



LIFE14 NAT/SI/000005

Mid-term Report

Covering the project activities from 01/11/2015 to 31/10/2017

Reporting Date

01/11/2017

LIFE TO GRASSLANDS



ZAVOD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
ZA VARSTVO NARAVE





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Data Project

Project location:	Slovenia (4 project sub-areas)
Project start date:	01/11/2015
Project end date:	31/10/2020 Extension date: /
Total budget:	€ 3.898.582
EU contribution:	€ 2.923.936
(%) of eligible costs:	75

Data Beneficiary

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2 List of key-words and abbreviations

AB - Associated beneficiary

CB - Coordinating beneficiary

EC - European Commission

EU - European Union

ZRSVN - Zavod Republike Slovenije za varstvo narave (Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation)

KGZ Ptuj - Kmetijsko gozdarski zavod Ptuj (Agriculture and Forestry Institute Ptuj)

PRJ Halo - Podeželsko razvojno jedro (Rural development centre PRJ Halo)

KS Dobovec - Krajevna skupnost Dobovec (Local community Dobovec)

Društvo GK - Društvo Gorjanske košenice (Society Gorjanske košenice)

MOP - Ministrstvo za okolje in prostor (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning)

MKGP - Ministrstvo za kmetijstvo, gozdarstvo in prehrano (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food)

SIDG - Slovenski državni gozdovi d.o.o. (Slovenia State forest ltd)

SKZG RS - Sklad kmetijskih zemljišč in gozdov Republike Slovenije (Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia)

PSA - project sub-area



3 Executive summary (max 2 pages)

The main objective of the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS is improvement of the conservation status of dry grasslands in Eastern Slovenia through overgrowth removal and establishment of appropriate long-term use of dry grassland. Two project targeted priority habitat types are: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) ((* important orchid sites) (EU_6210(*)) and Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe) (EU_6230(*)). The project area consists of four project sub-areas: Haloze, Gorjanci Kum and Pohorje.

The project is concretization and upgrading of the existing system of management of dry grassland in Slovenia through Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia (2015-2020). It will lead to dissemination of good practice examples in the field of active management of Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia as well as elsewhere in central European region.

Preparatory action A.1 has been successfully completed, while preparatory actions A.2, A.3 and A.4 are still in progress (according to time plan). There has been a slight delay in signing Agreements for joining the project's activities with landowners. It is taking an extremely high effort from project staff, (more than anticipated in the project proposal), to persuade farmers to join the project activities. Farmers are negatively oriented towards signing any new form of long-term agreement for managing their land in a specific way. It took a long time (and repetitive farm visits by project staff) to establish trustful relations with farmers.

Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) and 6230(*) were prepared (Action A.2) by CB ZRSVN. Conservation guidelines were prepared using participatory approach, involving experts, partners and relevant stakeholders. Overall, 15 preparatory and communication workshops were organised in Action A.2. The External subcontractor, prepared the Methodology for standardized field methods for mapping and determining the conservation status of targeted habitats, using indicator species and their reference values (Action A.2), and a Field form for monitoring of the initial status and the impact of project activities on targeted habitat types with assigned indicators (Action A.2, D.1).

Altogether 7853 initial information or additional information about the progress of the project, were sent to different home and e-mail addresses (Action A.3, indicator is 4000). Until now, project staff carried out 432 farm visits (Action A.3, indicator 400).

In order to actively involve farmers/landowners into the project's implementation actions (removing the overgrowth and long-term management of dry grasslands by mowing, grazing and traditional orchard rejuvenation), 20 local workshops: 9 project sub-area (PSA) Haloze, 5 PSA Gorjanci, 4 PSA Kum, and 3 PSA Pohorje were carried out in cooperation with project partners (indicator is 18). Altogether 356 farms/landowners attended the local workshops. (Action A.3). To ensure the transparency for inclusion of landowners/farmers into the project activities project partners prepared the Public invitation for the inclusion into the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS activities (Action A.3).

With the considerable effort from the project staff, we managed to obtain 95 Application from farmers/landowners to be included into project activities and 190 landowners/tenants

consensuses. Until now, we signed 43 Agreements with farmers and landowners (Action A.4). We are optimistic that it will be easier to get more farmers and landowners on board, once the first actions on the field will take place. We are getting very positive feedback from the field. The delay of the signing the Agreements with farmers affected also the implementation in the action C.1 (removal of overgrowth). There has been a slight delay in the start of the overgrowth removal activities under Action C.1. All other concrete conservation actions are progressing as planned. We carried out all necessary public tenders and signed all necessary contracts for the supply of moving, grazing equipment, transport of livestock (Action C.2) and rejuvenation of traditional orchards (Action C.3), to ensuring long-term management of grassland. We will start with the overgrowth removal activities (Action C.1), assurance of appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands (Action C.2) and restoration of the traditional orchards (C.3) in autumn 2017. External subcontractor prepared The first phase report of the Assessment of the socio-economic impact of the project actions on local economy and population (Action D.2). Additional external subcontractor prepared The first phase report for the Assessment of the project's impact on the ecosystem functions (Action D.3).

The project web page is up and running www.lifetograsslands.si and www.travisca.si in Slovene with English and Croatian subpage (Action E.5).

Awareness raising through education and training is progressing according to the time plan and 3 Educational programs for 3 different age levels were prepared (Action E.6). More than 30 events (presentations, workshops or field days) for children and teachers were organized by the project. Altogether more than 900 children and 120 teachers attended project events. An Educational program for teachers "Dry grasslands as a model for learning about environment and biology" was prepared by CB ZRSVN. It was successfully accepted into the national "Catalogue of additional teaching programs and trainings for educational professionals" (KATIS) under the Ministry of Education Science and Sport. Successful inclusion of the "Dry grasslands as a model for learning about environment and biology" into official national educational programmes is a great achievement for the project. A didactic game (Brain box: 10 themes, each containing 6 play cards) was prepared by CB ZRSVN.

Two info rooms (on PSA Haloze and PSA Pohorje) and one project classroom on PSA Kum are equipped (Action E.7).

Awareness raising and dissemination activities are being implemented according to the time plan. The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS, LIFE mechanism and Natura 2000 network were presented at: 34 events – lectures and presentations for National and local authorities (Action E.1) and 47 events for general public and local community (Action E.2). From the beginning of the project until now 44 articles were published at national and local newspapers (16 of them written by project staff, 28 written by independent journalists), 47 internet articles (8 of them written by project staff), 12 radio and 5 TV broadcasts (Action E.2)

The progress of project activities is shown on the Timetable diagram (Chapter 9.).

All Deliverables and Milestones that were due to be completed by this reporting date, are completed (Annex 10.1).

We plan to reach all project goals by the end of the project.



4 Introduction (max 2 pages)

The LIFE project Conservation and management of dry meadows in Eastern Slovenia (LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) is aimed at improving favourable condition status of two priority targeted habitats and ensuring the appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands. The project area consists of four project sub-areas: Haloze, Gorjanci Kum and Pohorje, altogether covering seven Natura 2000 sites (five pSCI and two SPA) and in total 35.599 ha.

Two project targeted priority habitat types are: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco- Brometalia) ((* important orchid sites) (EU_6210(*)) and Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe) (EU_6230(*)). The conservation status of both in Slovenia, in view of results of the reporting according to the Habitats Directive 2013, was bad/unfavorable (U2-, U1-).

According to the data on HT mapping from 2005 in Haloze project sub-area, 13.2% of all non-forest areas are in different phases of overgrowing. In different in earlier phases of overgrowing are 299,3 hectares of HT 6210(*), which amounts to 14.6% of the entire surface of the HT in the project sub-area Haloze. According to the data on non-forest HT mapping from 2008 in Gorjanci project sub-area, 11.6% of all non-forest areas are in different phases of overgrowing. In the earlier phase of overgrowing are 2 hectares of the HT 6210(*), which amounts to 3.4% of the entire surface of the HT in the project sub-area Gorjanci. In Kum project sub-area land is being abandoned also due to the industrial degradation of the area in the past and, in turn, undesirable fruit and vegetable growing owing to the high content of poisonous elements in the soil. In different phases of overgrowing are 68 hectares of the HT 6210(*), which amounts to 26.37% of the entire surface of the HT in the project sub-area Kum.

In Slovenia virtually all “semi-natural *Bromus erectus*-dominated dry grasslands” (6210*) are at the same time important orchid sites. This extensively used dry grassland habitat type appears in small and medium sized fragments.

Sites with prevailed Acid soil are rare in Slovenia; therefore HT 6230(*) is a habitat of many endangered species. Most *Nardus* grasslands are semi-natural habitats, where regular active management is the ultimate condition of their sustainable existence. According to the data on HT “first general” mapping from 1973/76 in Pohorje project sub-area, with revision in 1995, 39.70% of all grassland areas were already in different phases of overgrowing on Pohorje PSA. In different phases of overgrowing are 52.60 hectares of the HT 6230(*), which amounts more than 20 % of the entire surface of the HT in the Pohorje project sub-area.

The project will address following threats to dry grasslands in Slovenia,

- Land abandonment and overgrowing as a result: Targeted habitats are often present in higher elevations, on steep terrains, that are more demanding for management. The agricultural revolution in the 20th century, changed the situation drastically. Targeted habitat types are in sharp decline. These areas are the first to be abandoned, due to harder management condition (greater distance from the farm, steep slopes, hard terrain, low productivity of dry grasslands). Instead, farmers tend to intensify the land that has higher productivity and is therefore more economically interesting, closer to their farm and is easier to manage.

- Fragmentation of plots: Average size of a farm plot in Slovenia is 6.5ha. In project sub-areas (which are hilly and remote) the size of a farm plot are even smaller. For example, an average size of a farm in Haloze PSA is 4,81ha. The small average size of plots and farms/husbandries is diminishing the economic viability and sustainability of a farm. As a consequence farmer tend to find jobs in nearby cities and have farming as an “afternoon job”, and still persist on a farm only due to historical reasons.
- Inappropriate grazing/moving practices: A large proportion of targeted habitats HT 6210(*) and HT 6230(*) are unsuitable maintained. The traditional use of dry grasslands with single / possibly double annual mowing or extensive grazing has been rapidly replaced by modern ways of land use in recent years, with high grazing pressures (up to 1.9 head of cattle/ha) and multiple mowing. As a result of over fertilization, early and too frequent mowing, intensive and permanent grazing by small livestock, the targeted habitats are turning into other habitat types.
- Abandonment of traditional orchards: In the last few decades, the traditional orchards have been disappearing rapidly in the HT’s area. Maintenance of traditional orchards is economically not interesting enough for modern agriculture. In addition, many orchards do not reach even the minimal surface of 1 ha (fragmentation) to be eligible for AEP (subsidies). The orchards are very important for the Haloze project sub-area, given the characteristic of the area’s hilly relief with exceptionally high inclinations (up to 30%) which in combination with the bedrock causes a very high degree of sliding threat. This is additionally increased by new forms of land use (e.g. intensive grazing by small livestock).
- Low level of awareness as to the importance of dry grasslands’ and its’ conservation of traditional orchards: Poor awareness of local inhabitants and visitors of the importance of dry grasslands; HT 6210(*), HT 6230(*); and its’ conservation is a result of the lack of knowledge, poor informing on ecological significance and conservation value of dry grasslands.

The project will address all threats through following project activities: removal of overgrowth, sustainable use of dry grasslands in exchange for free use of mowing and grazing equipment, purchase and renting of land and restoration and maintenance of traditional orchards through rejuvenation pruning, planting of seedling of traditional orchards fruit tree varieties and networking of farmers / owners / land managers. In addition, awareness raising and education activities will support field activities.

Socio-economic context

Farmers can get actively involved in the project by applying sustainable dry grassland use of their land and with that, they get possibility of overgrowth removal, free use of mowing and grazing equipment as well as get their traditional orchards rejuvenated, all of that provided by the project free of charge. In addition, the project foresees the development of economic study of dry grasslands preservation and development of a local trademark, which will help increase the economic viability of local farms. Further on, local service providers can respond to all open tender calls and supplement their income. To supplement concrete actions, promotional and educational activities supplemented by series of meetings and workshops will influence local community and increase its positive attitude towards dry grassland conservation. We hope that in the long-run, people will recognize Natura 2000 areas as a sustainable development opportunity.

Expected longer-term results

The project will ensure appropriate long-term use of 517 ha of targeted habitats dry grasslands over four project sub-areas (7 Natura 2000 sites). The expected long-term sustainable use will be applied to HT 6210(*) on a surface of at least 260 ha (Haloze project sub-area (PSA) 180 ha, PSA Gorjanci 30 ha and PSA Kum 50 ha) and to HT 6230(*) on PSA Pohorje on 257 ha. Designated management zones, specific management measures and conservation guidelines for sustainable management of dry grassless (targeted habitats), developed in the project, will be integrated into existing sectoral plans for forestry, game management, and local community development plans and will be excepted by local farmers, which will ensure their long-term implementation, even after the end of the project. The project established an internet platform for networking between landowners and potential land users in order to support economic viability of farms. In addition, the economic study of dry grasslands preservation and development of a local trademark will improve economical perspective of local farms. Educational nature trails and dry grassland info rooms supported by education of youth and teacher will increase the knowledge of the importance of dry grassland conservation.

Replicability and transferability

The project is concretization and upgrading of the existing system of management of dry grassland Slovenia through Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia (2015-2020) (Program upravljanja območij Nature 2000). It will lead to dissemination of good practice examples in the field of active management of Natura 200 sites in Slovenia as well as elsewhere in central European region. Development of Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of dry grassland (Action A.2) will have a demonstrative value for future management of other Natura 2000 areas in Slovenia. Their incorporation into the sectoral plans (Action A.2) will upgrade management measures, management zones and management system for target habitat type currently set in Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia (2015-2020). The knowledge can be replicated in the field of active management of other Natura 2000 sites with the same habitat types in Slovenia as well as elsewhere in central European region or can be transferred to other types of dry grassland habitat types since this document contains of concrete measures for farmers for sustainable management of dry grasslands.

5 Administrative part

The project partnership consists of a:

- Coordinating beneficiary (CB): Zavod Republike Slovenije za varstvo narave (Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation; from now on CB ZRSVN)
- Four Associated beneficiaries (AB) namely:
 - Kmetijsko gozdarski zavod Ptuj (Agriculture and Forestry Institute Ptuj from now on AB KGZ Ptuj),
 - Podeželsko razvojno jedro Haloze (Rural development center PRJ Halo from now on AB PRJ Halo)
 - Krajevna skupnost Dobovec (Local community Dobovec from now on AB KS Dobovec)
 - Društvo Gorjanske košenice (Society Gorjanske košenice from now on AB Društvo GK).

