



LIFE14 NAT/SI/000005

Final Report

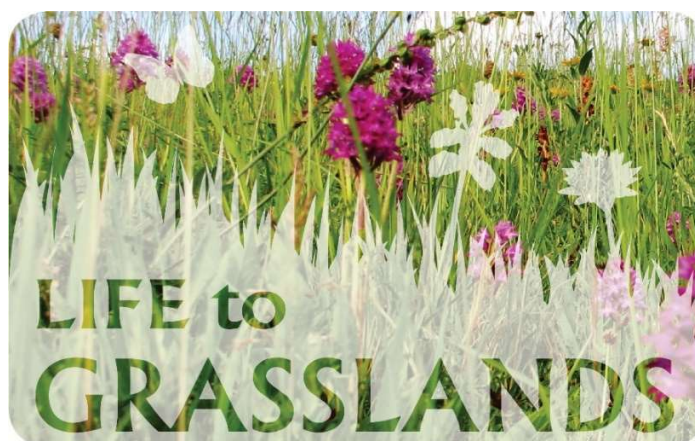
Covering the project activities from 01/11/2015 to 31/10/2020

Reporting Date

31/01/2021

“LIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF DRY GRASSLANDS IN EASTERN SLOVENIA”

LIFE TO GRASSLANDS



ZAVOD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
ZA VARSTVO NARAVE





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LIFE TO GRASSLANDS

Data Project

Project location:	Slovenia (4 project sub-areas)
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Project end date:	31/10/2020 Extension date: /
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(%) of eligible costs:	75

Data Beneficiary

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Package completeness and correctness check	
Obligatory elements	✓ or N/A
Technical report	
The correct latest template for the type of project (e.g. traditional) has been followed and all sections have been filled in, in English <i>In electronic version only</i>	✓
Index of deliverables with short description annexed, in English <i>In electronic version only</i>	✓
<u>Final report</u> : Deliverables not already submitted with the MTR annexed including the Layman's report and after-LIFE plan. Deliverables in language(s) other than English include a summary in English <i>In electronic version only</i>	✓
Financial report	
The reporting period in the financial report (consolidated financial statement and financial statement of each Individual Beneficiary) is the same as in the technical report with the exception of any terminated beneficiary for which the end period should be the date of the termination.	✓
Consolidated Financial Statement with all 5 forms duly filled in and signed and dated <i>On paper (signed and dated originals*) and in electronic version (pdfs of signed sheets + full Excel file)</i>	✓
Financial Statement(s) of the Coordinating Beneficiary, of each Associated Beneficiary and of each affiliate (if involved), with all forms duly filled in (signed and dated). The Financial Statement(s) of Beneficiaries with affiliate(s) include the total cost of each affiliate in 1 line per cost category. <i>In electronic version (pdfs of signed sheets + full Excel files) + in the case of the Final report the overall summary forms of each beneficiary on paper (signed and dated originals*)</i>	✓
Amounts, names and other data (e.g. bank account) are correct and consistent with the Grant Agreement / across the different forms (e.g. figures from the individual statements are the same as those reported in the consolidated statement)	✓
Beneficiary's certificate for Durable Goods included (if required, i.e. beneficiaries claiming 100% cost for durable goods) <i>On paper (signed and dated originals*) and in electronic version (pdfs of signed sheets)</i>	✓
Certificate on financial statements (if required, i.e. for beneficiaries with EU contribution ≥750,000 € in the budget) <i>On paper (signed original) and in electronic version (pdf)</i>	✓
Other checks	
Additional information / clarifications and supporting documents requested in previous EASME letters (unless already submitted or not yet due) <i>In electronic version only</i>	✓
This table, page 2 of Final report, is completed - each tick box is filled in <i>In electronic version only</i>	✓

**original signature by a legal or statutory representative of the beneficiary / affiliate concerned*

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1 List of key-words and abbreviations

PSA	Project sub-area
CB	Coordinating beneficiary
AB	Associated beneficiary
CB-ZRSVN	Zavod Republike Slovenije za varstvo narave (Coordinating beneficiary - Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation)
AB-KGZ Ptuj	Kmetijsko gozdarski zavod Ptuj (Associated beneficiary - Agriculture and Forestry Institute Ptuj)
AB-PRJ Halo	Podeželsko razvojno jedro (Associated beneficiary - Rural development centre PRJ Halo)
AB-KS Dobovec	Krajevna skupnost Dobovec (Associated beneficiary - Local community Dobovec)
AB-Društvo GK	Društvo Gorjanske košenice (Associated beneficiary - Society Gorjanske košenice)
HT	Habitat type
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
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)
AKTRP	Agencija za kmetijske trge in razvoj podeželja (Agency for Agricultural Markets and Rural Development) - A paying agency for Agro-Environment measures
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)
KGZS	Kmetijsko gozdarska zbornica Slovenije (Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia)
CAP	Skupna kmetijska politika (Common agricultural policy)
GERK	Areas of agricultural land of one agricultural holding with the same type of use
FNM	Univerza v Mariboru, Fakulteta za fakulteta za naravoslovje in matematiko (University of Maribor, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics)
AEM	Kmetijsko-okoljski ukrep, plačan prek Programa razvoja podeželja (Agri-environmental measures paid through the Rural Development Program)

2 Executive summary

The main objective of the project “**LIFE Conservation and management of dry grassland in Eastern Slovenia**” **LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (LIFE14 NAT/SI/000005)** was the improvement of the conservation status of 2 priority habitat types of species rich grasslands in Slovenia through overgrowth removal, establishment of appropriate long-term use of grasslands as well as promotion and support to the extensive agriculture in project sub-areas.

