komarno/85339-clanok.html	
24.	02.02.2015	Svetový deň mokradí v envirorezorte	http://www.minzp.sk/tlacovy-servis/tlacove-spravy/tlacove-spravy-2015/tlacove-spravy-februar-2015/svetovy-den-mokradi-envirorezorte.html	
25.	27.10.2015	Most do rozprávky	Veľký Lél, Restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch – opening new bridge http://www.vvb.sk/cms/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=80&cntnt01origid=56&cntnt01returnid=39	
26.	26.10.2015	Veľký Lél: Na Dunaji pokrstia most, ktorý otvorí cestu do rozprávkovej krajiny	http://ahojkomarno.sk/velky-lel-na-dunaji-pokrstia-most-ktory-otvori-cestu-do-rozpravkovej-krajiny/	
27.	23.10.2015	Na Dunaji pokrstia most, ktorý otvorí cestu do rozprávkovej krajiny	http://novezamky.sme.sk/c/8047642/na-dunaji-pokrstia-most-ktory-otvori-cestu-do-rozpravkovej-krajiny.html	
28.	13.6.2014	Dunaju vracajú odseknuté ramená	http://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/320745-dunaju-vracaju-odseknute-ramena/	
29.	27.10.2015	Na Dunaji sa zavíšila najväčšia revitalizačná akcia	http://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/ochranari-vodohospodari-revitalizacia/163166-clanok.html	
30.	25.11.2015	Ochranári zveľadili jeden ostrov, na druhý	http://novezamky.sme.sk/c/8083587/ochranari-zveladili-jeden-ostrov-na-druhy-sa-chystaju.html	

N.	Date	Title	Media	Author
		sa chystajú		
31.	26.10.2015	Na Veľkolélsky ostrov na Dunaji povedie Mahulienin most	http://novezamky.sme.sk/c/8048827/na-velkolelsky-ostrov-na-dunaji-povedie-mahulienin-most.html	
33.	27.10.2015	Ochranári a vodohospodári ukončili revitalizačnú akciu na Dunaji	http://spravy.pozri.sk/clanok/Ochranari-a-vodohospodari-ukoncili-revitalizacnu-akciu-na-Dunaji/374037	
34.	28.10.2015	Mahulienin most vedie na oživený ostrov	http://spravy.pravda.sk/regiony/clanok/372080-mahulienin-most-vedie-na-oziveny-ostrov/	

There were 34 press releases connected with realised project actions were issued and distributed. These press releases were taken over by various press and internet media publishers.

Articles

N.	Date	Title	Author	Media	Link
1.	12.12.2008	Slovensko v programe LIFE+ v roku 2008 <i>Slovakia in the LIFE+ programme in</i>	Katarína Linkešová	Enviromagazín 6/2008, p. 25	http://www.enviromagazin.sk/enviro2008/enviro6/16_slovensko.pdf
2.	30.1.2009	Na ochranu vzácneho vtáctva Dunajských luhov poputuje 4,5 milióna eur <i>4,5 mil EUR will go for protection of rare birds of Danube floodplains</i>	TASR	Ekolist, website	http://www.ekolist.cz/txtzprava.shtml?x=2145611
3.	31.1.2009	Ochranári spúšťajú projekt na ochranu vtáctva <i>Nature conservationists start a project for bird protection</i>	SITA	Bratislavské noviny, website	http://www.bratislavskenoviny.sk/109560/zivotne-prostredie/ochranari-spusta-projekt-na-ochranu-vtactva
4.	2.2.2009	Dnes je svetový deň mokradí <i>Today is the World wetland day</i>	BROZ	Changenet, website	http://www.changenet.sk/?section=spr&x=412134
5.	6.3.2009	Starajú sa o prírodu okolo nás <i>They care about nature around us</i>	(lud)	Petržalské noviny 5, p.21	http://www.petrzalskenoviny.sk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=403&Itemid=33
6.	8. 2009	Výlet do lužného lesa <i>Trip to the floodplain forest</i>	Katarína Radvanská	21.storočie, Magazín pre priemyselnú ekológiu 2/2009, p. 25	http://www.envira.sk/pdf_2_09/21-24%20-%20priloha%20mzp%20sr.pdf
7.	10.12.2009	Interaktív kiállításnak adott otthont igazgatóságunk a Duna árterén veszélyeztetettnek ítélt madárfajok jelentősége kapcsán (Opening of interactive exhibition)	ÉDUKÖVIZIG	webpage ÉDUKÖVIZIG	http://www.edukovizig.hu/node/852