All associated beneficiaries have a unique important role and each brings added value to the project partnership. AB KGZ Ptuj, being a regional institution responsible to provide public services of agricultural advising, professional tasks of rural development, expert tasks in the production of crops and livestock covers is crucial in the field of agriculture. ABs: PRJ Halo, KS Dobovec and Društvo GK are important project sub-area stakeholders and opinion makers with good connections to local associations and farmers, which is crucial for the project to be successful in the field.

CB ZRSVN signed partnership agreements with all four associated beneficiaries in December 2015 (Annex 10.2). While preparing the partnership agreement the project manager has taken into consideration the Commissions' Provisions and Guidelines. A co-financiers agreement was signed in June 2016 (Annex 10.3).

CB ZRSVN nominated: a full-time project manager Ms. Nika Debeljak Šabec, a part time financial coordinator Ms. Maruša Danev, a full time project assistant Ms. Andreja Rožnik and four part time project sub-areas coordinators (namely: Mr. Aleksander Koren for PSA Haloze, Mr. Jurij Gulič for PSA Pohorje, Ms. Ljudmila Stahovnik for PSA Kum and Mr. Matej Simčič for PSA Gorjanci). The Project manager is responsible for project implementation, compilation of project reports and coordination of project actions while the Project assistant is responsible for project administration and accountancy.

Each of the associated beneficiaries nominated a project coordinator employee, who communicates with the project manager namely: Mr. Peter Pribožič for AB KGZ Ptuj, Mr. Jernej Gojc for AB PRJ Halo, Mr. Franci Bratkovič for AB Društvo KG and Mr. Marjan Jamšek for AB Dobovec.

Currently the project team consists of 8 full time and 22 part time members. Altogether the partnership is amounting to 14,7 full time personnel. The project team members are working together and/or independently on their assigned activities. The partnership is well defined, balanced and working together well. Management organigrams are in Annex 10.4.

The successful and professional management of project and the quality of project results is assured by The Supervisory board committee. The Supervisory board committee was formed at the Kick off meeting 20th - 21st of February 2016. Representatives of all project beneficiaries

were nominated as members of the Supervisory board committee, namely: CB-ZRSVN: Ms. Nika Debeljak Šabec, Ms. Maruša Danev; AB KGZ Ptuj: Mr. Andrej Rebernišek; AB PRJ Haloze: Mr. Jernej Gojc; AB Društvo GK: Mr. Franci Bratkovič and AB KS Dobovec: Mr. Marjan Jamšek. The project Supervisory board committee met 4 times until now (22nd of April 2016, 15th of November, 30th of March 2017 and 4th of October 2017).

All partners prepare written monthly reports on progress of the activities to the CB ZRSVN. A monthly joint partnership written report on progress of the project is submitted by the CB ZRSVN to the external monitor (Mr. Nikolaj Pečenko, NEEMO). The project manager is in regular contact with the external monitor regarding question raised and cooperation with the external monitor Mr. Pečenko is good. So far, we have had two visits by external monitor (20th of January 2016, 26th of May 2017).

In addition, yearly partnership 2 day field meetings are organized by the CB ZRSVN (PSA Gorjanci 8th -9th September 2016, PSA Kum 21st -22nd September 2017).

The project manager is also in contact with the representative of the co-financer (Ministry Environment and Spatial Planning), also a LIFE focal point for Slovenia, Ms. Julijana Lebez Lozej.

ABs also prepare financial reports to the CB ZRSVN every 3 months (time sheets, expenditure reports and copies of all receipts/invoices that are all labelled with the project number). The reports are being a joint by the CB ZRSVN to revise the project expenditure.

For easier management and reporting of the partnership, CB ZRSVN prepared a handbook "Management plan of the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS" (Annex 10.5). It covers contents of the Annex X to the Model LIFE Grant Agreement, General conditions and reporting requirement of the EC and internal reporting rules.

Within Action F.3 the external independent audit company RÖDL & PARTNER Družba za revizijo in davčno svetovanje, d.o.o. was selected. The audit company performed an overview of the documentation management and accounting system of all beneficiaries. The auditors gave us some suggestions on how to improve the project management.

So far we submitted to the EC a Progress report at the end of June 2016.

Until now, there were no amendments to the Grant Agreement.

6 Technical part

6.1 Progress per action

6.1.1 Action A.1: Analysis of the initial situation of the agricultural use of dry grasslands

Foreseen start date: IV/2015

Actual start date: November 2015

Foreseen end date: III/2016

Actual (or anticipated) end date: September 2016

Status: completed, according to planned time table

In the initial stage of the project, detailed analysis of the situation of the current and past agricultural practices were collected in relation of the project.

An introductory workshop was organised for the partners on the 22th of December 2015 by the CB ZRSVN. The purpose of the workshop was to assign and coordinate the tasks involved in this action.

CB ZRSVN prepared two different questioners in collaboration with project partners. The first one is a General questioner regarding current agricultural practice on a farm, future perspectives of a farm and potential to be involved in a project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (Annex 10.6). The AB KGZ Ptuj is filling the questionnaires during the entry of farmers from Haloze into the Agri-environmental measures of the Rural development program or when a farmer comes to get advice from a farming advisor. AB PRJ Halo is filling the questionnaires when a farmer visits their office and CB ZRSVN fills the questionnaires at farm visits. Altogether 211 questioners were filled until now.

The second questioner is concerning the Past agricultural practice on a farm, (Annex 10.7). Both CB ZRSVN and AB KGZ Ptuj personnel were filling the questioners during field visits to farms. Altogether 105 questioners were filled.

AB KGZ Ptuj obtained data for recent (2006-2015) agricultural management history from the Agency for Agricultural Markets and Rural Development (Agencije za kmetijske trge in razvoj podeželja RS). Following data were obtained: data for inclusion of farmers into agricultural policy measures, data on areas eligible for agricultural payments (GERK) as well as data on animal breeding analysis (Annex 10.8).

AB KGZ Ptuj subcontracted Geodetski Zavod Celje to conduct the analysis and prepare the report of the obtained data for the state of actual and past land use, areas eligible for agricultural payments GERK and ownership structure for Project sub-areas (PSA): Haloze, Pohorje, Kum, and Gorjanci. The subcontractor also included data on the stocking rates, stock types, grazing periods and feeding regimes (start and finishing dates) into the report (Annex 10.9).

Four joint inventories »Initial analysis of the state of the project sub-areas« were prepared, one for each of the PSA (Annex 10.10).

AB KGZ Ptuj, CB ZRSVN as well as, on the request of the ZRSVN as coordinating beneficiary to the co-financer of the project, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, made an application to the Surveying and Mapping Authority (Geodetska uprava RS) to obtain information on the land ownership. Unfortunately, we were not able to obtain the data on land

ownership, since the data are being classified as personal data of landowners, which are not for public use.

A GIS database was compiled of all available spatial data for all four project sub-areas.

We visited Súske Consulting company (Vienna, Austria); company which prepared farm management monitoring indicators for “Result based Payments in Austria”. They presented their approaches to monitoring of farm management by indicator species. Similar approach was later developed for targeted habitat types and applied on the field in this project.



Picture: Consultations carried out with the Súske Consulting.

In view of preparation to activities in Action A.2 CB ZRSVN organized a workshop on the 13th of May 2016, with project partners and external contractor (Fakulteta za matematiko in naravoslovje, Univerza v Mariboru, Univ. Mb. FNM) (one for each project subarea). Project partner and external subcontractor exchanged knowledge on habitat types and local species of the project subareas. External subcontractor also presented working methods and work specifications for each of the project sub-area.

Following equipment necessary to carry out this action was purchased:

- by AB KGZ Ptuj: one personal computers with software, one ArcGIS license, one external disc and one mobile phone;
- by AB PRJ Halo: working place equipment for employee (project staff).

6.1.2 Action A.2: Elaboration of the Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / 6230(*) in the project sub-areas

Foreseen start date: IV/2015

Actual start date: December 2015

Foreseen end date: IV/2017

Actual (or anticipated) end date: December 2017

Status: in progress, according to planed timetable

In order to get information of the initial situation of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230(*), a public tender was published in April 2016. CB ZRSVN prepared a joint Public tender for actions A.2 and the Action D.1 (Monitoring of the impact of project action). The Analysis of the initial situation of the HT 6210(*) and HT 6230(*) included: evaluation of the habitat type baseline status - updating of old habitat type mapping, specific flora surveys, recording of the habitat type structures and its conservation status). External subcontractor, University of Maribor - Faculty of natural sciences and mathematics (Univ. Mb. FNM), was selected. Univ. Mb. FNM prepared

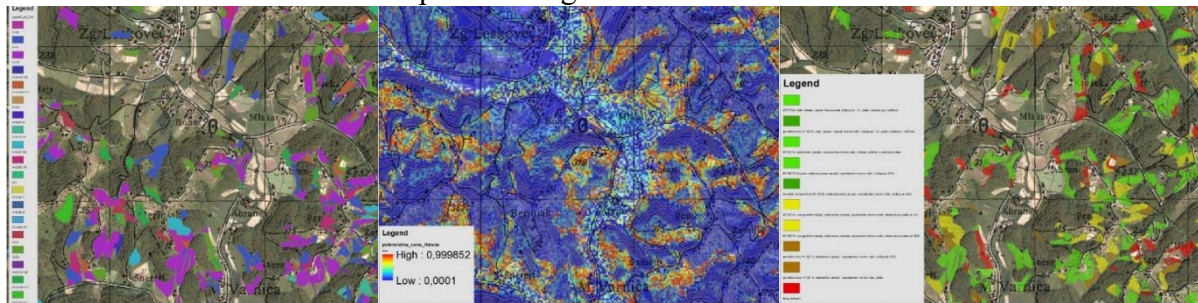
Protocols and the Methodology for standardized field methods for mapping and determining the conservation status of targeted habitats using indicator species and their reference values for each PSA (Annex 10.11). Univ. Mb. FNM also prepared a Field form for monitoring of the initial status and impact of project activities on targeted habitat types with assigned indicators for each PSA (which will also be used in action D.1) (Annex 10.11). External subcontractor Univ. Mb. FNM prepared the Report of initial situation of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230(*) of all PSA in September 2016 (Annex 10.12).

Initial mapping of the habitat types is very complex, where more than 50 habitat types or crosses between various habitat types are mapped. CB ZRSVN therefore carried out, according to the prepared Zonation protocol (Annex 10.13), GIS data analysis - zoning and classification of habitat types and prepared maps of Potential areas to be included into project activities for each PSA (Annex 10.14), Following classes were defined:

- targeted habitat type in favourable conservation status,
- targeted habitat type in unfavourable conservation status,
- potential areas for targeted HTs (currently not a targeted HT) - areas where targeted habitat type was present in old HT mapping and taking into consideration also potential distribution map.

This zonation maps was used when determining, if an applicant is suitable to be included in the project activities (Action A.3).

External subcontractor Univ. Mb. FNM also prepared, to their best expert opinion using modelling, Potential distribution maps of targeted habitats for all PSA (Annex 10.15). Baseline data for modelling were distribution data from monitoring's of targeted habitat types and their hybrids, taking into account following environmental variables: altitude, the inclination of the surface and its exposure of the surface, index of the position of the slopes, global solar irradiation (direct and diffuse), soil base type and land use. Modelling methodology used was so-called distribution model of species using the method of the Mahalonobis distance.



Picture: Comparative maps of a.) left -habitat type mapping by external subcontractor, b.) middle -potential distribution map prepared by modelling, c.) left -Potential areas to be included into project prepared by zoning and classification of habitat types

During the preparation phase of the project different approaches all round Europe in conservation of 6210* and 6230(*) habitat type and other similar grassland habitat types have been examined. The specific socio-economic situation combined with specific geographic disadvantages (steep slopes, small plots, landslides...) in our PSA, demanded an individual approach, as it is also suggested in the general recommendations of the Common guidelines (Technical Report 2008 12/24: Management of Natura 2000 habitats *Semi-natural dry

grasslands (Festuco-brometalia) 6210 and Technical Report 2008 14/24: Management of Natura 2000 habitats *Species-rich Nardus grasslands 6230).

When preparing Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230(*) for each PSA (Conservation guidelines), we examined and took into consideration following documents:

- Life STIPA – Saving Transylvania important pastoral ecosystems, 2010-2013;
- Baltic environmental forum – Management of coastal habitats and grasslands, Life Nature Co-op, 2004;
- Life Restoration of dry grasslands in Denmark, 2010-2013;
- Burren Life – Farming for conservation in the Burren: Burren best practice guides, 2010;
- UK National ecosystem assessment Technical report – Chapter 6: Semi-natural grasslands, 2011;
- Life Xero grazing – Semi-natural dry-grassland conservation and restoration in Vallée de la Suse through grazing management, 2013-2018;
- Life Herbages – Priority actions for grasslands and meadows in Lorraine and the southern Ardenne, 2013-2019;
- Life Ricopri - Ripristino e conservazione delle praterie aride dell'Italia centro-meridionale, 2011-2015;
- ADAS – Management Guidelines for Grassland in Environmental Schemes, 2009.

CB ZRSVN together with project partners prepared four Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230(*) for each PSA (Annex 10.16). Each document consist of two parts:

- Bases for targeted habitat type management (Strokovne podlage za upravljanje habitatnega tipa). This document contains all the data about nature conservation values of PSA, statement of objectives, historical land use analysis, agricultural policy, forestry, climate, social and economic background and urbanism.
- Nature conservation measures for sustainable management of dry meadows in the project sub-areas of the LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project (Naravovarstvena izhodišča za upravljanje suhih travniš na projektnih pod-območjih projekta LIFE TO GRASSLANDS). This document contains of concrete measures for farmers for sustainable management of dry grasslands:
 - deforestation of abandoned surfaces and establishment of grasslands,
 - management of dry grasslands with target HT in good conservation status by grazing and mowing,
 - management of dry grasslands with target HT in bad conservation status as a consequence of too intensive grazing, mowing or abandonment,
 - establishment and management of orchards.

Conservation guidelines were prepared using participatory approach, involving experts, partners and relevant stakeholders.

Overall, 15 preparatory and communication were organised (Annex 10.24):

- 5 workshops for with-in the project partnership: 26th of October 2016 (ZRSVN-internal), 9th of November 2016 (4 workshops for all PSA: PSA Haloze, PSA Kum, PSA, Gorjanci- and PSA Pohorje),

- 4 workshops with external experts:
 - PSA Gorjanci, 28th of November 2016, external experts: Public Institution - Regional Park Kozjansko, Univ. of Maribor - Faculty of natural sciences and mathematics;
 - PSA Kum, 28th of November 2016, external experts: Association of sheep breeding societies of Slovenia, Chamber of agriculture and forestry, Unit of Ljubljana, University of Maribor - Faculty of natural sciences and mathematics;
 - PSA Haloze, 29th of November 2016, external experts: Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, University of Ljubljana – Dept. of agriculture, Society for breeding sheep Stoperce, Institute for cartography of fauna and flora;
 - PSA Pohorje, 29th of November 2016, external experts: Slovenia state forest ptd. (Company managing state owned forests), Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, University of Ljubljana- Dept. of agriculture, University of Maribor - Faculty of natural sciences and mathematics, Institute for cartography of fauna and flora.
- 6 workshops with local stakeholders: PSA Haloze (2 workshops on 19th of January 2017 and 28th of January 2017); PSA Pohorje (2 workshops on 23rd of January 2017); PSA Kum (workshop on 2.2.2017) and PSA Gorjanci (workshop on 23rd of August 2017).