Report of the initial situation of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230* of all PSA (2016) showed that 48% (912 ha) of the targeted HT 6210 (*) on PSAs Haloze, Kum and Gorjanci is in favourable conservation condition and 39% (948 ha) in unfavourable conservation condition and that 100 ha of the targeted HT 6230* on PSA Pohorje is in favourable conservation condition and 141 ha in unfavourable conservation condition. A comparative analysis with a prior habitat monitoring for PSA Haloze showed a severe decline in favourable conservation status of the HT 6210(*) from 1491 ha in 2006 to 771 ha in 2016. This is nearly a 50% decline in 10 years.

Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230* were prepared in Action A.2 by participatory approach. Experts, partners and relevant stakeholders were involved in the process and knowledge transferred from the European commissions’ guidelines for management and other projects to species rich grassland in Slovenia.

In order to actively involve farmers/landowners into the project's actions, workshops and lectures were carried out. To ensure the transparency for inclusion of landowners/farmers into the project activities, project partners prepared the **Public call for the involvement of famers** into the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS activities (Action A.3). Initially farmers were negatively oriented towards signing any new form of long-term agreement for managing their land in a specific way. It took a high effort from project staff, and repetitive farm visits to establish trustful relations with farmers, to motivate them and to get them involved in project activities (more than anticipated in the project proposal). 670 farm visits were carried out in the process (Action A.3, expected result 400). **163 Agreements with farmers and landowners** were signed (Action A.4) to assure extensive long-term management of grasslands until 2025 through mowing, grazing and tall tree grasslands orchard management. In addition 136 land co-owners/tenants consensuses were obtained. Altogether **338 land owners/co-owners/tenets** signed consensus and got actively involved into the project activates.

With signed agreement we assured sustainable **long-term management of 678 ha of species rich grasslands** (Actions C.2, C.3, C.5). We are very happy we managed to get that many farmers involved and exceed the expected result of 517 ha, especially after the initial difficulties.

On PSA Haloze we **purchased** 13,66 ha (expected result 15 ha) **and leased** 12,67 ha (expected result 15 ha) of land. On PSA Gorjanci we purchased 2,36 ha of privately owned land (expected result 3 ha). We were not able to reach the expected result for purchasing and leasing land in total (Actions B.1 and B.2), due to lack of willingness from landowners to sell or lease the land at the value defined in the project proposal (the value was too low), as already pointed out in the previous Reports.

Altogether extensive overgrowth was removed on **139 ha** of overgrown grasslands (expected result 133 ha). After removal of overgrowth, activities to assure the long-term grasslands management, were carried out (mulching and/or pulling of tree hives, mulching of sprouts, rocks crushing and at the end, remediation works).

To assure long term management of species rich grasslands (Action C.2) partners purchased necessary **grazing** (for 113 km of new fences (expected result 94 km), 6 cattle trailers) and/or **mowing equipment** (1 mulcher, 4 mountain mowers, 1 tractor mower, backpack mowers). Project partners assured free use of purchased equipment for farmers with signed Agreements. Farmers received the equipment and set up the fences themselves. They are assuring long term management with no additional cost until 2025.

We restored 43,86 ha and planted a new 39,62 ha of **traditional tall tree grassland orchards** (all together 83,48 ha, expected result 45,5 ha). We are happy to report that we exceeded the expected result. The project partner purchased **61 different old local fruit tree varieties** (of eight different meadow orchard fruit tree types), which were specifically prepared for the project in the national fruit tree genetic bank with adjacent necessary protective equipment. Farmers received saplings and protective equipment and planted the trees themselves (after attending planting demonstration workshops and workshops on how to maintain tall tree grassland orchards, which were organized by the project). Voluntary actions were also organized to assist farmers with planting. Altogether **3493 saplings were planted** on 3 PSAs. In addition rejuvenation pruning of old orchard trees was carried out by contractors who **pruned 777 old orchard trees**. Additionally 25 insect hotels were installed and equipped with educational board which emphasise the importance of **pollinators** and their conservation. The action also promoted **agrobiodiversity** conservation of pollinators and other species of insects and birds which is in line with the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and efforts for conservation of wild pollinators. Tall tree grasslands orchards are also a good example of the **biodiversity-friendly farming practices** pointed out in the EC CAP greening reform.

An effort was made to network farmers in the PSAs, for example one mountain mower is co-used by organized group of farmers (who signed protocol of co-use) now jointly assure mowing of at least 20 ha of grasslands (Action C.4).

Report of the Action D.1: Monitoring of the **impact of project actions onto conservation status** of targeted habitat types showed a notable increase in re-established agricultural land use across all PSAs. A total of 73 previously abandoned plots have had their agricultural use re-established use due to project activities, a significant reduction of overgrowth (due to C.1 Action), improvement in management practices (due to action C.2), decline in presence of negative indicators, an increase in number of present positive indicator species (except PSA Haloze*), a shift of presence of dominant species towards indicator species of grasslands 6210 (*) and HT 6230*, presence and diversity of orchid species (PSA Gorjanci: 11 different species, PSA Haloze: 15 different species, PSA Kum: 19 different orchid species) was reported by external expert in action D.1.