N.	Date	Title	Author	Media	Link
8.	6.1.2010	Bemutató (Exhibition)	H. B. E.	Kisalföld, p. 5	
9.	2.2.2010	Conservation of endangered bird species populations in natural habitats of the Danube inland delta – abstract	Radvanská, Kušík	Conference collection of abstracts, Wetlands aLive, Warsaw, p.23	http://www.rec.org.pl/wetlands_alive/eng/
10.	5.2.2010	Duna: mindenki kincse (Danube: everybody's treasure)	Gallai Péter	Dunaújvárosi hírlap, p. 1	
11.	5.2.2010	Meseország a szomszédban (Wonderland in neighbourhoods)	Pekarek János	Dunaújvárosi hírlap, p. 4	
12.	2.2010	Lužné lesy na Slovensku (Floodplain forests in Slovakia)	Radvanská	Ďalekohľad 17/2010, p. 16-18	http://www.sosna.sk/docs/dalekohlad01.pdf
13.	2.2010	Hangos interaktív kiállítás (A sound interactive exhibition)	-ta-	Hungarian newspaper	
14.	2.2010	A természetről interaktívan (Interactive nature)	-ta-	Hungarian newspaper	
15.	3.2010	Conservation of endangered bird species populations in natural habitats of the Danube inland delta	Radvanská	DEF Bulletin 1-2 2009, p.13,14	
16.	4. 2010	Ochrana Dunaja a Dunajských luhov v medzinárodnom meradle – Protection of Danube and Danube floodplains in international aspect	Radvanská	Enviromagazín 4/2010, str. 18,19	http://www.sazp.sk/slovak/periodika/enviromagazin/enviro2010/enviro4/10ochrana.pdf
17.	4. 2010	Veľkolélsky ostrov – jedinečný príklad spolupráce v regióne Veľký Lél Island - a unique example of regional cooperation	Radvanská, Kušík, Kúdela	Enviromagazín 4/2010, str. 21,22	http://www.sazp.sk/slovak/periodika/enviromagazin/enviro2010/enviro4/11vekolersky.pdf
18.	5.2010	Fietsen voor de Keizerarend	Feiko Prins	Webstránka Natuurmonumenten	www.fietsenvoordekeizerarend.nl/dagboek.html
19.	9.2010	Lužné lesy na Slovensku – Floodplain forests in Slovakia	Radvanská	Biológia, ekológia, chémia, 14/2, 2010	http://bech.truni.sk/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=5&Itemid=56&lang=sk http://bech.truni.sk/prilohy/BEC_H_2_2010.pdf
20.	2009	Šanca na obnovu zničených mokradí – A chance for restoration of destroyed wetlands	Radvanská	Vtáčí raj – SOS Birdlife brochure	
21.	20.12.2010	Petržalský zelený ostrov – Green island in Petržalka	Khrapunová, Kovarik, Lištiaková	Ženskýweb.sk	http://zenskyweb.sk/index.php/clanky/1953/144/Petrzalsky-zeleny-ostrov
22.	február 2011	Dunajský majster aj na Slovensku Danube Art Master also in Slovakia	Rudá	Enviromagazín 15/2010	http://www.enviromagazin.sk/enviro2010/enviromc2/17_dunajsky.pdf
23.	1.2.2010	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island - a unique example of cooperation in the region	Kovarik, Radvanská, Kušík & Rudá	DEF Bulletin 1-2 2010, pp 10-12	
24.	20.4.2011	Introduction about the life of	Martina	Noviny Zemplína	http://web.novinyzemplina.sk/cl

N.	Date	Title	Author	Media	Link
		Danube birds bring the museum	Králiková		anky.php?id=2144
25.	Issue 9:2010	LIFE Project on the Conservation of Endangered Bird Species in natural Habitats of the Danube Inland Delta	Katarína Radvanská	Diversity - Newsletter of CEEweb biodiversity	http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Diversity2010.pdf
26.	07.10.2011	Exhibition The life of Danube birds in local library in Petržalka		Petržalské noviny	
27.	21.11.2011	Holtág-rehabilitáció a Szigetközben	Viola Kulcsár	Oxygen Media Csoport	http://www.o2gyor.hu/index.php?option=com_k2&id=8782:duna-menti-termeszettudomanyi-projektben-vett-reszt-az-edukoevizig&view=item&Itemid=131
28.	22.11.11	Újra víz alatt a Szárazzerdei-holtág (Mŕtve rameno Szárazzerdei je opäť pod vodou)	Mészely Réka	Mosonmagyaróvár és Környéke	
29.	23.11.2011	Tájrehabilitáció a Szigetközben	Borsodi Attila	Magyar Nemzet	
30.	01.02.2012	Terjedelmes mocsár revitalizációjába kezdtek a Dunán	minzp/para	Parameter	http://www.parameter.sk/rovat/regio/2012/02/01/terjedelmes-mocsar-revitalizaciojaba-kezdték-dunan
31.	23.03.2012	Zostane domovom brehule aj Petržalka? (Stay the home of Sand Martin Petržalka as well?)	Rudá	Petržalské noviny 18/6	
32.	22.05.2012	Szebb jövő reménye a csallóközi vízi élővilágnak	Zoltán Csibrányi	National Geographic Magyarország	http://www.ng.hu/Termeszettudomanyi/2012/05/szebb-jovo-remenye-a-csallokoz-i-vizi-elovilag-nak
33.	27.06.2012	K brehom Dunaja sa po rokoch opäť vrátila brehuľa hnedá (The Sand Martin returned back to river banks of Danube after years)	Sita	Daily Newspaper SME	http://bratislava.sme.sk/c/6436592/brehula-hneda-sa-vratila-k-dunaju.html
34.	27.6.2012	K brehom Dunaja sa po rokoch opäť vrátila brehuľa hnedá (The Sand Martin returned back to river banks of Danube after years)	TASR	TASR.sk	http://www.teraz.sk/regiony/k-brehom-dunaja-sa-po-rokoch-opat-vra/13683-clanok.html , http://www.teraz.sk/fotodennik/k-brehom-dunaja-sa-po-rokoch-opat-vra/14339-fotografia.html#/fotodennik/fotografia/14339
35.	29.06.2012	Brehuľa hnedá sa vrátila do povodia slovenského Dunaja (Sand Martin returned to Slovak part of Danube)	Sita	Daily newspaper Pravda 150/12, Užitočná pravda veda - str. 28	http://pravda.newtonit.sk/default.asp?cache=256466
36.	Summer 2012	Návrat brehule hnedej na slovenský úsek Dunaja (The return of Sand Martin to Slovak section of Danube)	Karolína Sobeková, Matúš Kúdela	VTÁKY – leto 2012, Volume 7, No. 2, p. 6-7	
37.	08.06.2012	Conservation boosts Danube sand martins		LIFE News: June 2012	http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/newsarchive2012/june/index.htm
38.	15.8.2012	Az Isztrága hamarosan visszakerülhet a térképepekre (Hungarian)	(la)	Daily newspaper Új szó 15.8.2012, p. 7	
39.	30.09.2012	Újra az Isztrágánál	Csibrányi Zoltán	National Geographic	http://uj szo.com/napilap/regio/2012/08/15/az-isztraga-hamarosan-visszakerulhet-a-