In the project, there are 3 topics of external subcontracting (for the CB ZRSVN) attached to the “forestry profession works”, namely:

- Preparation of the »Strategic Project (guidelines) for overgrowing action and initial analysis of the Status of the forestation processes« for the project sub-area Pohorje (Action A.2),
- Preparation of 7 detailed silviculture plans for the implementation of concrete C actions for the project sub-area Pohorje (Action A.2),
- Guidance and surveillance of forestry works for all project sub areas (Action C.1).

A public tender for “forestry professional works” was published on the Slovenian Public Procurement portal in September 2016. We received no offers for the public tender (Annex 10.17). We had to close the public tender without choosing any external subcontractor. We solved the unforeseen situation in the way that CB ZRSVN project staff (additional CB ZRSVN project staff - foresters Sebastjan Štruc and Klemen Kamenik) overtook the task and carried out analysis of the Status of the forestation processes. Further on, they have prepared together with the CB ZRSVN staff Jurij Gulič the Strategic guidelines for overgrowing areas that covers the forest sector for project sub-area Pohorje (Annex 10.18). Consequently, CB ZRSVN used more working hours (personnel costs) on the Action A.2 than anticipated, since we overtook additional tasks, but we managed to solve the unforeseen situation. We wrote to the project monitor Mr. Pečenko on the 17th of March 2017 (Annex 10.19), before we exceeded the personnel category, on intention to move 6.000€ from cost category External assistance cost CB ZRSVN to Personnel category cost CB ZRSVN. He advised us to include the changes in the Mid-term report (see chapter 8.1).

From the data gathered in action A.2 CB ZRSVN prepared four draft Action plans, one for each PSA (Annex 10.20). Draft Action plans include description of the initial situation (baseline assessment) and identification of areas for the implementation of concrete actions depending on the conservation status. Draft versions include areas, where we already signed Agreement

with frames/landowners. Action plans are going to be constantly supplemented with new areas of activities, according to newly signed Agreement with frames. They are going to be finalized when we obtain agreement with farmer for all the necessary areas for sustainable long-term management planned in the project.

Conservation guidelines for sustainable management were, according to the Management plan – article 12 of the Decree of Natura 2000 areas in Slovenia and the Programme of Management of Natura 2000 Areas in Slovenia state that management of Natura 2000 areas in Slovenia, integrated into relevant sectoral management plans (Annex 10.21).

In October 2016 (17th-20th of October 2016) CB ZRSVN organized a training trip to the project Life RI.CO.PR.I (LIFE09 NAT/IT/000118, also HT 6210(*)). We shared experiences about management of dry grasslands, especially through grazing and communication work with farmers (Annex 10.22).



Picture: Exchange of experience with the project Life RI.CO.PR.I (LIFE09 NAT/IT/000118)

Following equipment necessary to carry out this action was purchased by CB ZRSVN: one digital camera, upgraded three existing concurrent ArcGIS licenses, two personal computers with software, three pairs of binoculars and personal protection equipment (six protection jacket with pants for six employees) and two mobile phones.

6.1.3 Action A.3: Involvement of landowners in the project and identification of areas for action implementation

Foreseen start date: I/2016
Foreseen end date: IV/2017
Status: in progress

Actual start date: December 2015
Actual (or anticipated) end date: December 2018

This action is crucial for the identification and acquisition of targeted land for the implementation of project activities that will help to improve the state of grassland or maintain their favourable condition and ensure the long-term preservation of dry grasslands in the projects sub-areas Gorjanci, Haloze, Kum and Pohorje

At the beginning of the project, CB ZRSVN prepared a simple pamphlet with information regarding the project (Annex 10.23). In addition, project partners presented the project, financial mechanism LIFE and Natura 2000, to as wide local public as possible, at many events (Annex 10.24 Table of project events). The aim was to inform people about the project, its

activities, financial mechanism LIFE and Natura 2000 network. Altogether 7.853 initial information about the project or additional information about the progress of the project, were sent to different home and e-mail addresses (indicator is 4.000) (Annex 10.25). Until now, project staff carried out 432 farm visits (indicator 400) (Annex 10.25).

To ensure the transparency for inclusion of landowners/farmers into the project activities project partners prepared the Public invitation for the inclusion into the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS separately for each PSA (Annex 10.26). To assure the transparency of administrative revision and evaluation of application the Agreement on the procedure for implementing public invitation under the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (Annex 10.27) were signed between project partners and the Commissions for evaluating the applications were appointed for each PSA (Annex 10.28).

The Public invitation for the inclusion into the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was prepared separately for each PSA. The Public invitations for the inclusion into the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS were announced on the website of the project (www.lifetograsslands.si), on the website of the partners of the project: www.travisca.haloze.org (Haloze project sub-area), www.trd-kum.si (Kum project sub-area) and www.zrsvn.si (for all PSA) on 17th of April 2017.

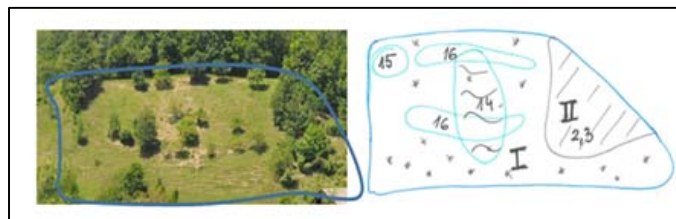
A press conference, in the premises of the AB PRJ HALO, was held on 11th of April 2017, in order to present the Public invitation for the inclusion into the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS to the public.



Picture 2: Press conference order to present the Public invitation for the inclusion into the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS to the public.

We have also prepared a Protocol for application processing (Annex 10.29). It involves,

- opening and administrative check of the application,
- examination of the suitability of the land plot to be included in the project activities according to the Project PSA zoning and classification (prepared in Action A.2),
- farm visit:
 - filling in the Field form for monitoring of the initial status of the targeted habitat type with indicators (prepared in Action A.2),
 - checking and drawing the plots for long-term management (mowing, grazing, overgrowth removal, orchard rejuvenation) on the aerial photo,



Picture 2: checking and drawing the plots for long-term management on the field

- determination of the amount of grazing equipment needed (m of wire, number of: poles, insulators, handles, couplings, springs, electric fence controller....);
- digitalization of plots for long-term management in the office.

In order to actively involve farms / landowners in the project's implementation actions (mowing, grazing, removing the overgrowth and long term management of grasslands), 20 local workshops: 9 PSA Haloze, 5 PSA Gorjanci, 4 PSA Kum, and 3 PSA Pohorje (Annex 10.30) were carried out in cooperation with project partners (indicator is 18). At workshops we informed the interested farmers and land owners about the progress of the LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project and presented them materials that were published with a public call. We invited the farmers to participate in the project and helped them with the explanations in fulfilling the application for inclusion in the project implementation actions. Altogether 356 farms / landowners attended the workshops.



Picture: impressions from local workshops.



In order to get farmer interested and actively involved in project activities we carried out 432 farm visits (indicator is 400).

Large fragmentation of land and the lack of interest by landowners are the main obstacles we are facing in involving farms in the implementation of concrete project actions.

As already stated in Executive summary, there has been a slight delay due to lack of interest of farmers / landowners in getting involved in the project activities. It is taking an extremely high effort from project staff (more than anticipated in the project proposal) to persuade farmers to join the project activities. Farmers are negatively oriented towards signing any new form of long-term agreement for managing their land in a specific way, due to negative experience of being involved in the agri-environmental measures of the European Agricultural Policy. It took extremely long time (and repetitive farm visits by project staff) to establish trustful relations with farmers. In addition, large fragmentation of land, with the average farm size for PSA Haloze being 4,81ha, is demanding greater efforts to ensure the targeted indicator value for long-term management.

With the considerable effort from the project staff, we managed to receive 95 application from farmers /landowners until now (Haloze 71, Kum 8, Gorjanci 6, Pohorje 10).

We processed 75 applications. Application opening and assessment, as well a farm visits were carried out.

We are optimistic, that it will be easier to get more farmers on-board, once the first actions on the field will take place. We are getting very positive feedback from the field.

We are therefore extending the Action A.3 until December 2018. The extension of the action will not effect total project budget, its duration or targeted project results.

Following equipment necessary to carry out this action was purchased:

- by CB ZRSVN: one mobile phone;
- by KGZ Ptuj: one laptop computer with software, two projectors, two projector screens, one external disk and one pair of binoculars.

6.1.4 Action A.4: Permit procedures

Foreseen start date: I/2016

Actual start date: March 2016

Foreseen end date: IV/2017

Actual (or anticipated) end date: December 2018

Status: In progress

Initially we planned to obtain four nature conservation approvals (one for each project sub-area). We double-checked the necessity for the acquisition of a Nature conservation approval in accordance with Article 105 of the Nature Conservation Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 96/2004) for the activities planned in the project. Nature conservation approvals for implementations of concrete conservation actions planned are not needed anymore, due to changes in national legislation (Nature conservation Act) during the project implementation.

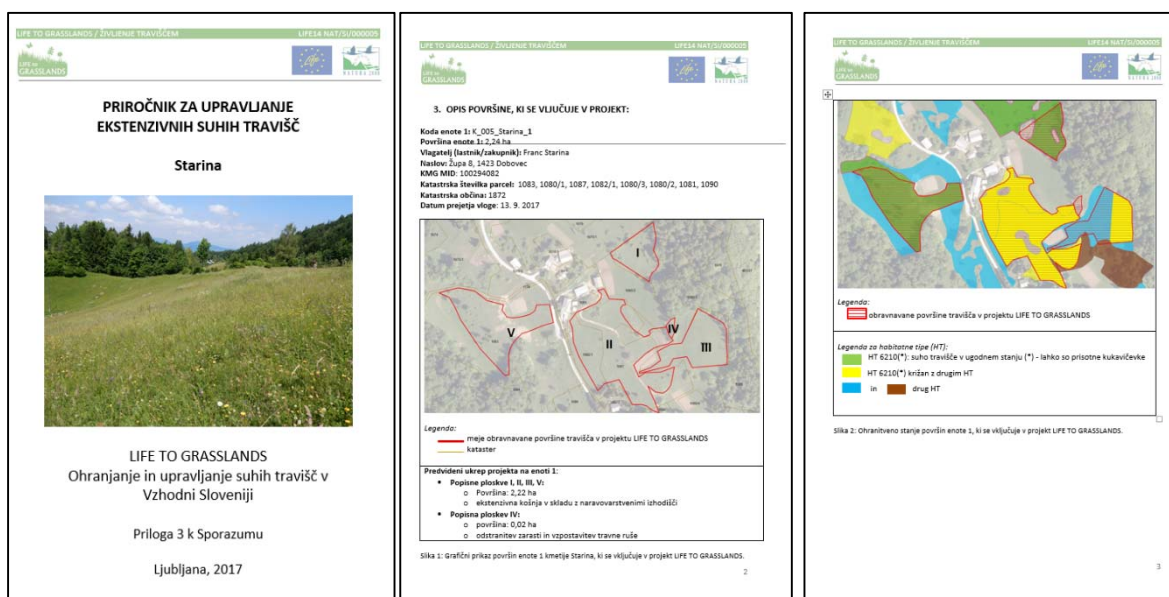
With the 95 application we managed to obtain 191 owner permits (separately for PSA Haloze 147 owner permits, for PSA Kum 8 owner permits, for PSA Gorjanci 12 owner permits, for PSA Pohorje 24 owner permits; Annex 10.31) (indicator 180 owners permits). Until now, we signed 43 Agreement for joining the project's activities with landowners/farmers (Annex 10.32). There is a slight delay in signing Agreements with landowners/farmers due to reasons stated in action A.3, even though a lot of effort was put in by the project staff.



Picture: Agreement for joining the project's activities with landowners/farmers

43 Agreement for joining the project's activities with landowners/farmers are currently assuring appropriate management of 229,12 ha of dry grasslands (Gorjanci: 10,35 ha, Kum: 13,97 ha, Pohorje: 131 ha and Haloze: 73,8 ha).

When a landowner/farmer signs an Agreement for joining the project's activities, CB ZRSVN prepares a personalized a Management manual for extensive dry grassland use for each specific farm plot (Annex 10.33). The personalized Management manual incorporates description of the surface to be included in the project activities with its exact location shown on aerial photo, the current conservation status of the plot with presence of positive and negative indicator species. Data are gathered from Field form for monitoring of the initial status and impact of project activities on targeted habitat types with indicators conducted (Action A.3).



Picture: Insert for the personalized a Management manual for extensive dry grassland use showing exact location of plots included in project activates and their current status.

There was also a slight delay in obtaining consensuses from Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia (as a manager of the agricultural state owned land) and Slovenian state forests, ptd. (as a manager of the state owned forest land). It took much longer to obtain consensuses from both of them, than anticipated according to our previous experience, prior to the split in management in July 2016 (when we were collaborating with Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia as manager of both agricultural and forest state owned land). We handed in a joint Application for consent to both managers of state owned land, at the same time (as agreed with both directors) on the 8th of March 2017. We managed to obtain consensus from Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia on the 15th of September 2017 (Annex 10.34). We are in the final stages of signing the agreement also with the Slovenian state forests, Ltd. (SIDG). The agreement with the Slovenian state forests, ptd. will be signed in November 2017 (Annex 10.34).

Specific forest areas fall into category under the Act on Forests (Article 21, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 30/1993), for which permits for deforestation for agricultural purposes have to be obtained from the Slovenia Forest Service (ZGS). Relevant permits were obtained for PSA Pohorje (Annex 10.35). On other PSA's the permits are not needed.

A slight delay in Action A.3 and the split of management of state owned land resulted in a slight delay also in Action A.4. We are therefore extending the Action A.4 until December 2018. The extension of the action will not effect total project budget, its duration or targeted project results.

6.1.5 Action B.1: Purchase and lease of land in the Haloze project sub-area

Foreseen start date: III/2016

Actual start date: July 2016

Foreseen end date: II/2018

Actual (or anticipated) end date: December 2018

Status: In progress

In the Haloze project sub-area farmland is mostly in private ownership and very fragmented. Farms are of small surfaces, with hard management conditions (steep slopes ...). The farms have poor economic viability or are unsustainable. As a consequence, farmer tend to find jobs in nearby cities and have farming as an "afternoon job", and still persist on a farm due to historical reasons. This is causing land abandonment and overgrowing on one hand and unsuitable farm practices (over-fertilization, overgrazing,...) on the other hand. Since, in many cases, farmers are not interested to continue or re-establish appropriate land use in areas where land use has been abandoned, long term land lease or purchase is the only option that would enable us to ensure favourable conservation status of the HT 6210*.