49 Farm management plans were prepared, setting up a 10 years development strategy of farms, taking into consideration extensive management of species rich grasslands and farms economic profitability (Action C.5). The Farm management plans were prepared in close collaboration with farmers, agriculture advisors and nature conservation expert.

Expert proposal of Agri-environment measure for species rich dry grasslands was prepared and sent to Ministry for agriculture, forestry and food to be considered for the next CAP (Action C.6). It was designed as a **result based approach** using habitat structure and plant species indicators. Filed scoring sheets were prepared and tested in the field as well as **educational workshops for farmers**, for identification of indicator plants, were carried out. Farmers' feedback was very positive. A **comparative analysis** and questioners in collaboration with another project were carried (see Action C.6) comparing farmers from PSA Haloze (258 farms involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) to farmers from a region of Kras (263 farms not involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS). Analysis showed that more farmers from PSA Haloze identified indicator plant then famers from Kras, as an outcome from workshops of the project. In addition farmers from PSA Haloze preferred a result based measure (measure without prescribed practices of 40,7%) to a higher degree then in comparison to farmers from Karst (21,7%, see Action C6, Annex for details).

Further efforts are made for **incorporation of the RBPS proposal in the CAP**. Meetings with the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food representatives; the Agency for Agricultural Markets and Rural Development – paying agency and Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia were organized. At the moment there is an indication that the RBPS could be, at last as a test, included in the future CAP.

Project co-financed the formation of internet page of the newly established **“Result based payments network”** where approaches of result based approaches in Agri-environment schemes of Europe are presented (including LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) <https://www.rbpnetwork.eu/> . 118 people from 26 countries are already registered as members and 9180 unique visits were detected until now.

Economic study for dry grasslands in PSA Haloze was prepared by external subcontractor in close cooperation with project partners and farmers from PSA Haloze (Action C.7) which involved several workshops with farmers and other targeted stakeholders, seminars and training. The Vision, the Action plan and a model for networking of products from grasslands under a **collective brand mark “From Haloze steep meadows”** (“S Haloških bregov”) were prepared.

According to surveys within the project socio-economic study (D.2), following **lasting results** of the project activities are already visible (standardized anonymous questionnaire of farms that participated in the project; 107 questioners were answered only for PSA Haloze): five farms switched to organic farming, organic milk from PSA Haloze is being sold at higher price to local dairy, two farms already registered a new complementary activity on the farm (fruit processing, tourism on the farm) and additional 21 farms are planning to registering a new complementary activity in the future, 4 farms already started fruit processing during the project and additional 18 are planning to do so, nine farms already increased their stock of animals and additional 30 plan to do so. 54.7% of the respondents agree that the project activities showed new opportunities for marketing products from dry grasslands and new potential farming model and majority believe that increase in revenue will follow.

Test scoring of products from species rich grasslands in PSA Haloze (milk and milk products, meat and meat products, fruit products, handcraft products) was organized. 136 products from 40 farms were evaluated by renowned external experts. A **catalogue of product** from grasslands was prepared. At the moment we assured scoring of the products from species rich grasslands, also after the project, through a national evaluation system for products from farms called “Goodies from Slovenian farms” (“Dobrote Slovenskih kmetij”), organized by the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and food. Activities were also carried out to connect producers with buyer for setting up sort food chains. These activities are in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy – for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. Through activities the project provided farmers a new vision, knowledge and support to start producing and processing products from species rich grasslands which provides needed **additional income for small farms**.

Conservation guidelines were integrated into **39 sectoral management plans** for forestry, hunting, spatial planning, rural development and education (Annex A.2_1). With this we

managed to include conservation of species rich grassland into plans of other sectors. In addition good, close **collaboration** of project partners, from the field of nature conservation, agriculture and regional development offered a new solution for farming in these rural areas, thus providing good example in the field of **cross-sectoral cooperation** for assuring extensive economically viable management of species rich dry grasslands.

To support concrete conservation actions, **promotional and educational activities** supplemented by series of meetings and workshops to increased knowledge about dry grasslands conservation and positive attitude towards dry grassland conservation were carried out (see Action E.2). 66 project events for National and local authority education were organized. Altogether 802 representatives of national and local authority were educated (Expected result: total approx. 150). In addition 64 events for general public and local community were organized by the project, with more than 6500 participant. 115 newspaper articles (Expected result 20) at national and local newspapers and 104 internet articles (Expected result 10) were published and 23 radio and 18 TV articles broadcasted. National Radio Television Slovenia produced a documentary movie about the species rich grassland conservation and the project on their costs.

The **comparative analysis** between awareness of national **general public** and general public of the PSAs with the standardised questioner showed that more farmers included in the project felt proud that they lived in a Natura 2000 area (85 % compared in project PSAs in comparison to 79 % of the general public) and less of farmers living in PSAs are of the opinion that Natura 2000 restricts agriculture (31 % compared in project PSAs in comparison to 68 % of the general public) (Action D.1 and E.2).