N.	Date	Title	Author	Media	Link
				Magyarország	terkepekre
40.	21.11.2012	Dobrá správa pre bratislavské životné prostredie: mŕtve rameno Dunaja opäť ožíva!		web	http://www.indymedia.sk/index.php/spravodajstvo/domace/292-dobra-sprava-pre-bratislavske-ivotne-prostredie-rameno-dunaja-opae-oiva
41.	28.11.2012	Életre kel a medvei Duna-ág		Új szó 28.11.2012, web	http://ujsoz.com/online/regio/2012/11/29/eletre-kel-a-medvei-duna-ag
42.	19.12.2012	Ismét áramlik a víz a Duna medvei ágában		Új szó, 19.12.2012	
43.	21.12.2012	Keď technika na Medvedovskom ramene pomáha prírode		Pravda 21.12.2012, web	http://spravy.pravda.sk/ked-technika-na-medvedovskom-ramene-pomaha-prirode-fwlsk_regiony.asp?c=A121221_090945_sk_regiony_p70 , http://dennik.pravda.sk/Pravda.aspx?datum=21.12.2012#6
44.	2013	Ochrana populácií ohrozených druhov vtáctva v prirodzených biotopoch vnútrozemskej delty Dunaja	Keresztessy Katalin	Halászat - Hungarian journal of Aquaculture and Fisheries	print
45.	21.1.2013	Obnova vodného režimu Rusovského ramena sa už začala		Bratislavský kuriér	
46.	5.2.2013	Príbeh Dolného Rusovského ostrova		web	http://portal.rusovce.info/article615
47.	04.13	DONAU-AUEN AUF DEM GEBIET DER SLOWAKEI – AKTIVITÄTEN ZUR REVITALISIERUNG DES BINNENDELTA DER DONAU	Karolína Sobeková, Tomáš Kušík, Matúš Kúdela	Auenmagazin	http://www.auenzentrum-neuburg-ingolstadt.de/Auenzentrum/uploads/media/Ausgabe_4_Web.pdf
48.	19.7.2013	Újraéled a Duna egyik kiszáradt ága		Új szó, 19.7.2013	
49.	20.7.2013	Do dunajských ramien sa vracia vzácna fauna		Pravda 20.7.2013, web	http://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/287406-do-dunajskych-ramien-sa-vracia-vzacna-fauna/
50.	13.11.2013	Harmadszor az Istragánál	Zoltán Csibrányi	National Geographic Hungary	http://www.ng.hu/Termeszt/2013/11/harmadszor_az_istraganal
51.	21.4.2013	Začali práce na úplnom sprietočnení Veľkolélskeho ramena na Dunaji		TASR.sk	http://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/zacali-prace-na-uplnom-sprietocneni/81799-clanok.html
52.	23.4.2014	Megújul a nagyléli Duna-ág		Új szó 23.4.2013	
53.	9.5.2014	Ochranári vlievajú život do Veľkolélskeho ramena	Andrej Barát	Pravda.sk	http://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/317110-ochranari-vlievaju-zivot-do-velkolelskeho-ramena/
54.	23.5.2014	Ostrovu na Dunaji vrátili život		Novezamkysme.sk	http://novezamky.sme.sk/c/7211690/ostrovu-na-dunaji-vratili-zivot.html?utm_source=link&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=rss
55.	23.5.2014	Új életre kel a nagyléli Duna-sziget	István Németh	Dunataj.sk	http://www.dunataj.sk/uj-eletre-kel-a-nagyleli-duna-sziget/

N.	Date	Title	Author	Media	Link
56.	24.5.2014	Obrazom: Ostrovu na Dunaji vrátili život, trávú spásajú kone		SITA	http://puchov.virtualne.sk/spravodajstvo/obrazom-ostrovu-na-dunaji-vratili-zivot-travu-spasaju-kone.html
57.	28.5.2014	Visszatért az élet a Nagyléli-szigetre	Cilla Szabó	Új Szó, 28.5.2014	http://ujsozso.com/online/regio/2014/05/28/visszatert-az-élet-a-nagyleli-szigetre
58.	13.6.2014	Dunaju vracajú odseknuté ramená	Andrej Barát	Pravda, 13.6.2014	http://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/320745-dunaju-vracaju-odseknute-ramena/

TV shots broadcasted

N.	Date	Title	TV station and programme	Author	Link
1.	2.2.2009	Každoročne 2. februára si ochrancovia prírody na celom svete pripomínajú Svetový deň mokradí <i>Every year on 2nd February is the World Wetland Day celebrated by all nature conservationists</i>	TV Bratislava, Správy 18:00	Petra Hunčárová	http://www.tvba.sk/video.php?id=1681 10:50-12:32 min.
2.	10.2.2009	Na Slovensku každý rok rapídne klesá počet vzácnych operencov <i>Every year the number of rare birds in Slovakia is decreasing</i>	STV 1, Slovensko dnes, 19:15	Monika Kardošová	http://www.stv.sk/videoarchiv/relacia/slovensko-dnes http://stv.livetv.sk/tvarchive//video/video.html?video=40741 9:00-10:27 min.
3.	27.7.2009	Brusel upozorňuje na zlý stav prírody v Európe <i>Brussels alerts for unfavourable status of Europe nature</i>	STV 1, Správy STV, 19:30	Soňa Miháliková, Peter Majer	http://www.stv.sk/videoarchiv http://stv.livetv.sk/tvarchive//video/video.html?video=45048 1:13-1:22 min.
4.	4.5.2010	Reportage form Veľký Lél Island	Voices	Viera Čakanyová, Pino Ungvolgyi	http://www.voices.sk/Prakticka_ochrana_prirody
5.	13.7.2010	Land changes in Pečňa	TV Markíza, Televízne noviny	Ján Maloch	http://video.markiza.sk/archiv-tv-markiza/televizne-noviny/44672
6.	27.9.2010	Planned highway R7 through the project area	TA3, Hlavné správy	Blanka Dóková	http://www.ta3.com/sk/relacie/23_hlavne-spravy/10142_hlavne-spravy-z-27-septembra
7.	30.9.2010	Document and interview from the Veľký Lél Island	Voices Live 14	Voices	http://www.voices.sk/Andrej_Kovarik_Voices_Live
8.	1.2.2011	World wetlands day and 40. anniversary of Ramsar convention	Správy STV, 19:30	Eliška Šándorová	http://www.stv.sk/online/archiv/spravy-stv?id=44001&section=6644
9.	12.12.2012	Medveďovské rameno opäť oživa	Headline news	STV1	http://www.rtvs.sk/televizia/program/detail/4173/spravy-rtvs/archiv?date=12.12.2012
10.	12.1.2013	Do lužných lesov sa vráti bocian čierny	Headline news	STV1	http://www.rtvs.sk/televizia/program/detail/4173/spravy-rtvs/archiv?date=12.01.2013