Potential sites for action implementation were identified through results of actions A.1 and A.2. Field visits to potential sites and evaluation of their nature conservation importance were carried out in combination with action A.3 and D.1 in April, May and June 2017.

Three larger priority sites for action implementation were identified in Čerin (cca 8 ha), Veliki vrh (cca 5 ha) and Pristava (cca 1,5 ha) areas. These are areas of large abandoned dry grassland complexes with important orchid populations. Land ownership for those areas was obtained from Land Registry. Key landowners were personally contacted. Invitation letters were prepared and send to all landowners of those three sites in September 2017. All together 17 landowners were invited to lease/sell the land to the project (Annex 10.36). Both options, land purchase or land lease, were offered to landowners.

For the Čerin area 5 landowners have already officially informed as that they are interested in selling the land (Annex 10.36). We are waiting for decision of other landowners.

Parallel, potential farmers, who would manage the purchased/leased land, were also identified and for Čerin and Pristava area. They have already joined the project.

Further priority sites for action implementation are currently being identified.

Possibility to lease/sell land and free use of the purchased/leased land by interested farmers is namely part of the content of the public call prepared in A.3. According to our current experience, we expect it will take more time to finish the action implementation as expected.

Implementation of the action is still in early phase of implementation. According to current results approximately 50% of the surface area foreseen in expected is in procedure. In next month's intensive work will be done to reach the expected results as planned.

We are therefore extending the Action B.1 until December 2018. The extension of the action will not effect total project budget, its duration or targeted project results.

6.1.6 Action B.2: Purchase of land in Gorjanci-Radoha project sub-area

Foreseen start date: III/2016

Actual start date: July 2016

Foreseen end date: II/2018

Actual (or anticipated) end date: June 2018

Status: In progress, according to planed time table

In the Gorjanci project sub-area farmland is mostly in private ownership and very fragmented. Farms are of small surfaces (not eligible for RDP founding), hard conditions (steep slopes ...) and economic inefficiency because land abandonment and overgrowing on one hand and unsuitable farm practices (overgrazing, improper mowing time) on the other hand. Since in many cases there are no interested farmers to continue or re-establish appropriate land use, purchase of land is the only option that would enable us to ensure favourable conservation status of the HT 6210.

CB ZRSVN and AB Društvo Gorjanske košenice have reached a verbal agreement with the landowner of three (3) plots to sell them. All three (3) plots are on Miklavž area near meadows, managed by the members of Društvo Gorjanske košenice.

In accordance with the law and pre-emptive right landowners of the 3 plots already posted an intention to sell the plots on bulletin board of Šentjernej Administrative unit.

On 2 of these 3 plots overgrowth will be removed after the purchase and AB Društvo Gorjanske košenice will ensure long-term management of all 3 plots.

6.1.7 Action C.1: Removal of overgrowth

Foreseen start date: III/2016

Actual start date: May 2016

Foreseen end date: II/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: June 2020

Status: in progress

Project sub-area Pohorje: Potential locations for the overgrowth removal activities were defined in the document "Strategic guidelines for overgrowing areas that covers the forest sector for project sub-area Pohorje" prepared in Action A.2 (Annex10.18). Exact locations were further specified in the document "Plan for labelling and determination of the quantity and structure of trees on agricultural and forest land in areas with the occurrence of habitat type (6230*) for Pohorje project sub-area" (Annex 10.18), which was prepared by CB ZRSVN. Majority is State owned land 42,65ha, the rest is privately owned land 11,76ha, for which we already received consensuses for the removal of overgrowth.

CB ZRSVN published a public tender for “Labeling and determination the quantity and structure of the tree on agricultural and forest land for the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS” (Annex 10.40) on 21st of March 2017. We received one offer from the Slovenia Forest Service (ZGS), which was subcontracted for the works (Annex 10.40). External subcontractor ZGS carried out field work on 54.43 ha in summer of 2017 and prepared a report according to the public tender (Annex 10.41). Altogether 10.000m³ trees were marked to be cut down.



Picture: Marking of trees on the field by external subcontractor ZGS.

PSAs Haloze Kum and Gorjanci: Locations for overgrowth removal are identified by applications from land owners / frames, when joining project activities. Considering the fragmentation of the plots, the action is expected to be carried out on a large number of small areas.

CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender for »Removal of overgrowth in project sub-areas Pohorje, Haloze, Kum and Gorjanci « which was published on European portal for public tenders on the 17th of August 2017. Following external subcontractors were contracted: for PSA Pohorje - Lesoteka gozdarstvo d.o.o.; for PSA Haloze - Zeleni turizem; for PSA Kum - Smer d.o.o., svetovanje, marketing, energetika, razvoja and for PSA – Gorjanci - Avtoprevoznništvo in gradbena mehanizacija, Dejan Obradovič (Annexe 10.42).

The progress indicators for removal of overgrowth is: up to November 2017 completed 30 % of planned surface overgrowth removed, will not be reached. We are certain, that the overall goal of 133 ha of surface cleared from overgrowth till 30th of June 2020, is achievable. The delay in signing the Agreements with farmers (Action A.2) affect the implementation in the action C.1 on the field.

Until now we organized 4 voluntary actions (24th of September 2016 - PSA Pohorje, 18th of February 2017 - PSA Haloze, 15th of April 2017 - PSA Gorjanci, 23rd of September 2017 - PSA Pohorje) with additional one planned for Gorjanci on the 21st of October 2017. The progress indicator is - up to November 2017 completed 5 of 16.



Picture: voluntary action on the PSA Pohorje

Following equipment necessary to carry out this action was purchased: by CB ZRSVN: four compact digital cameras and field work material for volunteer removal of overgrowth (working gloves).

6.1.8 Action C.2: Ensuring the appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands

Foreseen start date: IV/2016

Actual start date: August 2016

Foreseen end date: III/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: September 2020

Status: In progress, according to planed time table

Action C.2 aims at ensuring appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands. Project partners therefore purchased the necessary equipment which will enable local farmers (to whom we will lend it free of charge) to re-establish use of grasslands or in some cases to improve existing use.

One of the key reasons why the use of dry grasslands is being abandoned, is due to hard working condition (steep slopes) which demand traditional management uses, such hand mowing or management with modern expensive mowers. Modern equipment enables economically justified use, but is too expensive for many small local farmers.

Currently with the 43 Agreement for joining the project's activities with landowners/farmers signed we are assuring appropriate management of 229,12 ha of dry grasslands (Gorjanci: 10,35 ha, Kum: 13,97 ha, Pohorje: 131 ha and Haloze: 73,8 ha).

When discussing with farmers, who were prepared to be included in the project activities of longer management (mowing) of dry grasslands, they were interested only if they would have a possibility of a free rent of modern mowers, adjusted for steep terrain, which is making mowing on steep terrain much easier and less time consuming. They were not interested in renting ordinary mowers. After consultation with experts and farmer organizations, we decided to purchase more capable mowers for steep terrain (lighter, hydrostatic drive, able to mow more hectares per mower per day), which are more expensive than originally foreseen. PRJ Halo purchased 2 modern mowers adjusted for steep terrain (instead of 8 ordinary grass mowers initial planned), for the same amount of money. Due to this reason, we included an option into the Call for inclusion into the project activities for farmers/landowners a free rent of a modern mower by joint management of several farmers (which have to mow at least 20ha of land). With this option, the same area will be managed by less number of mower and with less human effort.

Joined public tender for purchasing mowing equipment was prepared by partner PRJ Halo for partners PRJ Halo and KS Dobovec (Annex 10.43). Public tender was published on European Public tender portal in July 2017. The supplier Autocommerce d.o.o., was chosen and contracted separately by each beneficiary (Annex 10.43). Following mowing equipment was purchased: 1 modern mountain mower for steep terrain and 1 brush cutter by KS Dobovec; 2 mountain mowers for steep terrain by PRJ Halo.

Joined public tender for purchasing grazing equipment was prepared by partner PRJ Halo for partners PRJ Halo, ZRSVN and KS Dobovec (Annex 10.44). Public tender was published on European Public tender portal in July 2017. The public tender for purchasing grazing equipment was divided into 5 categories (A - wire, B - insulators, C - wooden posts, D - electric fence chargers, E - livestock drinking supply systems). Following suppliers were chosen and

contracted separately by each beneficiary: Pekovec d.o.o. for part A (providing wire), part B (providing isolators) and part D (providing electric fence chargers); Žaga Trbovlje d.o.o. for part C (providing wooden posts) and Kmetijski zavod Bric, Soča for part E (livestock drinking supply systems) (Annex 10.44).

Partner Društvo GK carried out a separate public tender for one ordinary mower since the terrain in Gorjanci does not have as extremely steep terrain as have PRJ Halo and KS Dobovec. They carried out the public tender in August 2017. A supplier KZ Krka z.o.o was contracted for supplying 1 disc mower that is mounted to a tractor (Društvo GK already owns a tractor) (Annex 10.45).

Joined public tender for purchasing cattle trailer was prepared by partner PRJ Halo for KS Dobovec and ZRSVN in October 2017. A supplier TPV AVTO d.o.o. was contracted for supplying 5 trailers to PRJ Halo, 1 to ZRSVN and 1 to KS Dobovec) (Annex 10.46). Till now PRJ HALO bought 1 trailer for sheep. Other trailers will be bought in 2018.

Joined public tender for purchasing backpack movers was prepared by partner PRJ Halo for KS Dobovec in October 2017. A supplier Kmetijstvo Polanec d.o.o. was contracted for supplying 11 backpack movers to PRJ Halo and 9 to KS Dobovec) (Annex 10.47). 10 backpack movers were already purchased by PRJ Halo and 7 by KS Dobovec. Backpack movers will be delivered to the farms upon signing the Agreements. One will be kept and used within the project for voluntary overgrowth removal actions.

First seasonal orders were made for equipment that will be delivered in next weeks to farmers that already signed Agreements (Action A.3).

We plan to ensure appropriate long-term use of 517 ha of dry grasslands.

6.1.9 Action C.3: The restoration and maintenance of traditional orchards

Foreseen start date: I/2016, IV/2016

Actual start date: November 2015

Foreseen end date: I/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: March 2020

Status: In progress, according to planed time table

KGZ Ptuj prepared a list of varieties of traditional meadow orchard fruit tree suitable project purposes. Initial check of availability of traditional orchards tree varieties in nurseries showed that there are not enough seedling of traditional varieties of fruit trees in nurseries in Slovenia. The development of a traditional meadow orchards varieties seedling needs two seasons. To avoid possible delays, we prepared a public tender for the purchase of traditional meadow orchard fruit tree varieties in September 2016 so that the chosen external subcontractor would have enough time to develop sapling of specific varieties. CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender and an external subcontractor Kartuzija Pleterje was subcontracted (Annex 10.48). For this year's planting season, Kartuzija Pleterje already prepared sapling for planting.

14 saplings were planted in Gorjanci in November 2016. 335 sapling will be planned in PSA Haloze and Gorjanci in November 2017. AB KGZ Ptuj prepared a Manual, on how to properly plant and manage traditional orchard fruit trees (Annex 10.49) and Descriptions of the traditional orchards tree varieties (Annex 10.50).

CB ZRSVN also prepared a public tender for the protective equipment for seedlings in March 2017 (pols, underground protective nets for the root system and protective nets for trunks). Supplier Žaga Trbovlje, d. o. o. was subcontracted (Annex 10.51). In addition CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender for rejuvenation pruning of abandoned or neglected orchards in May 2017. External subcontractor Zavod Jabolko was subcontracted (Annex 10.52).

To ensure the successful pollination of orchards and increase the biodiversity of dry grasslands, insect hotels will be installed in the vicinity of orchards. PRJ Halo prepared public tender for construction of insect hotels in September 2017. External subcontractor LIMPAK d.o.o. was contracted.

From the existing KGZ Ptuj database, the list of farmers already owning traditional orchards, for the project sub area Haloze, was prepared. CB ZRSVN, AB Društvo GK and AB KS Dobovec gathered similar data for the sub areas Kum and Gorjanci. These were the farmers which were invited to participate at the practical workshops to educate landowners on the methods and importance of pruning. Project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS objectives and financial mechanism LIFE were also presented at the workshops. The AB KGZ Ptuj, CB ZRSVN, AB KS Dobovec and AB Društvo GK jointly organized workshops. AB KGZ Ptuj carried out actual demonstration of the traditional orchard tree pruning method on PSA Haloze and PSA Kum. An external subcontracted was subcontracted by the AB KGZ Ptuj for presentation of the actual demonstration of the traditional orchard tree pruning method for PSA Gorjanci.

For implementation of action has AB KGZ Ptuj purchased working equipment (pruning shears, aerial scissors, ladders and saws on a handle).

Nine (9) workshops demonstrating rejuvenation pruning of traditional fruit trees were carried out: 5 in Haloze PSA, 3 in Kum PSA and 1 in Gorjanci PSA (Annex 10.24). Four (4) workshops are planned at the end of October and at the beginning of November 2017 (2 in Haloze PSA and 2 in Kum PSA) and 2 more in the spring time.

- 29/2/2016; PSA Haloze; Kočice; number of participants: 29
- 15/3/2016; PSA Haloze; Dolane; number of participants: 29
- 31/3/2016; PSA Gorjanci- ; Miklavž; number of participants: 22
- 6/4/2016; PSA Kum; Škofja Riža; number of participants: 35
- 15/3/2017; PSA Haloze; Borl; number of participants: 26
- 23/3/2017; PSA Haloze; Jelovice; number of participants: 13
- 24/3/2017; PSA Haloze; Stari Grad; number of participants: 22
- 1/4/2017; PSA Kum; Čimerno; number of participants: 47
- 6/4/2017; PSA Kum; Dobovec; number of participants: 24



Picture: Workshops demonstrating rejuvenation pruning of old orchard trees.

The purpose of the demonstrating workshops for rejuvenation pruning and volunteer actions for sapling planting is to raise awareness among the local population of the importance of preserving traditional orchards.

We plan plant saplings of fruit trees this late autumn 2017 (optimal from October to November, depending on the season and weather conditions).



Picture: planting of saplings on PSA Gorjanci.

This action will show long term results in future. It will help improving the structure and function of the HT 6210 (*), ensure appropriate long term management of dry grasslands; prevent land form sliding and it will increase biodiversity in the project sub-area.

Public tender for the purchase of the project car was prepared by CB ZRSVN in November 2015. Supplier Avto Lušina, d. o. o. was concluded (Annex 10.53). A car: Suzuki Vitara was purchased by CB ZRSVN in March 2016 (Annex 10.53). Project car is regularly serviced.