Special attention was given to the **education of our youth** (Action E.6). An educational campaign for youth (kindergarten, primary schools, secondary schools, faculties, teachers), called Grassland classroom, was carried out using prepared educational programs (3 educational programs for 3 different age levels), didactic booklet and didactic games (Brain box and internet application). 13 educational seminars/workshops targeted to teachers' education (expected result 8) were organized, educating 226 teachers. In addition 57 events (presentations, workshops or field days) for children were organized, altogether educating over 2500 children from kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and students as well as 157 teachers about importance of grasslands conservation. "Dry grasslands as a model for learning about environment and biology" was successfully accepted into the **national "Catalogue of additional teaching programs** for educational professionals" (KATIS) under the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Successful inclusion of the "Dry grasslands as a model" into official national educational programmers is a great achievement for the project. Education of youth is important since they will once be the decision makes.

Three **info rooms** (on PSA Haloze, PSA Gorjanci and PSA Pohorje) and **one project classroom** on PSA Kum were equipped (Action E.7). 3 **interpretation polygons** together with information boards (action E.4) and supporting promotional materials (Action E.3) which supported the awareness raising campaign were prepared. The project web pages www.lifetograsslands.si and www.travisca.si in Slovene, with English and Croatian subpage (Action E.5) are being updated regularly. Awareness raising and dissemination activities were implemented promoting biodiversity, LIFE mechanism, Natura 2000 network and green agriculture.

The Assessment of the project's impact on the **ecosystem functions** carried out by an external expert showed that nature conservation activities are economically justified in the long term, because they increase production value of areas (Action D.3). Activities of LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project increased the value of natural areas, where they were implemented and at the same time landowners and business owners can increase their business offer and effectiveness without any additional investment. The total increased monetary sum of all **ecosystem functions** was assessed at 1.837.700 €

The project organized **International conference** titled “Challenges and opportunities in multifunctional management of grasslands”. Over 130 people from 6 countries attended the conference. (Action F.2).

The project actively **exchange knowledge** with 53 projects (32 LIFE projects and 21 projects funded from other EU funds (Annex F.2_1)). The project **networked** in total with 80 LIFE and 21 projects funded from other EU funds, by attending networking events (Action F.2).

In addition the knowledge was transferred to 2 **new project** that were already accepted (DINARA back to LIFE (LIFE18 NAT/HR/000847)) and POHORKA, The vision of Pohorje 2030 (Cohesion funds) as well as 2 projects that were rejected at the evaluation phase but will be upgraded and resend for evaluation (LIFE TO GRASSLANDS II - Conservation and sustainable economic use of dry grasslands in the common border area (LIFE20 NAT/SI/001182) and EIP GRASSLANDS “Farming for the conservation of species-rich grasslands through the transfer of knowledge to farmers” (4th public tender for sub-measure M16.5_ Support for joint action to mitigate climate change or adaptation).

The **partnership** was well designed and collaboration was a great success. Project co-ordination and management supported all project activities. The **Supervisory board committee** met 10 times (every 6 months) and overviewed the project results.



3 Introduction

Preserving biodiversity in agricultural land is one of the key **environmental challenges** we are facing in Europe as well as globally. Extensive grasslands are one of the most endangered ecosystems, because their existence depends on continuous human activity, namely sustainable and moderate use of the land.

The project “LIFE Conservation and management of dry meadows in Eastern Slovenia” (LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) is aimed at improving favourable conservation status of two priority targeted habitats and ensuring the appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands.

Two project targeted **priority habitat types** are:

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) ((* important orchid sites) (**HT_6210(*)**))



- Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and sub-mountain areas in Continental Europe) (**HT_6230***).



The conservation status of both, in view of the reporting, according to the Habitats Directive 2018, for Slovenia is **bad/unfavourable (U2-, U1-)**.

The project was carried out on four **project sub-areas** (PSA): Haloze, Gorjanci Kum and Pohorje, altogether covering seven Natura 2000 sites (five pSCI and two SPA) and in total **35.599 ha**. These extensively managed species rich grassland habitat types appear in small and medium sized fragments spread over the PSAs.

The project addressed following **threats** to dry grasslands in Slovenia:

- land abandonment and overgrowing as a result: targeted habitats are often present in higher elevations (HT 6230*), on steep slopes (HT 6210*) (Graph 1.)). Average inclination of land use 1300 (grasslands) in Haloze PSA is 28 -50% (Action A.1). These areas are more demanding for management and of greater distance from farms and thus are abandoned first. Species rich dry grasslands are being overgrown. For example, according to the data on habitat type (HT) mapping from 2005 in Haloze project sub-area, 13.2% of all non- forest areas are in different phases of overgrowing. According to the data on HT “first general” mapping from 1973/76 in PSA Pohorje, with revision in

1995, 39.70% of all grassland areas are in different phases of overgrowing. In addition current agricultural policy is not successful in attracting farmers into agri-environment schemes, designed for species rich grasslands, since the enrolment is very low.

- fragmentation of plots and abandonment of farming: average size of a farm plot in Slovenia is 6.5 ha. In project sub-areas (which are hilly and remote) the size of a farm plot is even smaller. An average size of a farm in Haloze PSA is 3.5 ha. The small average size of plots and farms/husbandries is diminishing the economic viability and sustainability of these small farms. As a consequence farmers tend to find jobs in nearby cities and have farming as an “afternoon job” and persist on a farm only due to historical reasons. It seems that current agriculture policy does not support enough farming on small rural farms.