N.	Date	Title	TV station and programme	Author	Link
11.	18.7.2013	Dunajské ramená sú opäť plné vody	Headline news	STV1	http://www.rtv.sk/televizia/program/detail/4173/spravy-rtvs/archiv?date=18.07.2013
12.	18.7.2013	Dunajské Kriviny nevyschnú	Headline news	TA3	http://www.ta3.com/clanok/1023597/do-ramien-dunajskych-krivin-opat-prudi-voda.html
13.	26.2.2014	Rusovské rameno opäť oživa	Headline news	STV1	http://www.rtv.sk/televizia/program/detail/4173/spravy-rtvs/archiv?date=26.02.2014
14.	18.5.2014	Záchrana Veľkolélskeho ramena	Headline news	STV1	http://www.rtv.sk/televizia/program/detail/4173/spravy-rtvs/archiv?date=18.05.2014
15.	22.5.2014	Veľkolélsky ostrov na dolnom toku Dunaja prechádza revitalizáciou	Headline news	TA3	http://www.ta3.com/clanok/1040679/velkolesky-ostrov-na-dolnom-toku-dunaja-prechadza-revitalizaciou.html
16.	27.10.2015	Mahulienin most sprístupnil Veľkolélsky ostrov	Headline news	TV JOJ	http://velkenoviny.joj.sk/noviny-archiv/2015-10-27-noviny-tv-joj.html
17.	27.10.2015	Breh Dunaja spája s Veľkolélskym ostrovom nový most	Headline news	TA3	http://www.ta3.com/clanok/1071738/breh-dunaja-spaja-s-velkolelskym-ostrovom-novy-most.html
18.	28.10.2015	Veľkolélsky ostrov na Dunaji	Radio news	RTVS	https://slovensko.rtv.sk/clanky/priroda/92295/velkolelsky-ostrov-na-dunaji

Radio interviews broadcasted

N.	Date	Title		
1.	10.4.2011	Planting of native tree species		
2.	21.11.2011	Holtág-rehabilitáció a Szigetközben		
3.	3.2.2012	Nature reserve Dunajské ostrovy Islands		
4.	30.11.2012	Restoration of Medveďovské river branch	News	Slovak radio
5.	16.4.2013	Veľkolélsky island	Story of the week	Slovak radio
6.	17.4.2013	Istragov	Story of the week	Slovak radio
7.	19.4.2013	Szigetkoz, Veľkolélsky island	Story of the week	Slovak radio
8.	20.7.2013	Dnajské Kriviny	News	Slovak radio
9.	23.7.2013	Dunajské Kriviny ožívajú	News	Slovak radio
10.	16.9.2013	From international conference SONDAR	News	Slovak radio
11.	21.4.2014	Veľkolélske river branch	News	Slovak radio
12.	20.6.2014	Reportage about Veľkolélsky island		Radio regina

6.3. E – Overall project operation and monitoring

Action E.6: Networking with other projects (BROZ)

Responsible beneficiary: BROZ

Deliverables of the action:

Attendance record of networking meetings were attached to Inception report as the Annex 16, to 1st progress report as Annex 21 and to 2nd progress report as the Annex 30. Attendance record and pictures were attached to Mid-term report submitted on May 2012 as the Annex 34.

Pictures from networking were attached to 2nd Mid-term report 2012 as the Annex 16.

Pictures from networking were attached to 3rd Progress report as the Annex 16.

Comparison with planned outputs / expected results and time schedule:

Expected results: Contacts established with relevant projects on restoration of river and wetland habitats. Mutual exchange of information and experiences, visits of project sites and restoration actions. Consultations and comparison of different approaches and methods, strengthened international cooperation. Raised awareness of project personnel.

Achieved results: All expected results fully achieved. 18 official networking meetings with 204 participants were realised. Action started 19/03/2009, which is 3 months ahead of the time schedule.

Problems and their solution:

There were no problems in implementation of the action.

Implementation of the action:

During project we had an ongoing communication with other nature conservation organisations and their projects from Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Romania, Serbia and also from Slovakia, which participate on project focused on Natura 2000 areas or other restoration and conservation activities. The main scope of activities is of course connected with the Danube River and related projects. During the project, we have recorded 18 (official networking meetings with 204 participants. Professional discussions and helpful exchange of experiences took place also during conferences or excursions which were organised for delegates from different Slovak or foreign conservation and scientific organizations.

N.	Date	Topic of meeting	Organisations	Place	Participants
1.	19.3.2009	Management of reed beds and wetlands	BROZ, NP Neusiedler See	NP Neusiedler See – Seewinkel	5
2.	26.3.2009	Restoration of Danube banks and branches	BROZ, NP Donau-Auen	Bratislava	6
3.	4.5.2009	Danube floodplains – meeting with Austrian-	BROZ, Bayrisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt,	Danube river	10