6.1.10 Action C.4: Networking of owners and users of dry grassland plots in the Haloze project sub-area

Foreseen start date: IV/2017

Actual start date: May 2017

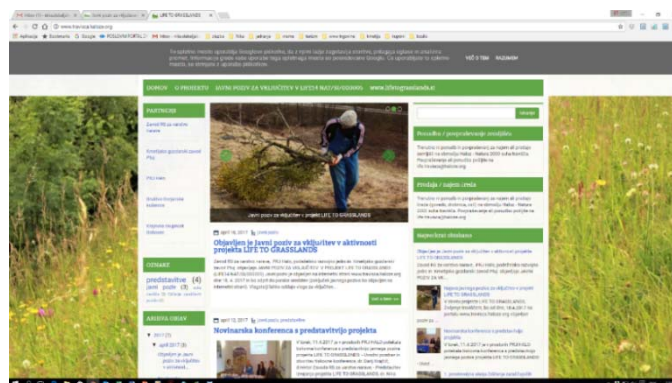
Foreseen end date: III/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: September 2020

Status: started in advance

Implementation of the action C.4 started earlier than planned, in January 2017. This is because we noticed, in early stages of the project, high importance of ensuring constant communication with the landowners / farmers and a high need for their networking.

PRJ HALO prepared the draft scheme of the web portal. In April 2017, PRJ HALO subcontracted Arhides d.o.o. to construct the web portal providing basic information about the project, its partners, LIFE mechanism and Natura 2000 as well as constant update on project development (Annex 10.54). The web portal is functional since end of April 2017. It is available on web page: <http://www.travisca.haloze.org/> . Links to this web portal are available on web pages of LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project, PRJ Halo, ZRSVN and KGZ Ptuj.



Picture: web portal for landowner networking in Haloze project sub-area

The portal is made in a way that topics and themes can be easily added or deleted. At present stage, the portal facilitates land purchase/land, livestock buy/lease/sell. All relevant news about the project implementation are also available on the portal. Due to catastrophic 2017 summer draught, an information about mutual assistance of landowner/farmer to farmer in distress, was posted on the web portal. Farmers/landowners offered free hay to farmers in need, if they mow the grass themselves. The news was covered by the press.

The portal attracted several farmers and landowners to join the project.

Promotion of the web portal was included in all events and workshops where PRJ HALO participated as well as in single contacts with landowners or residents.

For the same purpose Facebook account (LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) was created to reach as many users as possible.

As an annual information events promotion of the networking between farmers thought in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was presented at the Assembly of Local Action Group Haloze on the 11th October 2017.

6.1.11 Action C.5: Preparation of farm management plans for improving dry grasslands management

Foreseen start date: IV/2017

Actual start date: 1.10.2017

Foreseen end date: III/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

Status: started, according to planed time table

The discussion on how to prepare Farm management plans and the determination of the time plan and responsibilities took place during the partnership coordination.

6.1.12 Action C.6: Preparation of an Expert Proposal of AEP measures related to the preservation of the HT 6210(*) and 6230(*) for integration into the 2021–2027 Rural development programme of the Republic of Slovenia

Foreseen start date: IV/2017

Actual start date: June 2016

Foreseen end date: II/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: June 2020

Status: started in advance

CB ZRSVN representative Ms. Mateja Žvikart is a member of Group for grassland, formed by the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and food. The group consist of expert and policy maker in the field of grasslands, from various ministries and national expert agencies, universities and other organizations and is discussing different topic in relation to grassland management and policy (Annex 10.55). Currently the group was involved in preparation of a proposal for a change in the Specific grassland habitat management measure (HAB) which is a measure in Common agriculture policy Pillar II of the Rural Development Program (2015 – 2020). The group recommended rayonization of the measure across Slovenian region. The group met 4 times during the project duration.

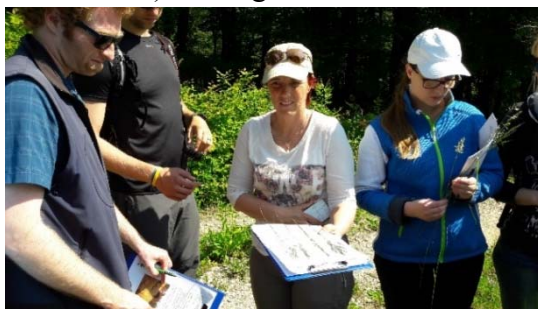
6.1.13 Action C.7: Development and Economics study of Dry Grasslands Preservation in the Haloze project sub-area

Foreseen start date: II/2018 Actual start date: /
 Foreseen end date: IV/2019 Actual (or anticipated) end date: December 2019
 Status: not due yet, according to planed time table

6.1.14 Action D.1: Monitoring of the impact of project actions success

Foreseen start and end dates: II/2017 - III/2017 and II/2018 – III/2018 and II/2019 – III/2019 and II/2020 – III/2020
 Actual start date: January 2016 Actual (or anticipated) end date: September 2020
 Status: in progress, according to planed time table

A joint Public tender with action A.2 was prepared and concluded for the Monitoring of the impact of the concrete project actions on to the HT 6210(*) and HT 6230(*) (refer to Action A.2). The contract with the subcontractor University of Maribor, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (Univ. Mb. FNM) was signed.



Picture: A field training for project partners was organized by Univ. Mb. FNM on how to fill in the Field form for monitoring of the initial status and impact of project activities on targeted habitat types with assigned indicators (1 joined and 4 for each PSA).

In order to be able to evaluate the impact of the management on conservation status of habitats, the monitoring protocol, monitoring indicators were clearly defined in Action A.2. Univ. Mb. FNM prepared a protocol and the methodology for standardized field methods for mapping and determining the conservation status of targeted habitats using indicator species and their reference values (Annex – 10.11). Field form for monitoring of the initial status and impact of

project activities on targeted habitat types with assigned indicators for each PSA was prepared in action A.2. The forms for each plot to include in to project activates were filled in with information on initial status during farm visit Action A3.

Same Field forms, for monitoring of the initial status and impact of project activities on targeted habitat types with assigned indicators for each PSA for each plot included into project activities, will be filled again during farm visits after project activities will be carried out. This data will be compared to the initial situation and the impact of project activities onto the conservation status of targeted habitat types assed.

The final outcome of action D.1 will be an assessment of the project field actions effectiveness on conservation status of the targeted habitats for all project sub-areas (4). The best practices on sustainable management for conservation of dry grassland habitat and species will be identified, which has an invaluable impact for future management of dry grassland Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia.

6.1.15 Action D.2: Assessment of the socio-economic impact of the project actions on local economy and population

Foreseen start and end dates: I/2016 – IV/2016 and I/2020 – III/2020

Actual start date: January 2016 Actual (or anticipated) end date: September 2016

Status: Phase 1 completed, according to planed time table

In line with the EU guidelines and after reviewing the literature, a Public tender for Assessment of the socio-economic impact of the project actions on local economy and population was published aby CB ZRSVN. External subcontractor University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Geography, was contracted in August 2016 (Annex 10.56).

In the first phase of the study, a set of social and economic indicators was developed to measure the socio-economic impact of project actions on the local economy and the local population during the implementation of project activities.

External subcontractor University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Geography prepared The first phase report - Analysis of the baseline for the period I/2016 – XII/2016 (Annex 10.56). On the basis of the calculation and interpretation of socio-economic conditions, the analysis of the initial state has shown many similarities, but also significant differences between the four project sub-areas. With the help of selected indicators, at the end of the project activities, a Socio-economic analysis of the impacts of project activities will be made in 2020. Based on the established socio-economic conditions in the initial state, we anticipate that the project actions will have a positive impact on the local economy and the population.

6.1.16 Action D.3: Assessment of the project's impact on the ecosystem functions

Foreseen start and end dates: I/2016 – IV/2016 and I/2020 – III/2020

Actual start date: January 2016 Actual (or anticipated) end date: September 2020

Status: Phase 1 completed, according to planed time table

We reviewed the accessible literature and EU guidelines. Through public tender, we chose company Zavod Iskrija to carry out the assessment of the project's impact on the ecosystem services (Annex 10.57). They analysed the theory behind grasslands' ecosystem services and made a methodological plan on how to detect changes in ecosystem services values as a result of project actions. External contractor evaluated the value of different types of land-use using different methodologies (transfer of values, market prices).

Contractor prepared the evaluation of ecosystem services value according to three different scenarios:

- a) scenario: no project activities, areas are being overgrown;
- b) scenario: implementation of nature conservation activities of the project (removal of overgrowth and grassland management activities)
- c) scenario: (an upgrade to scenario b) - implementation of nature conservation measures followed by the development of activities which could bring positive economic effects to the area.

External subcontractor prepared a report of the phase I (Annex 10.57). Initial results suggest that project actions will have positive impact on the (economic) value of ecosystem services as a result of removal of overgrowth.

6.1.17 Action E.1: National and local authority education and information project

Foreseen start date: IV/2015

Actual start date: November 2015

Foreseen end date: IV/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

Status: in progress according to planed time table

The aim of this action is to present, promote and educate target audience (national and local authority) about dry grasslands, its species and habitats as well as Natura 2000, protection requirements and appropriate conservation measures for dry grasslands at project sub-areas.

The project Communication manual was prepared covering all awareness raising activities and other communication activities connected to all possible stakeholders (Annex 10.58) and approaches for specific stakeholder groups were identified together with the targeted message for each stakeholder. A workshop was organized for all partners to develop the communication strategies.

The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS, LIFE mechanism and Natura 2000 network was presented at 34 project events – lectures and presentations (Annex 10.24):

- A workshop was organized with Agricultural Institute of Slovenia representatives (Kmetijski inštitut Slovenije - KIS) for preparation of guidelines for dry habitats (6210* and 6230*) for all four project sub-areas.
- 10 meetings with mayors and municipalities councils were organized (representatives of municipalities Šentjernej, Novo mesto, Kostanjevica na Krki, Trbovlje, Hrastnik, Zagorje ob Savi, Radeče, Videm, Makole, Cirkulane, Majšperk, Podlehnik, Poljčane, Žetale, Zavrč, Mislinja, Vitanje, Zreče, Lovrenc na Pohorju, Ribnica na Pohorju, Slovenska Bistrica were presented).

- 24 lectures and project presentations were organized for (Annex 10.24):
 - National authorities: Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (co-financer), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia forest service, Company Slovenian national Forests (SiDG), Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia, Farmland and Forests Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, Regional Development Agency for Koroška.
 - Local associations: Pasture community Rogla (Zreče), hunting association Šentjernej, Inter-associatory committee of the Mountaineering associations of Zasavje - Zasavje (MDO Planinskih društev Zasavja), Association of winegrowers and fruit growers Haloze, Stakeholders at Miklavž, Pasture Community Rogla.

Other important events:

-The project was presented at the Presentation of the conclusions of the Government Working Group for Haloze, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, on the 25th of January 2016 in Podlehnik.



Picture: left: The project was presented at the Presentation of the conclusions of the Government Working Group for Haloze, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, on the 25th of January 2016 in Podlehnik; right: Presentation of the project to municipalities in Haloze (16th of June 2016).

At all events, the knowledge about dry grasslands and their protection requirements were presented as well as LIFE project, LIFE mechanism and Natura 2000 network. Participants are now able to pass this knowledge to farmers, forests and land owners as well as to general public.

A series of workshops for target audience are planned in second part of the project when proper grassland management will be presented.

List of events with short description in Annex 10.24.

6.1.18 Action E.2: General public and local community awareness campaign

Foreseen start date: IV/2015

Actual start date: November 2015

Foreseen end date: IV/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

Status: in progress according to planed time table

The aim of this action is to present, promote and educate general public and local communities about dry grasslands, its species and habitats as well as Natura 2000 and LIFE project and mechanism.

At the beginning of the project, a General grasslands questioner was prepared in order to obtain information on the opinion of general public, on threats and importance of dry grasslands conservation (Annex 10.59). General questioners (163) were filled at various general public events. CB ZRSVN carried out an Analysis of General questioners from project events in 2016 and 2017 (Annex 10.59).

Two press conferences were organized (at kick off meeting at the beginning of the project on the 21st January 2016 and at launching of public call for involvement of landowners into project activities on the 11th April 2017) (Annex 10.24).

On the 16th of September 2016 LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was also presented at the event with the press conference of LIFE project "Okrepljeni do evropskih sredstev za naše okolje". The event was organized by Ministry for Environmental and Spatial Planning, networking 23 Slovenia LIFE projects. The event was covered with the media.

The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS, LIFE mechanism and Natura 2000 network as well as dry grasslands, important species and habitats, protection requirements and appropriate conservation measures was presented at 47 events for general public and local community (Annex 10.24). Among them

- 10 workshops for land owners/users, local farmers and local communities were organized,
- 9 lectures were given at different events for land owners/users, local farmers and local communities.

The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was presented at 11 traditional events at project sub-areas, like Traditional hand mowing day.



Picture: Impressions from presentation of the project on traditional events: mowing in traditional was on Pohorje (Left), goats and sheep ball Borl, Haloze (middle), Kozjansko jabolko (right).

The project and its activities were presented two times at Slovenian agriculture fair AGRA (2016 – 125.000 visitors, 2017 – 120.000 visitors) and at Narava - Zdravje fair 2016 (Nature and health fair) (25.000 visitors)



Picture: presentation of the project at the Nature and health fair 2016 (left) and on AGRA fair 2016 (left).

On 20th of May 2016, CB ZRSVN, Mountaineering Association Kum Trbovlje, TRD KP Kum and Municipality Trbovlje jointly organized an event celebrating Green week and Natura 2000 day. The event was published on site Green week (link to the site: <http://www.greenweek2016.eu/partner-event/natura-2000-day-landscape-park-kum-20-years-anniversary>). An outdoor exhibition was rented from a photographer and a light craft pilot Matevž Lenarčič.



Picture: event celebrating Green week and Natura 2000 day on KUM PSA.

From the beginning of the project until now 44 articles were published at national and local newspapers (16 of them written by project staff, 28 written by independent journalists), 47 internet articles (8 of them written by project staff), 12 radio and 5 TV broadcasts (Annex 10.60). Altogether we reached 2.709.150 people.

In order to be able to record press conferences, lectures and other events during the whole project one digital camera was bought by CB ZRSVN.

List of events with short description in Annex 10.24.

6.1.19 Action E.3: Promotion material

Foreseen start date: I/2016

Actual start date: January 2016

Foreseen end date: IV/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

Status: In progress according to planed time table

The aim of this action is to help promote the project and activities and goals.

CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender covering all printed promotional materials. A subcontractor Birografika Bori was contracted in March 2016 (Annex 10.61). Public tender was also prepared for preparation and printing of a didactic game. A subcontractor Birografika Bori was contracted in July 2017 (Annex 10.61).