Picture 1: A Typical farm in rural areas of PSA Haloze

- inappropriate grazing/moving practices: a large proportion of targeted habitats HT 6210(*) and HT 6230* are unsuitably 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 and multiple mowing. 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. 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 tall tree orchards have been disappearing rapidly. They tend to be abandoned or replaced by intensive low orchard trees. In addition, many tall tree orchards do not reach the minimal surface of 1 ha (fragmentation) to be eligible for AEP (subsidies). The orchards are very important for the Haloze PSA, given the characteristic of the areas hilly relief, with exceptionally high inclinations, which in combination with the bedrock, poses a very high risk of land sliding.
- low level of awareness as to the importance of dry grasslands and its' conservation of traditional orchards: poor awareness of local inhabitants, visitors and even agriculture advisory service about the importance of conservation of species rich dry grasslands, is a result of the lack of knowledge, poor informing on ecological significance and conservation value of dry grasslands.



Picture 2: traditional tall tree orchard

The project addressed all threats and focused on restoration of species rich grasslands through following project activities: land purchase and lease, removal of overgrowth, assuring

sustainable long-term management of dry grasslands by grazing, mowing or tall tree grasslands orchards restoration and networking of farmers/owners/land managers. In addition activities for supporting extensive farming in rural areas, such as preparation of Farm management plans, development of Economic study, preparation of Expert proposal for a result based agri-environment scheme for species rich grasslands and its testing on the field, were planned to be carried out, to support economic farming in this rural areas. Supporting awareness raising and education activities were planned.

Expected longer-term results (as anticipated at the start of the project)

The anticipated longer-term results at the start of the project were:

- the restoration of 260 ha HT 6210(*) and 257 ha of HT 6230*,
- removal of overgrowth (133 ha),
- establishment of long term sustainable use on areas that were cleared of the overgrowth and on other areas of dry grasslands that currently have no sustainable management (517 ha);
- land lease (18 ha) and land purchase (15 ha) of dry grasslands
- revitalization of 45.5 ha of traditional orchards, a key habitat structure, for preventing land sliding and for greater species diversity
- incorporating sustainable dry grassland management into agricultural and environmental sectors in Slovenia
- preparation of 49 farm management plans for dry grasslands management
- preparation of an expert proposal for AEP measures related to the conservation of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230*
- recognised economic interest for further sustainable use of dry grasslands in the Haloze project sub-areas
- the social and economic perspective of agriculture in project sub-areas improved
- greater awareness and understanding of the importance of dry grassland, its conservation and proper management
- improvement of conservation status of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230*

4 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); a national professional institution in the field of nature conservation, providing necessary professional support and guidance in project coordination, since it has extensive experience in project implementation in various financial mechanisms
- **four Associated beneficiaries (AB)** namely:
 - Kmetijsko gozdarski zavod Ptuj (Agriculture and Forestry Institute Ptuj from now on 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
 - Podeželsko razvojno jedro Haloze (Rural development centre PRJ Halo from now on AB PRJ Halo) professional tasks of rural development and is an important project sub-area stakeholder and opinion maker with good connections to local associations and local farmers
 - Krajevna skupnost Dobovec (Local community Dobovec from now on AB KS Dobovec); an important project sub-area stakeholder and opinion maker with good connections to local associations and local farmers
 - Društvo Gorjanske košenice (Society Gorjanske košenice from now on AB Društvo GK); an important project sub-area stakeholder and opinion maker with good connections to local associations and local farmers

All beneficiaries had a unique important role and each brought added value to the project partnership, which was crucial for the project to be successful.

CB ZRSVN signed **partnership agreements** with all four associated beneficiaries in December 2015 (Annex FIN_7). Annexes to partnership agreement were signed on 5th of September 2017 between CB ZRSVN, AB PRJ Halo and AB DGK due to transfer of finances for land purchase/lease. Issue was reported in the Midterm report (see chapter finances).

A **co-financers agreement** was signed in June 2016 with the Ministry environment and spatial planning (Annex FIN_6). The project manager was in regular contact with the representative of the co-financer Ms. Juliana Lebez Lozej, also a LIFE focal point for Slovenia.

Mr Nikolaj Pečenko (NEEMO) was an **external monitor** of the project. Project manager regularly consulted Mr. Pečenko.

CB ZRSVN nominated: a full-time **project manager**, a part time financial coordinator, a full time project assistant and **four part time project sub-areas coordinators**. The Project manager assured project implementation, coordination, organised work and project partnership as well as offered necessary scientific support and guidance to the partnership. For easier management and reporting of the partnership, CB ZRSVN prepared a handbook “Management plan of the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS” (Annex F.1_1). 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. Each of the associated beneficiaries nominated a project **AB coordinator** employee, who communicates with the project manager.

Through the duration of the project 55 different people were employed by the project (full time or part time). The project partnership members were working together and/or independently on their assigned activities. The partnership was well defined and balanced.