N.	Date	Topic of meeting	Organisations	Place	Participants
		German project LIFE04 NAT/AT/000003 Hang- und Schluchtwälder im oberen Donautal	Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz, Landesbund für Vogelschutz in Bayern		
4.	1.7.2009	Networking and exhibition with NP-DonauAuen	BROZ, NP Donau-Auen, SMOPAJ, PriFUK	Orth an der Donau	10
5	5.-14.9.2009	Conservation and management of wetlands of international importance	BROZ, State Nature Conservancy of the SR, MoE of the Czech Republic	Poland, Lithuania, Belarus	1
6.	7.-10.9.2009	Networking with project LIFE06 NAT/RO/000177 Conservation and Integrated Management of Danube Islands, Romania	BROZ, PriFUK, Environmental Protection Agency Calarasi	Whole project area Bratislava – Komárno	9
7.	29.10.2009	Networking with Czech entomologists – Management on Danube floodplains	BROZ, Entomol.institute AVČR, SCHKO Pálava, AOPK ČR, ČSE	Veľký Lél Island	7
8.	15.1.2010	Networking with partners from Austria and Czech Republic	Naturschutzbund, AOPK ČR, AURING, DAPHNE, Veronica, WWF	Marchegg	21
9.	25.2.2010	Participation at conference Protection of cities before floods, drought and climate changes	Ľudia a voda	Košice	
10.	15.5.2010	Networking with German Conservation organisation	Landesbund für Vogelschutz	Danube flood plain	15
11.	17.6.2010	Excursion for Romanian conservationists	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve	Slovanský ostrov, Rusovce, Čunovo	8
12.	28.-29.6.2010	Management of lowland forests	Agentura ochrany přírody a krajiny ČR a Lesní závod Židlochovice	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	19
13.	12.7.2010	Excursion for partners from various Danube national parks	NPDA, DINPI, DDND, DDBRA, Persina, Vojvodinasume (Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania)	SPA Dunajské luhy	12
14.	25.9.2010	Networking with Danubeparks at the Veľký Lél	Danubeparks partners	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	19
15.	15. – 16.4.2011	Networking with conservationists from Austria and Hungary during Pannonian Bird Experience 2011 connected with information stand	NPDA, NP Fertő – Hanság, NP Neusiedler See	Illmitz, NP Neusiedler See	25
16.	19.4.2011	Networking with conservationists from Czech Republic	Sorbus o.s., Veronica, ZO ČSOP Kněžice, Hamerský potok o.s., BROZ, ČSOP Liteň	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	14
17.	9. –14.4.2012	Networking with conservationists from Serbia	NP Djerdap	Donji Milanovac, Serbia	12
18.	7.3.2014	Networking with conservationists from Croatia	NP Kopački rit	Veľkolélsky ostrov Island	11
				TOTAL	204

Since many actions of the project were realized and project team has good experiences in large scale restoration as the reconnection of big side arms to Danube – the most of networking meetings and/ or discussions with people, who are within their project in preparatory phase, were very helpful for them. Many important questions focused on fishways on lowland rivers, occurrence of different fish species, and improvement of feeding habitats for birds and population parameters of project bird species nesting also in other areas along the Danube River.

We are glad to have the opportunity to share practical experience gained during the project realization. We consider these meetings to be extremely useful for other projects as well as for our future work. Continuously action was running until the end of project.

6.4. Evaluation of Project Implementation

The results of the actions implemented have met and in certain cases also exceeded the goals set by the project (see description of the actions). Choosing of appropriate methodologies for the project has been confirmed by the achieved results.

The applied methodologies can be divided into the following groups:

- methodology for overall project management;
- methodology for accounting;
- methodology for monitoring of project results and elaboration of reports from the monitoring;
- methodology for implementation of conservation measures; and
- methodology for organizing trainings and workshops, PR and media activities.

Although there was lack of experiences in the project management team (and in whole Slovakia) with several of the project's restoration actions, the results show very clearly that proper methodologies and procedures were used. BROZ is nowadays very experienced and professional beneficiary with successful implementation of number of LIFE projects, both as coordinating and associated beneficiary. Staff of BROZ is target oriented and has the experiences from other projects and field practice and can use already well-established methodologies.

During the project implementation, the attention has been paid to the cost-efficiency of the project's actions. Public procurement procedures following legal requirements have been applied concerning works and services provided by external providers. Especially the so called electronic auctions contributed to significant decrease of the expected prices for construction works and services.

The cost-efficiency of the project's actions has been reached also through a systematic approach to the project management, including efficient use of the project staff's work time, vehicles and other resources.

Lessons learnt

Based on lessons learnt during the project the beneficiaries will focus on direct communication with stakeholders, especially through personal meetings and discussions on concrete conservation measures. This approach proved to be very effective in terms of improving the cooperation as well as raising capacity and expertise of stakeholders. An intensive media campaign and active involvement of public are important to promote the topic and secure long-term interest and active participation of state authorities and also local inhabitants and communities. These are very important preconditions to support long-term sustainability of the project's results.

Task	Foreseen in the revised proposal	Achieved	Evaluation
A1	The mathematical hydrological model of the left-sided branch-system in the section Dobrohošť – Sap including 1D hydrodynamic	yes (Annex A1.4 to 1 st progress report (01/03/2010))	Final results include also application of the model to the actions proposed in the section targeted with the model – calculations defining all required technical parameters of hydrotechnical structures and suitable water