Following promotion materials were produced by CB ZRSVN till now (Annex 10.1):

- In the beginning of the project, a project info-sheet were prepared in Slovenian and English language (.pdf, printed as needed) (Annex 10.23).
- 5 transportable promotional banners (one for each project sub-area and one general project banner) were produced to support project promotion Annex 10.1.
- A project brochure on four pages was printed. The brochure gives detailed information on project, project sub-areas, project targeted species/habitats and general information about the aim of the project, project action and its results and goals as well as Life+ mechanism. The brochure was printed in Slovenian language (4.000 copies), English (500 copies). Additionally, a .pdf version in Croatian language was prepared to be printed if needed Annex 10.1).
- A leaflet describing target habitat type was printed in Slovenian language (2.000 copies) and prepared as .pdf version in English and Croatian language was prepared to be printed if needed Annex 10.1).
- For each project sub-area, a leaflet was printed - 4 different leaflets (altogether 6.000 copies; Haloze – 3.000 copies, Pohorje – 1.000 copies, Kum – 1.000 copies and Gorjanci – 1.000 copies). A leaflet about Gorjanci was also printed in Croatian language (500 copies). In project sub-areas leaflets project sub-area with important information about target habitat type is presented and as well as foreseen project activities and goals (Annex 10.1).
- T-shirts (350 pieces) and straw hats (100 pieces) were produced as promotional material for volunteer, farmers and general public (Annex 10.1).
- A poster calendars for year 2017 (1.000 pieces) was produced and distributed (Annex 10.1).

All project publications are available in .pdf format on the project web page.

Good project promotion was achieved with produced promotional material (promotional banners, T-shirts, poster calendars and brochures) on different project events. Project publications increased the knowledge about project, project sub-areas, dry grasslands and target species as well as Natura 2000.

6.1.20 Action E.4: Information and interpretation tools

Foreseen start date: III/2017

Actual start date: May 2016

Foreseen end date: IV/2019

Actual (or anticipated) end date: December 2019

Status: started

CB ZRSVN prepared public tender for eight small project info plates describing the project and LIFE External subcontractor Birografika Bori was subcontracted. Project info plates were distributed to all partners. The boards were placed at visible location at all partner organisations (Annex 10.1). All other activities are planned for later stages of the project.

6.1.21 Action E.5: The project's web page and project graphic identity

Foreseen start date: IV/2015

Actual start date: December 2015

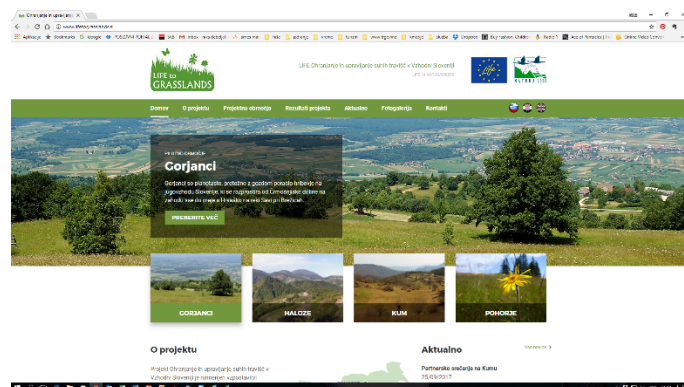
Foreseen end date: II/2016

Actual (or anticipated) end date: June 2020

Status: in progress

Project graphic identity was prepared by CB ZRSVN project staff (Annex 10.62). With project identity and logo, we uniform all project promotional material. Due to strict use of project logo in combination with LIFE and Natura 2000 logo project is easily recognizable as well as it contributes to recognition of the LIFE financial mechanism and Natura 2000 network.

As a vital part of the project's publicity, a regularly updated web page by CB ZRSVN was prepared. CB ZRSVN prepared a conceptual design together with most of the text for the web page. The subcontractor Novi splet (Atribut d.o.o.) was chosen on a tender (Annex 10.63). The web page is up and running www.lifetograsslands.si and www.travisca.si in Slovene with English and Croatian subpage. Translation was carried out by subcontractor Alkemist d.o.o (Annex 10.63). The pages are being updated regularly by CB ZRSVN. Project goals, its activities and progress are presented together with LIFE financial mechanism and Natura 2000 network. Web page helps to disseminate project activities and results. It is an important tool to raise the environmental and nature protection awareness among general public. Up to date 4.500 unique visitors visited the project webpage per month, app 50.000 since web-page was launched.



Picture: project webpage www.lifetograsslands.si.

6.1.22 Action E.6: Grassland classroom

Foreseen start date: IV/2015 Actual start date: December 2015

Foreseen end date: II/2020 Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

Status: started

Aim of the project is to raise awareness of young population about importance of dry grasslands and nature conservation and encourage schools and kindergartens to actively involve their youth into nature conservation activities.

A partnership workshop was held on the 18th of March 2016 where the action was planned in depth. Targeted kindergartens and schools were identified at the beginning of the project.

Three Educational programs for schools (Annex 10.64) with working/learning sheets were prepared by CB ZRSVN for:

- Children of the kindergarten and first part of primary school (1-3 grade),
- Children of the second part of primary school (4-6 grade),
- Children of the second third part of primary school (7-9 grade) with potential use in secondary school.

The importance of conservation of dry grasslands, traditional extensive orchards, its protection or restoration value for biodiversity as well as management practices (mowing and grazing) are incorporated into the educational programs. For each school group, a number of learning leaflets, teaching aids and workshop suggestions was prepared.

8 educational seminars/workshops for teachers were organized (4 also included presentation of the educational programs) (Annex 10.24).



Picture: impressions from different events for children.

Educational programs for schools were presented at Annual conference of Society of teachers of affiliated primary schools (70 participants) Annex 10.24).

More than 30 events (presentations, workshops or field days) for children and teachers were organized by CB ZRSVN at project events. Altogether more than 900 children and 120 teachers attended project events (Annex 10.24).

An Educational program for teachers “Dry grasslands as a model for learning about environment and biology” was prepared by CB ZRSVN. It was successfully accepted into the national “Catalogue of additional teaching programs and trainings for educational professionals” (KATIS) for professional teachers under the Ministry of Education Science and Sport (Annex 10.65). At the moment, in Slovenia the contents of nature conservation is very poorly included in the official national educational programmers for kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools. Successful inclusion of the “Dry grasslands as a model for learning about environment and biology” into official national educational programmers is a great achievement for the project.

A didactic game (Brain box: 10 themes, each containing 6 play cards) was prepared by CB ZRSVN and printed (200 copies) (Annex 10.1 and Annex 10.66).



Picture: Left: project mascot - Arnika and Primožek (arnika and primožek being indicator species of dry grasslands) are helping kids in the didactic game to learn about importance of grassland conservation.

Project web has a separate tag “Grassland classroom” with all the materials produced in the project accessible to public.

A 3-day children’s nature conservation camp and a school competition are planned for year 2018, 2019.

6.1.23 Action E.7: Equipment for setting up project info rooms in Haloze, Pohorje, Gorjanci- Radoha and Kum project sub-areas

Foreseen start date: I/2016

Actual start date: February 2016

Foreseen end date: I/2019

Actual (or anticipated) end date: March 2019

Status: in progress, according to the time plan

The aim of this action is to educate general public and school youth and general public about the importance of conservation of dry grassland habitats through setting up project info rooms in PSAs Haloze, Pohorje, Gorjanci and a project classroom on PSA Kum.

A public tender was prepared by CB ZRSVN for designing and equipping (furniture) 2 info rooms in PSA Haloze and PSA Pohorje, and a project classroom on PSA Kum. External subcontractor GEAart, d. o. o. was sub contracted in May 2017 (Annex 10.67). They produced a Conceptual design manual (Annex 10.67) and already equipped the rooms with furniture (Pictures Annex 10.67).

An info rooms in PSAs Gorjanci will be equipped in 2018, since the AB DGK has just finished constructing an extension to the Mountain home on Miklavž (PSA Gorjanci, on their own expense, not a project activity), where the new info rooms will be equipped through the project.



Pictures: new info room on Haloze (left) and Pohorje (second from the left); project classroom on Kum (second from the right) and extension to the Mountain home on Miklavž (Gorjanci – far left).

CB ZRSVN carried out a public tender for technical equipment of 3 info rooms and one class room. Due to new development in technology and multifunctional use, were equipped the 3 rooms at PSA Kum, Pohorje and Haloze with big TV screens instead of screens and projectors. We wrote to the project monitor Mr. Pečenko on the 17th of March 2017 (Annex 10.19), before we purchased the equipment. He advised us in the email (Annex 10.19) to include the changes in the Mid-term report (see also chapter 8.1). Following supplier were contracted: Gambit trade d.o.o for TV screens, Lestra d.o.o. for a projector, Acord-92 d.o.o. for laptop computers and Biro sistemi d.o.o. for Ms Office (Annex 10.67).

Environmental and nature protection awareness of general public about the Natura 2000 network as well as the importance of dry grasslands habitats and species of community importance will rise. A good example of nature conservation and dry grassland management is shown. Information about the project, along with its actions, aim and results as well as the importance of the NATURA 2000 network is presented.

6.1.24 Action E.8: Layman's report

Foreseen start date: I/2020
Foreseen end date: IV/2020
Status: not due yet.

Actual start date: January 2020
Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

6.1.25 Action F.1: Project co-ordination and management

Foreseen start date: IV/2015
Foreseen end date: IV/2020
Status: in progress

Actual start date: November 2015
Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

At the beginning of the project CB ZRSVN nominated: a full time project manager Ms. Nika Debeljak Šabec, a part time financial coordinator Ms. Maruša Danev, a full time project assistant Ms. Andreja Rožnik and four part time project sub-areas coordinators (namely: Mr. Aleksander Koren for PSA Haloze, Mr. Jurij Gulič for PSA Pohorje, Ms. Ljudmila Stahovnik for PSA Kum and Mr. Matej Simčič for PSA Gorjanci). The Project manager is responsible for project implementation, compilation of project reports and coordination of project actions while the Project assistant is responsible for project administration and accountancy.

Each of the associated beneficiaries nominated Associated beneficiary coordinators (1 each AB), an employee who communicates with the project manager namely: Mr. Peter Pribožič for AB KGZ Ptuj, Mr. Jernej Gojc for AB PRJ Halo, Mr. Franci Bratkovič for AB Društvo KG and Mr. Marjan Jamšek for AB S Dobovec.

Currently the project team consists of 8 full time and 22 part time members. Altogether the partnership is amounting to 14,7 full time personnel. The project team members are working together and/or independently on their assigned activities. The partnership is well defined, balanced and working together well. Management organigrams are in Annex 10.4.

CB ZRSVN signed partnership agreements with all four associated beneficiaries in December 2015 (Annex 10.2). While preparing the partnership agreement the project manager has taken into consideration the Commissions' Provisions and Guidelines. A co-financers agreement was signed in June 2016 (Annex 10.3). The project manager is also in contact with the representative of the co-financer (Ministry environment and spatial planning), also a LIFE focal point for Slovenia, Ms. Julijana Lebez Lozej.

The kick off meeting of the project partnership was held in Rimske terme on the 20th - 21st of February 2016. The event was organized by CB ZRSVN and attended by all AB, co-financers and some other stakeholders of the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (Table of events Annex 10.24). The project sub-areas and project activities was presented in detail. In addition, project partnership as well as LIFE mechanism and its relevant rules from the General conditions were presented. Obligation of the internal reporting of the monthly activities together with the internal financial reporting to the CB was presented as well as reporting obligation to the European commission. Detailed involvement and responsibilities of each of the beneficiaries were discussed and assigned in relation to the time plan, through a set of workshops. The kick off meeting was attended by the representative of NEEMO external monitoring team, Mr. Nikolaj Pečenko, who presented technical and financial revision rules for the project.

The successful and professional management of project and the quality of project results is assured by The Supervisory board committee. The Supervisory board committee was formed at the Kick off meeting 20th - 21st of February 2016. Representatives of all project beneficiaries were nominated as members of the Supervisory board committee, namely: CB-ZRSVN: Ms. Nika Debeljak Šabec, Ms. Maruša Danev; AB KGZ Ptuj: Mr. Andrej Rebernišek; AB PRJ Haloze: Mr. Jernej Gojc; AB Društvo GK: Mr. Franci Bratkovič and AB KS Dobovec: Mr. Marjan Jamšek. The project Supervisory board committee met 4 times until now (22nd of April 2016, 15th of November, 30th of March 2017 and 4th of October 2017).



Picture: Meeting of The Supervisory board committee.

All partners prepare written monthly reports on progress of the activities. A joint partnership written reports on progress of the project is monthly submitted by the CB ZSVN to the project monitor (Mr. Nikolaj Pečenko, NEEMO). The project coordinator is in regular contact with the project monitor regarding question raised and cooperation with the external monitor Mr. Pečenko is good. So far we have had three two visits by external monitor (20th of January 2016, 26th of May 2017).

In addition yearly partnership 2 day field meetings are organized by the CB ZRSVN (PSA Gorjanci 8th -9th September 2016, PSA Kum 21st -22nd September 2017).



Picture: Meeting of The project partnership.

For easier management and reporting of the partnership CB ZRSVN prepared a handbook “Management plan of the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS” (Annex 10.5). It covers contents of the Annex X to the Model LIFE Grant Agreement, General conditions and reporting requirement of the EC and internal reporting rules.

ABs also prepare also financial reports to the CB every 3 months (time sheets, expenditure reports and copies of all receipts/invoices that are all labelled with the project number). The reports are being a joint by the CB ZRSVN to revise the project expenditure.

So far we submitted to the EC a Progress report at the end of June 2016.

Until now, there were no amendments to the Grant Agreement.

Following equipment necessary to carry out this action was purchased: by CB ZRSVN: one laptop, one personal computer with software and one mobile phone for the project manager.

6.1.26 Action F.2: Networking with other projects

Foreseen start date: I/2016

Actual start date: February 2016

Foreseen end date: I/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: March 2020

Status: in progress

Following networking were events took place (Annex 10.24):

- A field visit to results of the project Goričko travniki (Goričko meadows; EEA Grants) was organized by the CB ZRSVN on the 1st of June 2016 for all the project partners.
- Cooperation with Kozjansko regional park was established. Their knowledge from the project (Maintaining high dry grasslands Vetrnik and lake - LIFE00 NAT / SLO / 007223) were discussed. In addition they cooperated at tree pruning workshop for farmers organized by the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS since the Kozjansko regional park also has an extensive knowledge in traditional orchard tree growing.
- Collaboration with the project LIFE Kočevsko (Conservation of Natura 2000 sites in Kočevsko, LIFE13 NAT/SI/000314) was also established.

- Ministry of the Environment and Spatial planning prepared two workshops for the preparation of new LIFE projects (8th and 9th of June 2016). CB ZRSVN was asked to presented the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS on project as good practice example of preparing campaigns for awareness raising and promotion of the project. The workshops were held for two days (the first day in NR Škocjanski Zatok, the second day at Otočec). Workshops were attended by more than 80 participants.
- 16th of September 2016: The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was presentation on the event entitled "Enhanced to European Funds for Our Environment - Okrepljeni do evropskih sredstev za naše okolje"". It was organized in the framework of the LIFE project Capacity Building by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. The organized with a press conference and attended by the Minister Irena Majcen. 23 Slovene LIFE project were presented.