The successful and professional management of project and the quality of project results was assured by **The Supervisory board committee**. The Supervisory board committee was formed. Representatives of all project beneficiaries were nominated as members of the Supervisory board committee. The project Supervisory board committee met 10 times (every 6 months) and reviewed and approved the work being carried out and its’ results (see Action F.1).

All partners prepared written monthly reports on progress of the activities to the coordination beneficiary ZRSVN. A monthly joint partnership report was written on progress of the project and submitted to the **external monitor** (Mr. Nikolaj Pečenko, NEEMO). ABs also prepared financial reports to the CB ZRSVN every 3 months (time sheets, expenditure reports and copies of all receipts/invoices that were all labelled with the project number). The reports were joined by the CB ZRSVN to revise the project expenditure.

Five external monitoring visits were carried out by Mr. Pečenko joined by a representative of the co-financer the Ministry of environment and Spatial Planning (also a LIFE national focal point). On the 23rd of June 2020 an **online monitoring visits by EC desk officers** was carried out.

Within the Action F.3 the **external independent financial audit** company RÖDL & PARTNER (Družba za revizijo in davčno svetovanje, d.o.o.) performed an overview of the financial documentation and accounting system of all beneficiaries. They prepared a midterm and a final report.

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

5 Technical part

5.1 Technical progress per action

5.1.1 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 end date: September 2016

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application:

1. Up to date analyses of the situation of the agricultural use of dry grasslands
2. Collection of expert data for the implementation of concrete C actions.
3. Databases containing information required for the implementation of concrete actions
4. Greater knowledge of the habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* status and potential threats to management in the near future.

For detailed description see (Annex A.1).

In the initial stage of the project, detailed analysis of the situation of the current and past agricultural practices were collected in relation to the project. Following **initial analysis** and questioners were prepared:

- A General questioner regarding current and future practices of farms and a potential to be involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (Annex A.1_1). Altogether 211 questioners were filled.
- A questioner on past 10 years agricultural practice on farms (type of management by grazing/mowing of grasslands and type of grazing animals (Annex A.1_2). Altogether 114 questioners were filled. The analysis showed a shift in management practise in the 10 years, from prior management by late mowing or in combination of mowing followed by grazing into just grazing nowadays.
- An Analysis of farmers' involvement in CAP measures (data on actual land use, enrolment into agri-environment measures, data on areas eligible for agricultural payments (Annex A.1_3). It showed a poor enrolment into existing agri-environment measures of the Rural development program (from 2% in PSA Haloze to 30% in PSA Gorjanci).
- An Analysis of past and current land use (Annex A.1_4). The study showed a change of 776.7 ha of grasslands (of 4 PSAs from 2005 to 2015) into other land use categories (overgrown agriculture land, shrubs & trees, forest, arable).

4 overview documents (one for each PSA) were prepared »**Initial analysis of the state of the project sub-areas**« (Annex A.1_5).

We visited Süske Consulting (Vienna, Austria; 13th of May 2016); a 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.

The following deliverable result was produced as part of Action A.1: **A common management database** for 4 project sub-areas, connecting all data gathered in the project (Annex DEL).

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 an employee (project staff).

5.1.2 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 end date: December 2017

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application:

1. *The current status of the selected habitat in the project sub-areas will be evaluated.*
3. *Standardised field methods and evaluation criteria set*
4. *Updated databases containing information required for the implementation*
5. *Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230* for the four project sub- areas will be prepared*
6. *Strategic guidelines for overgrowing areas of HT 6230* for Pohorje sub-area including 7 detailed silviculture plans for the implementation of concrete C actions will be prepared.*

For detailed description see (Annex A.2).

In order to get information of the initial situation of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230*, a joint public tender was prepared for actions A.2: **the detailed analyses of the initial situation** and the Action D.1: **the Final analysis of the impact of project action on the status of the HT 6210(*) and HT 6230*HT**, on all four project subareas. A joint public tender was prepared by CB ZRSVN in April 2016. External subcontractor, University of Maribor - Faculty of natural sciences and mathematics (FNM) was selected. FNM prepared the **Report of initial situation** of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230* of all PSA in September 2016 (Annex A.2_2). Results showed:

- 48% of the targeted HT 6210 (*) on PSAs Haloze, Kum and Gorjanci is in favourable conservation condition (in total 912 ha) and 948 ha in unfavourable conservation condition
- 39% of the targeted HT 6230 * on PSA Pohorje is in favourable conservation condition (cca100ha) and 141 ha in unfavourable conservation condition.

A comparative analysis with a prior HT monitoring showed a severe decline in good conservation status of HT 6210(*) from 1491 ha in 2006 to 771 ha in 2016 for PSA Haloze. It

also showed a severe increase in unfavourable conservation status of the HT 6210(*) for PSA Haloze from 8.9% in 2006 to almost 50 % in 2016 PSA Haloze.

External subcontractor FNM also prepared, to their best expert opinion using modelling, **Potential distribution maps** of targeted habitats for all PSA (Annex A.2_3), taking into account following environmental variables: altitude, the inclination of the surface and its exposure, index of the position of the slopes, global solar irradiation (direct and diffuse), soil base type and land use.

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 GIS data analysis: **zoning and classification** of data obtained from the initial mapping of the habitat type according to the prepared Zoning protocol (Annex A.2_4).