Task	Foreseen in the revised proposal	Achieved	Evaluation
	numerical model in the 'Istragov'		regime. Based on results of this action, actions C.1 and C.2 have been realised.
A2	Technical documentation for restoration of Istragov marsh	Yes (Annex A2.2 to 2 nd progress report (01/03/2011))	applied in the activity C1
A3	Technical documentation for restoration of Dunajske kriviny river branch system	Yes ; Annex A3.3 to 2 nd progress report (01/03/2011))	Applied in the activity C2 and C4
A4	Technical documentation for construction of the fishway on Bakanske ramena river branch system	yes (Annex A4.4 to mid-term report (31/05/2012))	Applied in the activity C3
A4	Technical documentation for construction of the fishway on Velkolélske river branch system	yes (Annex A4.5 to mid-term report (31/05/2012))	Applied in the activity C3
A5	Technical documentation for restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system	yes (Annex A5.5 to mid-term report (31/05/2012))	Applied in the activity C6
A5	Technical documentation for restoration of Medveďovské rameno river branch system	yes (Annex A5.5 to mid-term report (31/05/2012))	Applied in the activity C5
A8	Technical documentation for restoration of Szárazerdei river branch and restoration of wetlands in Ásványi river branch system	Yes (Annex A8.7 to 2 nd progress report (01/03/2011))	Applied in the activity C9
C1	Technical documentation for sealing the critical section of canal by restoration of Istragov marsh	yes (Annex C1.10 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Wetland birds habitats were restored at 21,4 ha. Permanent water surface of river branches and canals was restored at the length of 6 600 m. Water supply was improved for the 250 000 m2 of adjacent floodplain forests. Possibility of human disturbance was reduced on 15 ha.
C1	Technical documentation for reconstruction of the object in the seepage canal by restoration of Istragov marsh	yes (Annex C1.12 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Wetland birds habitats were restored at 21,4 ha. Permanent water surface of river branches and canals was restored at the length of 6 600 m. Water supply was improved for the 250 000 m2 of adjacent floodplain forests. Possibility of human disturbance was reduced on 15 ha.
C2	Restoration of Dunajské kriviny river branch system	Yes (Annex C2.14 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Dried river branch (as the water birds habitat) was restored at the length of 1 200 m (7 000 m2). Improved conditions of adjacent forest habitats due to increased ground water at 20 ha. Reduced human accessibility and disturbance at the area of 13 ha.
C3	Construction of fishway on Bakanske ramenov river branch	yes (Annex C3.15 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Fishway I – or fish bypass at the Bakanske rameno river branch consist of fragments of existing river branches, which were connected with the main river branch, barriers were removed and crossings with the forestry roads were rebuilt in order to allow free migration of fish.
C3	Construction of fishway on Veľkolélske rameno river branch	yes (Annex C3.16 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Fishway II – or fish bypass at the Veľkolélske rameno river branch is very important construction. Shortly after finalization of the works, water level in Danube increased. During this time results of restoration works were significantly visible, since the migration of many fish species was allowed.

Task	Foreseen in the revised proposal	Achieved	Evaluation
C4	Technical documentation for restoration of Ostrov orliaka morského Island	Yes (Annex C4.11 to mid-term report (31/05/2012))	Realized restoration measure within the White-tailed Eagle Island was highly effective –many fishes comes after long term period of dry wetland to this location. Next seasons of 2013 and 2015 the effect was even greater, since many amphibians as well as fishes had opportunity to reproduce within large restored and reconnected wetland. At the same time an extensive area of about 33,5 ha without any human disturbances has been created.
C4	Technical documentation for restoration of Dolný rusovský ostrov Island	Yes (Annex C4.12 to mid-term report (31/05/2012))	we have achieved significantly better ecological results for target bird species and more project success, since on the island are now highly appropriate conditions for breeding of endangered and/ or sensitive bird species. Also after more than 20 years there are many places which are re-available for fish spawning, more wetlands for amphibians reproduction and thus more available feeding habitats for birds
C4	Technical documentation of additional work within Rusovske rameno river branch	Yes (Annex C4.17 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Due to restricted or physically excluded access to major part of Nature reserve Dunajské ostrovy after restoration works, also significant decrease of human disturbance was achieved on total area of 86,4 ha: Dolný (lower) rusovský ostrov island 50 ha, wetland at the Dolný (lower) rusovský ostrov island 0,9 ha and Horný (upper) rusovský ostrov 35,5 ha.
C5	Restoration of Medved'ovské rameno river branch system	Yes (Annex C5.22 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	By restoration of the flowing water and natural river dynamics, steep banks have by naturally created and started to be occupied by the nesting pair of kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>). Restored river branch is used as the feeding habitat of black stork (<i>Ciconia nigra</i>), which is nesting in the adjacent area.
C6	Restoration of Veľkolélske rameno river branch system	Yes (Annex C6.23 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Works for restorations of the Veľkolélske rameno river branch were joined together with action C.3 construction of fishway 2 on one large river branch system. Therefore ambitious restoration as well as large and functional fishway/ bypass could be realised. The full flowing capacity of the branch could be only achieved by construction of the bridge, which is described in Actions A.4 and C.3.
C7	Restoration 188 ha of lowland meadows as feeding and nesting bird habitats	Yes (Annex C7.14 to mid-term report (31/05/2012))	Lowland meadows restored: Veľkolélsky ostrov Island – 70 ha + 15 ha (grazing and combination of removing of invasive trees, milling and grazing) +3,5 ha (grassing of arable land by seeding mixture of natural grasslands species) Čičov – 10,5 ha Iža – 14,6 ha Dunaszég, Hungary – 65 ha
C8	Planting of 44 900 native tree species	Yes (Annex C8.1 to final report (31/05/2016))	By planting of new forests on the places previously occupied by the hybrid poplar plantations, potential area of forest habitats of Community interest was restored. 207 600 m ² of the residual alluvial forests (91E0*) and 150 000 m ² of riparian mixed forests along