Picture. Impressions from the networking event "Enhanced to European Funds for Our Environment".

- Two press conferences were organized (at kick off meeting at the beginning of the project 21st of January 2016 and at launching of public call for involvement of landowners into project activities 11th of April 2017).
- In October 2016 (17th-20th of October 2016) CB ZRSVN organized a training trip to the project Life RI.CO.PR.I (LIFE09 NAT/IT/000118, also HT 6210(*). We shared experiences about management of dry grasslands, especially through grazing and communication work with farmers.
- During the visit of the ZRSVN to the Environmental Agency of Iceland (October 2016; in the context of a bilateral exchange visit) the project LIFE OT GRASSLANDS was presented.
- the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning organized an international LIFE networking conference titled "The environment needs LIFE for the next 25 years", which took place on 25th of May of 2017 in the House of the European Union. The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was presented at the event.
- The project manager was in contact by mail with the project manager Mr. Brendan Dunford (LIFE04NAT/IE/000125 Farming for Conservation in the Burren).

Additional networking evets will be organized till the end of the project.

6.1.27 Action F.3: Audit

Foreseen start date: I/2018
Foreseen end date: III/2020

Actual start date: June 2017
Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

Status: started in advance

CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender for external independent auditor of the project's finances. The company RÖDL & PARTNER Družba za revizijo in davčno svetovanje, d.o.o., was subcontracted (Annex 10.68). They performed an overview of the documentation management and accounting system of all beneficiaries. The auditors gave us some suggestions on how to improve the project management.

6.1.28 Action F.4: After-life conservation plan

Foreseen start date: I/2020

Actual start date: /

Foreseen end date: IV/2020

Actual (or anticipated) end date: October 2020

Status: not due yet.

6.2 Main deviations, problems and corrective actions implemented

There has been a slight delay in signing the agreements with farmers Action A.3. It is taking an extremely high effort from project staff (more than anticipated in the project proposal) to persuade farmers to join the project activities. Farmers are mainly negatively oriented towards signing any new form of long-term agreement for managing their land in a specific way. It took a long time (and repetitive farm visits by project staff) to establish trustful relations with farmers. In addition, large fragmentation of land, for example with the average farm size for PSA Haloze being 4,81ha, is demanding greater efforts to ensure the targeted indicator values for long-term management. With the considerable effort from the project staff, we managed to obtain 71 Application form farmers/landowners to be included into project activities (Action A.3) and signed 43 agreements with farmers until now (action A.4). We are optimistic that it will be easier to get more farmers onboard, once the first actions on the field will take place. We are getting very positive feedback from the field.

In the Invitation to join the project activities, which was published on internet on the 9th of March 2016, the rules to join the project are strict – the land has to have a presence of the targeted habitats HT6210(*) or EU_6230(*) according to the survey of the initial situation of the habitat types carried out in the Action A.2. In case of low involvement of farmers, we can lower the rules to join the project so that also adjacent areas to the ones where targeted habitat were mapped in Action A.2 and to the areas, where according to the previous mapping of habitat types, the targeted habitats were present in the past (but are no longer present). In addition, we asked the external subcontractor which carried out the survey of the initial situation of the targeted habitat types in action A.1 (University of Maribor, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics) to produce, according to their best expert opinion, a map of potential areas of distribution for the targeted habitats inside the project sub-areas. This would be the next potential level of widening the rules of the invitation to join the project activities.

A delay was caused also caused by the fact that on the 1st of July 2016 the Republic of Slovenia nominated two new public managers of the state owned land, namely Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia (as a manager of the agricultural state owned land) and Slovenian state forests, Ltd. (SIDG as a manager of the state owned forest land). Before 1st of July 2016

the Republic of Slovenia had only one public manager of state owned land, namely Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, who had 20 yearlong concession contracts with Regional forest management companies, for carrying out works in state owned land. This new division in management of state owned land caused a delay in obtaining the consensus from both new managers of state owned land. We finally managed to obtain written consensus to carry out project activities from Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia (SKGZS RS) September 2017 (Annex 10.34). We are in the final stages of signing the agreement also with the Slovenian state forests, Ltd. (SIDG). The agreement will be signed in November 2017 (Annex 10.34).

The received applications until now do not cover the total area needed to ensure the appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands on 517ha (as planned), therefore we are extending the duration of Action A.3, A.4 and B.1 until December 2018.

The delay in signing the Agreements with farmers (Action A.2) affect the implementation in the action C.1 on the field. There is a delay in the start of the overgrowth removal activities under action C.1. The progress indicator for removal of overgrowth is: up to November 2017 completed 30 %, will not be met. We are certain that all overgrowth removal activates can be finished till November 2019 as planned.

In action A.2 a public tender for “forestry professional works” was published on the Slovenian Public Procurement in September 2016. We received no offers for public tender (annex). We had to close the public tender without choosing any external subcontractor. We solved the unforeseen situation in the way that ZRSVN project staff (additional ZRSVN project staff - foresters Sebastjan Štruc and Klemen Kamenik) overtook the task and carried out analysis of the Status of the forestation processes. Further, on they have prepared together with the ZRSVN staff Jurij Gulič the Strategic guidelines for overgrowing areas that covers the forest sector for project sub-area Pohorje. Consequently, ZRSVN used more working hours (personnel costs) on the Action A.2 than anticipated, since we overtook additional tasks, but we managed to solve the unforeseen situation. We wrote to the project monitor Mr. Pečenko on the 17th of March 2017 (Annex 10.19), before we exceeded the personnel category, on intention to move 6000 € from external cost CB ZRSVN to Personnel category cost ZRSVN. He advised us in the email, from (Annex 10.19) to include the changes in the Mid-term report (see also chapter 8.1 - finances).

All other activities in actions C are progressing as planned. We concluded all necessary Contacts for the supply of equipment for the ensuring long-term management of grassland (Action C.2: grazing equipment, equipment for moving grasslands and transport of livestock) and restoration and maintenance of traditional orchards (Action C.3: seedling of traditional orchard trees together with the protective fencing and rejuvenation pruning).

We are certain we can still meet all project goals, with the extension in Action A.3 An A.4.

6.3 Evaluation of Project Implementation

Refer to Annex 10.69

6.4 Analysis of benefits

6.4.1 Environmental benefits

a.) Direct / quantitative environmental benefits:

With the implementation of the project, we hope to eliminate key issues regarding management two targeted priority habitats in 7 Natura 2000 sites thus significantly contribute to achieving objectives and commitments of the Birds and Habitats directives.

Targeted priority habitat types:

- Dry grasslands - Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco- Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) (EU_6210(*)) and
- Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe) (EU_6230(*))

have bad/unfavourable (U2-, U1-) conservation status in Slovenia according to the results reported according to the Habitats Directive 2013. This project will focus on improving the conservation status and assure long-term management of two priority habitat types of Community and national importance namely HT 6210(*) and HT 6230(*)

Although the majority of concrete actions are not implemented at this stage of the project, we can estimate that the project will contribute to a better protection of target habitat type in project area. The “Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / 6230(*)” have a very positive effect since they harmonize the inter-sectorial management of the PSA. In addition incorporation of the prepared “The “Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / 6230(*)” into sectoral management plans will assist in long-term management of the two targeted habitat types.

The project directly contributes to the "Europe 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" (hereinafter the "Europe 2020 Strategy") and EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and its objectives to tackle the causes of biodiversity losses by 2020. The project actions will contribute also to strengthening the Natura 2000 network.

CB ZRSVN representative Ms. Mateja Žvikart is a member of Group for grassland, formed by the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and food. The group consist of expert and policy maker in the field of grasslands from various ministries and national expert agencies, universities and other organizations and is discussing different topic in relation to grassland management and policy.

A new recommended rayonization of the management measures prepared for Specific grassland habitat management measure (HAB - a measure in Common agriculture policy Pillar II of the Rural Development Program 2015 – 2020), will hopefully help in better involvement of farmers into the measure HAB and though assure a better long-term management of dry grasses national wide. New recommendations were prepared also by involvement of our project staff (Action C.6). Curranty the group was involved in preparation of a proposal for a change in the Specific grassland habitat management measure (HAB) which is a measure in Common agriculture

policy Pillar II of the Rural Development Program (2015 – 2020). The group recommended rayonization of the measure across Slovenian region. The group met 4 times during the project duration. An approach to rayonization of the management measures can be also applied to other habitat types management in Slovenia or in Europe.

Several events which were organized for national and local authorities, targeted audience, general public and local community as well as new and internet articles and radio broadcasts raised the awareness of the public about the Natura 2000 sites, grasslands, their importance and functions and threats as well as the LIFE + mechanism.

The project activities will also have beneficial effect onto the status of other species listed below.

Site	Species/habitats targeted	Other species/habitats present on site(s)
PSA Haloze	HT 6210(*) Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites).	Plants: <i>Mesobromion</i> - <i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> , <i>Arabis hirsuta</i> , <i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i> , <i>Bromus inermis</i> , <i>Campanula glomerata</i> , <i>Carex caryophyllea</i> , <i>Carlina vulgaris</i> , <i>Centaurea scabiosa</i> , <i>Dianthus carthusianorum</i> , <i>Eryngium campestre</i> , <i>Koeleria pyramidata</i> , <i>Leontodon hispidus</i> , <i>Medicago sativa</i> ssp. <i>falcata</i> , <i>Ophrys apifera</i> , <i>O. insectifera</i> , <i>Orchis mascula</i> , <i>O. militaris</i> , <i>O. morio</i> , <i>O. purpurea</i> , <i>O. ustulata</i> , <i>O. mascula</i> , <i>Polygala comosa</i> , <i>Primula veris</i> , <i>Sanguisorba minor</i> , <i>Scabiosa columbaria</i> , <i>Veronica prostrata</i> , <i>V. teucrium</i> . <i>Xerobromion</i> - <i>Bromus erectus</i> , <i>Fumana procumbens</i> , <i>Globularia elongata</i> , <i>Hippocrepis comosa</i> . <i>Festucetalia valesiacae</i> : <i>Adonis vernalis</i> , <i>Euphorbia seguierana</i> , <i>Festuca valesiaca</i> , <i>Silene otites</i> , <i>Stipa capillata</i> , <i>S. joannis</i> .
PSA Kum		
PSA Gorjanci		Animals: <i>Papilio machaon</i> , <i>Iphiclides podalirius</i> ; <i>Libelloides</i> spp., <i>Mantis religiosa</i> .
PSA Pohorje	HT 6230(*) Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe).	Plants: <i>Agrostis tenuis</i> , <i>Antennaria dioica</i> , <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> , <i>Arnica montana</i> , <i>Campanula barbata</i> , <i>Carex pallescens</i> , <i>Danthonia decumbens</i> , <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> , <i>Festuca filiformis</i> , <i>F. rubra</i> , <i>Gentiana pannonica</i> , <i>Hieracium aurantiacum</i> , <i>Homogyne alpina</i> , <i>Hypochoeris radicata</i> , <i>H. uniflora</i> , <i>Jasione montana</i> , <i>Leontodon helveticus</i> , <i>Nardus stricta</i> , <i>Polygala amara</i> , <i>P. amarella</i> , <i>P. vulgaris</i> , <i>Potentilla aurea</i> , <i>Pseudorchis albida</i> , <i>Scorzonera rosea</i> . Animals: <i>Tetrao tetrix</i> , <i>T. urogallus</i> , <i>Miramella alpina</i> .
Overall	HT 6210(*), HT 6230(*)	See section above

b.) Qualitative environmental benefits

LIFE Nature & Biodiversity:

Field surveys of the distribution and habitat conditions of target habitat types (action A.1), development of Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of dry grassland (Action A.2) and their corporation into the sectoral plans implemented (Action A.2) will upgrade management measures, management zones and management system for target habitat type currently set in Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia (2015-2020). This will ensure long sustainable management of targeted habitats on 4 project sub areas (7 Natura 2000

sites), even after the end of the project. Knowledge gained from the project will contribute to implementation, updating and development of several sectoral policies and legislation, in particular nature conservation, agriculture, environment, forestry and game management.

For long-term effect of the project, after-LIFE conservation plan will be elaborated at the end of the project. It is expected that several activities will be continued after the end of the project. The After-LIFE conservation plan will explain details regarding what actions will be carried out, when, and by whom, and will identify potential sources of finance. The plan will be drafted in consultation with all project partners and key stakeholders.

Social Economic benefits

Based on the established socio-economic conditions in the initial state, we anticipate that the project actions will have a positive impact on the local economy and the population. Throughout this project, every effort will be made to involve landowners in conducting the main works to be undertaken as part of this project. This will ensure that the money spent will support the local rural economy at all four project sub-areas.

Project offices and project staff (PRJ Halo, GK Gorjanci, KS Dobovec) are based in project sub-areas and preferential qualified project staff will be employed from these areas also supporting the local economy.

In action C.7 13 workshops, one study visit for stakeholders (visiting good practices for economic evaluation of products from dry grassland) and a draft brand will stimulate farmers and landowners to start preparing products from dry grassland. We will try to include also knowledge of marketing opportunities of conserved nature in educational tourism.

Aside from agriculture, the other main land use of all four project sub-areas regions could be recreation and sustainable green tourism for which the regions have an excellent potential. Despite the high potential of the region with walking, cycling and wine routes passing through the two SACs, many important nature features and cultural heritage, small villages in the areas, the touristic offer is either very poor and disconnected or it deals with unsustainable visitors' management. Tourism is in turn to be reliant on the quality of the natural and cultural landscape, a quality that is upheld through the farming traditions practiced by these rural dwellers. Organic farming has been frequently suggested as the ideal alternative for farmers at the project sub-areas, but it does not have a strong presence in the areas yet. By involving the local tourism associations in nature conservation, it would be a good chance to persuade them of the benefits of modern nature protection (the extra benefits, improved environment, alternative economic opportunities) and to raise their social and environmental awareness.

Tools for sustainable development of ecotourism will be integrated in farm management plans (Action C.5) for all project subareas. We will encourage local residents to seek new business and employment opportunities – farm self-employment in production of products from grassland (hay milk, cheese, beef meat product, products from fruit and in tourist sector and complementary activities (e.g. tourist farmhouses). With the upgrade of information and educational infrastructure (info rooms and classroom, upgrade of educational trails – Actions

E.4 and E.7). This will support local economy, help farm economics, and thus positively affect the socio-economic conditions of the sub-areas.

Replicability, transferability, cooperation:

Development of Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of dry grassland (Action A.2) and their corporation into the sectoral plans (Action A.2) will upgrade management measures, management zones and management system for target habitat type currently set in Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia (2015-2020). The knowledge can be replicated to other Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia with the same habitat types. It could also be transferred also other types of dry grassland habitat types since this document contains of concrete measures for farmers for sustainable management of dry grasslands.