Joining all data, CB ZRSVN identified **possible areas for the implantation of concrete conservation actions** and prepared maps for each PSA (Annex A.2_5). 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. The map was used when determining, if an applicant is suitable to be included in the project activities (Action A.3).

When preparing **Conservation guidelines** for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230* for each PSA, we examined and took into consideration several documents available from EC and best experience from various projects. Conservation guidelines were prepared using participatory approach, involving experts, partners and other relevant stakeholders. Overall **18 meeting and workshops** were organised: 5 workshops with-in the project partnership, 5 workshops with external experts, 6 workshops with local stakeholders and other additional meeting and workshops (Annex EVENTS). Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230* were prepared specifically for each PSA (Annex A.2_6). Each document consist of two parts: Base data of the PSA and Nature conservation measures for sustainable management of dry meadows for each the PSA.

From the data gathered in action A.2, CB ZRSVN prepared 4 draft **Action plans**, one for each PSA (Annex A.2_7), which were at the end of the project updated to include all activities carried out by the project. A **GIS database** was compiled of all available spatial data for all four project sub-areas.

In the project, there were 3 topics of external subcontracting planned under the “**Forestry profession works**”, namely: **Preparation of the “Strategic guidelines for forestation activities for the PSA 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) and **Guidance and surveillance of forestry works for all project sub areas** (Action C.1). A joint public tender for all “forestry professional works” was published on the Slovenian Public Procurement portal in September 2016. We received no offers for the public tender. We had to close the public tender without choosing any external subcontractor for activities under the Action A.2. We solved the unforeseen situation in the way that CB ZRSVN employed foresters (additional CB ZRSVN project staff - Sebastjan Štruc and Klemen Kamenik). They overtook the task initially planned for external contractors and carried out the analysis of the Status of the forestation processes on PSA Pohorje. Further on, they prepared, together with the senior CB ZRSVN staff dr. Jurij Gulič, the **“Strategic guidelines for forestation activities for the PSA Pohorje”**(Annex A.2_8). CB ZRSVN used more working hours (personnel costs) on the Action A.2 than anticipated, but we managed to solve the unforeseen situation. We wrote to the project monitor Mr. Pečenko on the 17th of March 2017 about the situation.

Silviculture plans for the implementation of C1. Actions were prepared by Slovenia Forest series (ZGS), on the demand by the land owners.

Conservation guidelines were integrated into **39 sectoral management plans** for forestry (15), hunting (2), spatial planning (19), rural development (1) and education (2)(Annex A.2_1). With this we managed to include conservation of species rich grassland into plans of other sectors.

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 and exchanged experiences about management of dry grasslands, especially through grazing and communication work with farmers. 19 people participated at the project networking.

The following deliverables were produced as part of Action A.2: 4 Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230* (one for each of the project sub-areas) (Annex DEL)

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

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

Foreseen start date: I/2016

Actual start date: December 2015

Foreseen end date: IV/2017

Actual end date: December 2018

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application:

- 1. Interest among farmers and their involvement in the project*
- 2. Suitable areas for implementation of concrete actions will be identified.*
- 3. At least 4000 farmers and landowners will be informed about the contents and importance of the project (at least 400 will be also visited).*

For detailed description see (Annex A.3).

This action was crucial for implementation of project activities. At the beginning of the project, CB ZRSVN prepared a simple **informational leaflet** concerning the project (Annex E.3_1) with additional information about the project. Leaflets were sent to **9.747** different home and e-mail addresses (expected result is 4.000) (Annex A.3_1). In addition, project partners presented the project, financial mechanism LIFE and Natura 2000, to as wide local public as possible, at many events (Annex EVENTS). The aim was to inform people about the project, its activities and to get them interested in the project.

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 A.3_2). Protocol for **application processing** was followed involving administrative check of applications, GIS examination of the suitability of the land plot, farm visit and field check, conformation of suitability plots for long-term management and drawing of plots, GIS digitalization of plots.

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 general public.

In order to actively involve farms/landowners in the project's implementation actions (land purchase/lease, mowing, grazing and removing the overgrowth and long term management of grasslands), **20 local workshops**: 9 PSA Haloze, 4 PSA Gorjanci, 4 PSA Kum, and 3 PSA Pohorje were carried out in cooperation with project partners (expected result is 18). Altogether 307 farms/landowners attended the workshops.

The initial response from the farmers was very poor. Project staff therefore carried out **670 farm visits** (379 PSA Haloze, 156 Kum, 21 PSA Pohorje, 114 PSA Gorjanci) in this action alone, to further discuss the activities of the project with farmers and to get them involved in the project (more than anticipated in the project proposal, expected result 400) (Annex VISITS). Farmers were negatively oriented towards signing any new form of long-term agreement for management of their land in a specific way, due to negative experience of being involved in the Agri-environmental measures of the European Agricultural Policy. As already stated in Midterm report, due to described circumstances, there has been a delay in getting farmers involved in the project activities. Only after repetitive farm visits, we establish trustful

relations with farmers and got the involvement in the project. Due to this fact we extended the Action A.3 until December 2018. This also caused a delay in the start of Actions C.1, C.2 and C.3.

With the considerable additional effort, we managed to receive in total of **192 Applications from farmers for potential inclusion in the project** activities (129 Haloze, 33 Kum, 15 Pohorje, 18 Gorjanci). 29 applications were rejected, since areas were outside Natura 2000 or did not have suitable habitat or in a few cases farmer later on left the project due to health reasons.