Task	Foreseen in the revised proposal	Achieved	Evaluation
			great rivers (91F0) was restored. Native trees were planted on 35 localities in groups between hybrid poplar plantations.
C9	Restoration of 260 m steep river banks as nesting bird habitats	yes (Annex C9.17 to mid-term report (31/05/2012 and Annex C9.1 to final report (31/05/2016))	Steep natural river banks were restored at two localities in total length of 260 m This action has been extremely successful. In season of 2012 a breeding colony of 970 pairs of sand martins has been recorded on restored river bank!
C10	Restoration of Százazerdei river branch in the length of 1500 m	Yes (Annex C10.18 to mid-term report (31/05/2012))	The Directorate managed to publish article in the local media about the opening of the Százazerdei branch (C.10) and the previously mentioned fish study were disseminated in the professional paper.
C11	Restoration of wetlands in the Ásványi river branch system – improving of water regime at the area of 345 000 m ²	Yes (Annex C11.27 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Completing of this action improved water inflow and communication of the islands inner lakes and wetlands with the river branch system.
E2	Final hydrological report for 2009 – 2014	Yes (Annex E2.1 to final report (31/05/2016))	The action was focused on documentation and assessment of current situation of water formations in the location of left-side branch system of Danube – Istragov and Dunajské Kriviny. The sampling frequency was from 2 (selected biological quality elements) to 12 sampling per year (other elements of quality). Overall 52 samples were collected and 3 586 analysis were performed during 2009-2011.
D1	Project website established	yes	http://www.broz.sk/danubebirds
D2	Leaflet	yes	7,000 pcs of leaflets printed and disseminated
D2	Stickers	yes	15,000 pcs of stickers printed and disseminated
D2	postcards	yes	5,000 pcs of postcards printed and disseminated
D2	Brochure	yes	6,700 pcs of brochures printed and disseminated
D2	Posters	yes	3,200 pcs of posters printed and disseminated
D2	T-shirts	Yes	850 pcs of T-shirts made and disseminated
D2	Calendars 2010 and 2011	Yes	2,000 pcs of each printed and disseminated
D2	Pens	Yes	1,500 pcs of pens made and disseminated
D4	Installation of two bird watching towers	Yes (Annex D4.31 to 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	Both observation towers were installed and are frequently used by visitors
D5	49 meetings with stakeholders	Yes (Annex D5.10 to Inception report (01/10/2009), Annex D5.13 to 1 st progress report (01/03/2010), Annex D5.19 in 2 nd progress report (01/03/2011), Annex D5.25 in Mid-term report (31/05/2012), Annex D5.12 in 2 nd Mid-term (30/09/2012),	Many meetings with stakeholders were realised from the project start and during the whole project duration. 514 participants are recorded and presented in this action.

Task	Foreseen in the revised proposal	Achieved	Evaluation
		Annex D5.32 in 3 rd Progress report (30/06/2014))	
D6	14 presentations for students, 32 presentations for public	Yes (Annex D6.11 to Inception report, Annex D6.14 to 1 st progress report, Annex D6.20 to 2 nd progress report, Annex D6.26 to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012, Annex D6.13 to 2 nd Midterm report, Annex D6.33 to 3 rd Progress report.)	Lectures were realised for children, students and public. During each such event we presented the project itself, its objectives, actions and the LIFE+ programme and also different related environmental topics.
D6	22 guided excursions for students, 25 guided excursions for public	Yes (Annex D6.11 to Inception report, Annex D6.14 to 1 st progress report, Annex D6.20 to 2 nd progress report, Annex D6.26 to Mid-term report submitted in May 2012, Annex D6.13 to 2 nd Midterm report, Annex D6.33 to 3 rd Progress report.)	Excursions, trips, or practical care for nature actions were realised for children, students and public. During each such event we presented the project itself, its objectives, actions and the LIFE+ programme and also different related environmental topics.
D7	Exhibition Bird life in Danube floodplain	Yes (Annex D7.10 & D7.12 to Inception report, Annex D7.13 & D7.15 to 1 st progress report, Annex D7.19, D7.21 & D7.22 to 2 nd progress report, Annex D7.27 to Midterm report, Annex D7.14 to 2 nd Mid-term.)	exhibition presented at 34 venues
D8	book – Birds of Danube floodplains	Yes	Presentation book “Birds of Danube floodplains” was published and distributed by the end of the project in the target region of Danube floodplains.
D9	Conferences (19), press conferences (7), press releases (34), articles (50), reports and interviews on radio (12) and TV (18)	Yes (Annexes in each report: Annex D9.13 Inception report, Annex D9.16-18 to 1 st progress report; Annexes D9.23-27 to 2 nd progress report, Annexes D9.28-31 to Mid-term report, Annex D9.15 to 2 nd Mid-term report, Annexes D9.34-39 to 3 rd Progress report)	Most of the press conferences, articles and media events were connected with finalization of actual restoration actions (restoration of river branch systems and/ or fishways) were realised mostly in the second half of the project.

Immediately visible results are those, where significant change and improvement of the situation was caused by project actions. This means for example removal of barriers and bringing water to previously (long-term) dry areas. Actually most of the project actions are like this (C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4, C.5, C.6, C.10, C.11). Also bringing the grazing animals on abandoned meadows (C.7) did bring very quick visible results in look of the landscape and major vegetation cover of pastures. Planting of native tree species to restore natural refugia and nesting area (C.8) is the **action with long-term impact** and results will only become apparent after a certain time period. Also some of the target species react very quickly to well-designed project actions and like to occupy the pioneer stands such as Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and Sand martin (*Riparia riparia*). Other species are more conservative and need more time for their population to recover. More time is also needed for natural development of plant and animal communities in changed ecological conditions after implementation of the project's actions.

There have been 5 **project amendments** and each of them helped the project management team to tackle unexpected issues in project implementation. After each amendment, project implementation was easier as before. Reasons for amendments were withdrawal of AB Agravia by 31/12/2010 and prolongations of the project due to serious delays in public procurement and impacts beyond the control of the coordinating beneficiaries.

Effectiveness of dissemination of the project's results:

The project's results were disseminated via several tools, including media outcomes, published materials, presentations at workshops and conferences, etc.

Important communication tool which is also building trust and credit of project staff were numerous personal meetings with stakeholders, authorities, public, etc. Active communication of the project's results led to improved institutional capacities and knowledge of the key stakeholders. Personal meetings proved to be the most effective way to discussed technical proposals of restoration actions on-the-spot. Personal meetings provided a platform to share experience and exchange know-how as well as to establish professional contacts.

Numerous presentations and excursions organized during the project were attended by more than 3 000 participants of students and public. The project's interactive exhibition became popular and effective tools to disseminate the project's results and increase public awareness – especially children. This is evidenced by a high demand of institutions, who were interested to host the exhibition. Only by 30/06/2014 it was attended by more than 20 000 visitors.