Best Practice lessons:

The Project could serve as good example for active involvement of farmers and landowners into management of Natura 2000 sites, therefore we expect that other protected site administrations will be interested to visit the project sites and learn about the conservation measures implemented and involvement of farmers into the project.

Innovation and demonstration value:

Univ. Mb FNM prepared standardised field methodology for determining the conservation status of targeted habitats using indicator species and their reference values. Indicator species for assessing the conservation status of targeted habitat types and their reference values are also included into the personalized a Management manual for extensive dry grassland use. They are prepared specifically for each plot, included into project activities. This personalized approach has not been used yet in Slovenia. A better understanding of the importance of grasslands conservation and possible self-assessment of undertaken management activities by farmers and land owners is very important for long-term sustainable management of dry grasslands.

Policy implications:

Unintended impact of intensive project presentation in early months of the project to local farmer communities is also the inspiration and encouragement of local farmer associations in Haloze project sub-area, which prepared a proposal of changes of AEP measures in the existing Rural development program and sent it to the government. Changes are being prepared of AEP measures that are more suited for farming in project sub-areas (Action C.6 and 6.4.1.a.).

7 Project Specific Indicators

Project is in line with the Project Specific Indicators.

Annex updated table of the indicators Annex 10.70.

8 Comments on the financial report

The Standard payment request is enclosed (Annex 10.71).

Following documents are enclosed:

- Beneficiary's certificate for nature and biodiversity projects for all beneficiaries (Annex 10.72),
- Consolidate cost statement for the project (Annex 10.73),
- Financial statement of individual beneficiary (Annex 10.74),
- 3 highest invoices per cost category (Annex 10.75),
- Bank transfer statement for transfer of the pre-financing of EC to beneficiaries (Annex 10.76),
- Declaration of non-recoverable VAT forms from the national tax authorities for all beneficiaries (Annex 10.77),
- Accounting system of beneficiaries (Annex 10.78),
- Changes to the budget (Annex 10.79),
- Durable goods/equipment purchase – inventory number of beneficiaries (Annex 10.80),
- Supporting documents (Annex 10.81),
- External auditors' statement (Annex 10.82).

Personnel cost category: The highest cost of all budget categories, in table below, is the cost of the Personnel (575.072,84 €), which was mostly incurred during Preparatory actions A.1, A.2, A.3 and A.4 (all together 315.186,75 €), followed by costs for concrete conservation actions and project management (F.1). Overall, 30 people have been working on the project so far (counting present and past staff employed to the project). Currently the project team consists of 8 full time and 22 part time members. Altogether the partnership is amounting to 14,7 full time personnel.

Equipment in Durable goods: Until now, we spend 237.243,31 € in category cost Equipment in Durable goods. Most of the cost (159.193,43 €) was incurred in the project action C.2 (*Ensuring the appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands*) for purchasing grazing and mowing equipment.

Further clarifications requested in previous letters from the Commission

Issue: Letter from EASME dated on 04/07/2017: *Clarification regarding the Invoice issued on date 15/10/2015, which is incurred before the start date of the project.*

Answer: In October we have received an invitation from the European Commission to participate in a kick-off meeting for LIFE14 projects on 4th of November in Murcia. With the warning that the cost of attending the meeting could be considered as eligible, if the start of the project is set before the date of the kick-off meeting.

After the received invitation, we have made an enquiry for two plane tickets (for Ms. Nika Debeljak Šabec and Ms. Andreja Rožnik). On 14th of October we made a purchase order for two plane tickets at Agencija Oskar d.o.o. Agencija Oskar d.o.o. has issued the invoice on 15/10/2015, which we have paid after the participation at the kick-off event in November

(Annex 10.81). The invoice was paid on the 13th of November 2015, so after the start of the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (1st of November 2015), as well as after the date of the signature of the Grant agreement (23th of October 2015). We would like to stress, that the trip to kick off meeting of LIFE14 projects and the payment of the Invoice was made after the official start of the project. We believe the cost are eligible as project expenditure. Please find all documents enclosed Annex 10.81.

Issue: Letter from EASME dated on 04/07/2017: *Modification of timesheet template with additional column - actual working hours worked on the project.*

Answer: We have modified for all project partners a timesheet template, which includes actual working hours on project and “other working hours”. Please see in the enclosed document a sample of fulfilled timesheet for employee of CB ZRSVN (Annex 10.81).

8.1 Summary of Costs Incurred

The project cost are incurred within the reporting period of 1st of November 2015 to 20th of October 2017.

Table: Project budget and project expenditure per cost category

	PROJECT COSTS INCURRED			CHANGES
Cost category	Budget according to the grant agreement in €* in €*	Costs incurred within the reporting period in €	%**	New Budget in €***
1. Personnel	1,590,288 €	575,072.84 €	36 %	1,602,887.30 €
2. Travel and subsistence	163,436 €	27,784.59 €	17 %	166,677.68 €
3. External assistance	1,022,776 €	72,861.61 €	7 %	1,003,489.32 €
4. Durables goods: total <u>non-depreciated</u> cost				
- Infrastructure sub-tot.	0 €	0 €	0 %	0 €
- Equipment sub-tot.	578,974 €	237,243.31 €	43 %	582,399.70 €
- Prototype sub-tot.	0 €	0 €	0 %	0 €
5. Land purchase or long-term lease of land	117,000 €	0 €	0 %	117,000 €
6. Consumables	90,285 €	9,760.05 €	11 %	90,285 €
7. Other costs	88,450 €	17,067.59 €	19 %	88,450 €
8. Overheads	247,393 €	56,460.00 €	23 %	247,393 €
TOTAL	3,898,582 €	996,250 €	26 %	3,898,582 €

*) If the EASME has officially approved a budget modification through an amendment, indicate the breakdown of the revised budget. Otherwise this should be the budget in the original grant agreement.

**) Calculate the percentages by budget lines: e.g. the % of the budgeted personnel costs that were actually incurred

***) New budget according to the Midterm report

Due to the unforeseen situation (no offers were obtained at the public tender in action A.2 and an administrative mistake was discovered between action B.1 and B.2) we notified the external monitor Mr Pečenko, by mail on the 17th of March 2017 and asked for changes to the project (Annex 10.19). Detailed description of changes made to the project budget refer to (Annex 10.79) with enclosed beneficiaries' proposal letters for budget transfers (Annex 10.79). He advised us to include the changes in the Mid-term report.

8.2 Accounting system

At the beginning of the project in November 2015 the Coordinating beneficiary has set up the financial management scheme of the project (prepared document “Management plan of the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS” (Action F.1). CB ZRSVN transferred the first EC financial payment to ABs according to the proposed budget (Bank statement - Annex 10.76).

All project beneficiaries have received Declaration of non-recoverable VAT forms from the National tax authorities for recovering VAT (Annex 10.77).

ABs are made responsible for their own budget with the ABs’ agreements. They prepare financial reports to the CB every 3 months (time sheets, expenditure reports and copies of all receipts/invoices with bank proof of payment and travel orders (with obligatory documents – report, list of participants and invitation if there was prepared). All documents are labelled with the project name and number: LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (LIFE 14 NAT/SI/000005). All received invoices contain project code: LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (LIFE 14 NAT/SI/000005) and are equipped with sticker of our project code, manually signed with the budget category and project action and signed by responsible person of each individual beneficiary (Please find 3 highest invoices per cost category in Annex 10.75). At the end of each financial reporting, a joint project expenditure is calculated by CB ZRSVN. Each AB has established separate cost centre in their accounting system. Codes identifying the project costs for all beneficiaries are listed below:

- CB ZRSVN: SM: 103 LIFE TO GRASSLANDS
- AB PRJ Halo: SM 217 - LIFE TO GRASSLANDS
- AB KGZ Ptuj: SM: 010104 PROJEKT-LIFE TO GRASSLANDS
- AB KS Dobovec: LIFE14 NAT/SI/000005
- AB Društvo GK SM: LIFE TO GRASSLANDS.

All costs for implementing project activities are with accordance to the Grant Agreement. All project cost of each individual beneficiary are booked under each cost in accounting system as are allocated in the project budget category (Annex 10.78).

Equipment, in cost category Durable goods-equipment, purchased by individual beneficiary, is marked with inventory number (Annex 10.80).

Public tenders are conducted with accordance to the national legislation (Public Procurement Act), further in accordance with the internal acts of beneficiaries, in which are the selection procedures specified in more details, as well in accordance with guidelines in Annex X of Grant Agreement. The public tender documentation consists of an invitation tender for preparation of an offer, received offer, a purchase order or a contract.

In case of an order with an estimated cost above 20,000 €, we have to publish the tender on the Portal for public tender according to Public Procurement Act. For orders higher from 134,000 € tender has to be published on European portal for public tenders and a European Single Procurement Document (ESPD) has to be prepared.

Timesheets are filled manually by all beneficiaries, using the model timesheets (that was made by coordinating beneficiary on the basis of the official LIFE timesheet) and was approved by LIFE External Monitoring Team representative Mr. Pečenko (NEEMO) in start of the project. CB ZRSVN personnel timesheets are signed by the director of the CB ZRSVN. Associated beneficiaries timesheets are signed by responsible person in the given institution (associated beneficiary coordinator, which was assigned to the project by the ABs). Timesheets are signed within the two first weeks of following month, exceptionally later, if the person was on sick leave, parental leave or had other absences.

Time registration system is in beneficiaries (CB ZRSVN and AB KGZ Ptuj) electronic and in beneficiaries (AB KS Dobovec, AB PRJ Halo and AB Društvo GK) is monitored manually. Manually monitored time registration list for each month is reviewed and signed by responsible person in the given institution (associated beneficiary coordinator, which was assigned to the project by the ABs).

Associated beneficiary KS Dobovec has one person employed and assigned for working on the project for 10 hours per week (on daily unit, which amounts to two hours per day). After the consultation with the audit, KS Dobovec entered into the Financial reporting table in the column type of employment – full time and in column daily working hours – 2 hours. As is presented in the contract for the employee.

The same applies for the Društvo GK, who has similar employed one person for working on the project for eight hours per week (on daily unit this presents 1,6 hour per day). Društvo GK, entered into the Financial reporting table in the column type of employment – full time and in column daily working hours – 1,6 hour. We hope that have correctly understand the meaning of daily hours which directly affect the calculation of personnel costs and daily rate cost.

8.3 Partnership arrangements (if relevant)

All ABs produced financial and technical reports every three months throughout the project duration to the CB ZRSVN.

Partnership contracts between coordinating beneficiary (ZRSVN) and Associated beneficiaries (PRJ Halo, KGZ Ptuj, KS Dobovec and Društvo GK) have been signed at the beginning of the project and enclosed to the report (Annex 10.2). AB prepared invoices for the transactions, on the basis of which, CB ZRSVN carried out transfers of the EU contribution to ABs (Annex 10.76). Each associated beneficiaries themselves enter the information in the Table of cost of expenditure and send every three months to the CB ZRSVN. Each associated beneficiaries themselves is keeping all original invoices and timesheets. The CB ZRSVN prepared joint project expenditure tables of the partnership and consolidated cost statement.

8.4 Certificate on the financial statement

An independent external auditor RÖDL & PARTNER Družba za revizijo in davčno svetovanje, d.o.o. was subcontracted according to the public tender (Annex 10.68). The contract was signed

on 24th of April 2017 (Annex 10.74). Auditor has prepared a Declaration of auditor's independence regarding relationships to the project beneficiaries (Annex 10.81).

In the past months (August and September 2017) the RODL & PARTNER has performed overview of the financial and documentation management and carried out a check of project accounting system of all beneficiates. The main objective of their visit was to check the correctness of management and accounting systems of each beneficiary in the project.

Director of the RODL & PARTNER attended the Supervisory board on 4th of October 2017 and gave us some suggestions and guidelines to improve our management and to avoid potential future mistakes. At the end of the project, the independent auditor will prepare final auditor's report.

9 Envisaged progress until next report

Action	Status	2015				2016				2017				2018				2019				2020				2021			
		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
Reports						Progress report				Mid-term report				Progress report				Progress report				Final report							
A. Preparatory actions, elaboration of management plans and/or action plans :																													
Action A.1 " Analysis of the initial situation of the agricultural use of dry grasslands"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x																		
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																		
Action A.2 " Elaboration of the Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) /	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x																	
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																	
Action A.3 " Involvement of landowners in the project and identification of areas for action implementation"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x																	
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		x	x	x	x												
Action A.4 " Permit procedures"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x																	
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		x	x	x	x												
B. Purchase/lease of land and/or rights :																													
Action B.1 " Purchase and lease of land in the Haloze project sub-area"	Proposed							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x													
	Actual							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
Action B.2 " Purchase of land in Gorjanci-Radoha project sub-area"	Proposed							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x													
	Actual							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
C. Concrete conservation actions :																													
Action C.1 " Removal of overgrowth"	Proposed							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
	Actual							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Action C.2 " Ensuring the appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands"	Proposed							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
	Actual							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Action C.3 " The restoration and maintenance of traditional orchards"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Action C.4 " Networking of owners and users of dry grassland plots in the Haloze project sub-area"	Proposed												x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
	Actual												✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Action C.5 " Preparation of farm management plans for improving dry grasslands management"	Proposed												x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
	Actual												✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Action C.6 " Preparation of an Expert Proposal of AEP measures related to the preservation of the HT 6210(*)"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Action C.7 " Development and Economics study of Dry	Proposed													x	x	x	x	x	x										
	Actual													✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
D. Monitoring of the impact of the project actions (obligatory) :																													
Action D.1 " Monitoring of the impact of project actions success"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action D.2 " Assessment of the socio-economic impact of the project actions on local economy and	Proposed					x	x	x	x												x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓												✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action D.3 " Assessment of the project's impact on the ecosystem functions"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x										x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
E. Public awareness and dissemination of results (obligatory) :																													
Action E.1 " National and local authority education and information project"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action E.2 " General public and local community awareness campaign"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action E.3 " Promotion material"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action E.4 " Information and interpretation tools"	Proposed					x	x						x	x	x	x	x	x	x										
	Actual					✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action E.5 " The project's web page and project graphic identity"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action E.6 " Grassland classroom"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action E.7 " Equipment for setting up project info rooms in Haloze, Pohorje, Gorjanci-Radoha and Kum	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x														
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action E.8 " Layman's report"	Proposed																					x	x	x	x	x	x		
	Actual																					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
F. Project management and monitoring of the project progress (obligatory) :																													
Action F.1 " Project co-ordination and management"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action F.2 " Networking with other projects"	Proposed					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
	Actual					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Action F.3 " Audit"	Proposed												x	x	x								x	x		x			
	Actual												✓	✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	✓			
Action F.4 " After-life conservation plan"	Proposed																					x	x	x	x	x	x		
	Actual																					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
As porpose in the granr Agreement		x																											
actual		✓																											
not due yet -		*																											
change in duration		x																											

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