The project and its results in nature conservation and river restoration were positively recognized both at national and international level and received several awards. In 2012 – National landscape award, of the Slovak Environmental Agency (SAŽP) – special recognition for project with high model value in landscape management for the proposal including restoration measures at the Veľkolélsky ostrov island (actions C.5, C.6, C.7, C.8, C.9). In 2012 BROZ has received the Award of the Slovak minister of environment, which was largely also because of Danube birds LIFE project. In 2014 BROZ was rewarded as one of three finalists of the European river price award organised by the International River Foudation.

6.5. Analysis of long-term benefits

Environmental benefits

The LIFE project aimed to bring **direct conservation benefits** to the target species through restoration and improvement of quality of their natural habitats and thus to improve their conservation status according to the **Birds and Habitats Directives**. Each of 11 project conservation actions did bring environmental benefits and improvement of the targeted area and target bird species which use the restored habitats.

Most of the project conservation actions targeting the water habitats, especially large scale river branch restoration (Action C.5 and C.6) support also sound implementation of the **Water framework directive**. Restoration of Medved'ovské rameno and Veľkolélske rameno river branch system were first such large river restoration actions done in Slovakia and therefore have also high replication value. Slovak Water Management Enterprise, who participated in preparation of these actions is showing them in their own presentations as the bright examples of good and modern care for our rivers.

The project's actions contribute also into the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and 7th EU Environment Action Program, in particular to the following priority objectives:

1. to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital
3. to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing
4. to maximise the benefits of the Union's environment legislation by improving implementation
5. to increase knowledge about the environment and widen the evidence base for policy
6. to secure investment for environment and climate policy and account for the environmental costs of any societal activities
7. to better integrate environmental concerns into other policy areas and ensure coherence when creating new policy
9. to help the Union address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively.

Long-term benefits and sustainability

The project was focused mainly on one-off investments, which did restore natural river dynamics and vital ecosystem functions and services. Restored wetlands, river branches and river banks will provide for a long time living space, feeding and nesting habitats for target bird species. Sustainable grazing regime at Veľkolélsky ostrov Island has been established, which is now functioning without any project financing. Lowland meadows as birds feeding habitats were restored and are maintained by grazing.

Minimum or no external effort is needed to maintain restored natural habitats such as wetlands and/ or river branches. Also nesting walls and natural nesting habitats at the river banks should be primary maintained without human interference by natural water flow and river dynamic, as it is for example in the water course of the restored Medved'ovské rameno river branch system:



Planted young trees need human care mainly in first 1 - 3 years after planting, which includes removal of weeds, climbers, protection from game, etc. This costly part was secured during the project. To keep the planted trees further is responsibility of forest owner/ manager. Major owners and managers of the forests, where native tree species were planted are Lesy SR and BROZ.

In general, no or only little management and maintenance is needed for realised project actions in following years after the end of the project.

Details regarding what actions should be carried out, when, by whom and using what source of finance are listed in the After-LIFE conservation plan.

Long-term / qualitative economic and social benefits include creation of jobs during the project and using supplies of local and regional companies. Some of the supplies had one-off character of supplies for individual construction, some were longer – term, e.g. planning of trees and follow up maintenance and after planting care was realised during several years. Re-establishment of the traditional livestock grazing created several permanent jobs continuing also after the project end.

Local inhabitants, communities, land owners and land managers can benefit also from restored and/ or improved ecosystem services. Restored localities with improved water regime support better grow of floodplain forests (also in large adjacent areas) and/ or provide better condition for fishing or hunting.

Benefits for the locals are also emotional. Many people have really appreciated especially large scale river branch restoration actions, or re-starting grazing of Veľkolélsky ostrov Island, bringing the landscape back to times of their youth and childhood. People enjoy nice environment and landscapes also for recreation.

Due to intensive media campaign and promotion of Danube floodplains, local patriotism and local pride of people was supported and strengthened. Project indirectly supported few local businesses starting to promote eco-tourism in Danube floodplains area.

Replicability, demonstration, transferability, cooperation

Project LIFE07 NAT/SK/000707 Conservation of Endangered Bird Species Populations in Natural Habitats of the Danube Inland Delta was the first such large and integrated Life project in Slovakia. **Unique partnership and cooperation** of diverse project beneficiaries (2 state water management enterprises, 2 NGOS, 1 private business company and 1 University)

from both sides of the Danube River, and the state border going in the middle of the river, resulted in **successful and ambitious model solutions. Project actions have high replication value** and can be used in various area along the Danube River and in Danube River basin. The Danube River, as the largest and most international river in the EU, should be one of the priorities of the nature conservation and protection of the EU. It is a significant component of the common European biodiversity; it belongs to the species richness hotspots in Europe. As a natural biotic corridor it ensures the connectivity of the Natura 2000 network – connecting its individual components.

Best practice lessons

The project and its actions are based on know-how and best-practice available and applied in Europe. Best-practice conservation and restoration measures applied during the project were inspired mostly by measures realized in Austria, Hungary (our closest neighbors) and other countries at the Danube River. Very important best-practice aspect of the project is the fact that it is bringing together partners from different sectors, with different backgrounds and expertise, namely environmental non-governmental organizations, state water management enterprises and scientific and education sector (University).

What has changed during the project was, that initially we were visiting best practice examples in other countries abroad. At the end of the project we could and we did present the best practice from our own ambitious project actions.

Demonstration value

The project has significant demonstration value. Restoration actions and technical measures have been applied in such a scale for the first time in Slovakia, demonstrating model solutions for specific nature and river conservation issues.

The project and financial support provided by the European Commission have significantly contributed to Danube floodplain habitat conservation in Slovakia. It has initiated an intensive communication between stakeholders and increased institutional as well as expert capacities on protection of birds and their habitats especially in relation to water management, but also forestry and traditional animal farming.

Long-term indicators of the project success

To monitor long-term sustainability of the project's results the following indicators were selected:

- number of nesting pairs of target bird species monitored during the project
- size and species composition of the restored grasslands and lowland meadows
- increase of population size of species using the restored habitats
- new species starting to occupy and permanently use restored habitats
- water level of the restored wetlands
- flow capacity of the restored river branches

The indicators will be monitored annually.