Refer to Annex DOC_Land_owner_documentation which contains all applications, Agreement with farmers, Personalized farmers' management manual, action being carried out on a farm, use of equipment and all photo documentation, organized by individual application.

Following equipment necessary to carry out this action was purchased:

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

5.1.4 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: completed

Expected results from the project application:

1. *Obtained owner permits (at least 180) for the implementation of concrete actions*
2. *Obtained four nature conservation approvals (one for each project sub-area).*
3. *Relevant permits for deforestation will be obtained in accordance with the Act on Forests (estimate 15)*
4. *The implementation of concrete actions in accordance with national legislation.*

For detailed description see (Annex A.4).

After the application processing, **163 Agreements with farmers** to be included in project activities were signed (Separately: PSA Haloze 100, PSA Kum 30, PSA Gorjanci 18, PSA Pohorje 15) (Annex DOC - Sporazum). 154 Agreements were signed with private landowners/farmer and with 9 legal owners. The Agreements assure appropriate management of grasslands until November 2025.

Due to reasons stated in Action A.3 there has been a delay in signing Agreements with landowners/farmers, but the action was successfully completed.



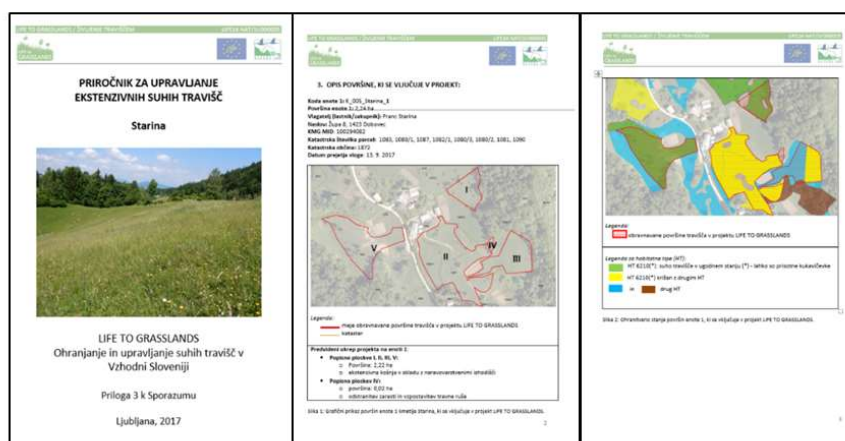
Picture 3: signing the Agreement

All farms who joined the project activities received one project signboard which they placed in a visible area, either on their farm or on one of their project plots in the field.



Picture 4: placed signboard

When a landowner/farmer signed an Agreement for joining the project's activities, CB ZRSVN prepared a **Personalized farmers' management manual** for extensive dry grassland use for each specific farm unit (Annex DOC - Priročnik). The personalized Management manual incorporates 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 and description of management practices to be applied (grazing, mowing, tall tree orchards). Data were 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 5: Insert for the personalized Management manual for extensive dry grassland use, showing exact location of plots included in project activities and their current status.

In order to be able to carry out project activities on private land we also obtained **163 land owners and 136 land co-owners approvals, all together 299 approvals** (separately by PSA: PSA Haloze 190, for PSA Kum 40, for PSA Gorjanci 30, for PSA Pohorje 39; Annex DOC - Soglasje lastnika solastnika).

Since the land is very fragmented, we needed a higher number of land units to be included in the project. Average size of land unit/plot included in the project is 2.77 ha while the average size of the entire farm included in the project is 5.44 ha. In average 51%, of a farm was included in the project.

Additional 12 landowner approvals were obtained in the process of Action E.4 actions for setting up information boards and interpretation tools (. A4_1) and another 25 permits in

Action C.3 for construction of insect hotels (Annex A.4_2). 2 more permits were obtained from SiDG and SKZGRS for Pohorje PSA (detailed description below). Altogether **338 landowner approvals were obtained** in the project (expected result 180 owners approvals).

There was also a delay in obtaining **consents from managers of state owned land** namely Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia (SKZGRS as a manager of the agricultural state owned land) (Annex A.4_3) and Slovenian state forests, Ltd. (SiDG as a manager of the state owned forest land) (Annex A.4_4). It took much longer than anticipated, according to our previous experience, to obtain consensuses from both of them. We obtained the consent agreement form both of the managers of state owned land.

A delay in Action A.3 and the split of management of state owned land in 2016 resulted in a delay in Action A.4. We therefore extended the Action A.4 until December 2018 (see Midterm report).

Initially we planned to obtain four **nature conservation approvals** (one for each project sub-area for all activities). 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, 2016), but due to change in the legislation they were not needed any more for the majority of activities planned in the project. The only time the nature conservation approvals were needed was for the construction of insect hotels. We obtained 3 nature conservation approvals (Annex A.4_5).

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). 30 permits were obtained (Annex A.4_6).

The following deliverables were produced as part of Action A.4: 338 owner permits, 3 conservation consents and 30 permits in accordance with the Act on Forests (Annex DEL).

5.1.5 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 end date: December 2018

Status: Partially completed

Expected results from the project application:

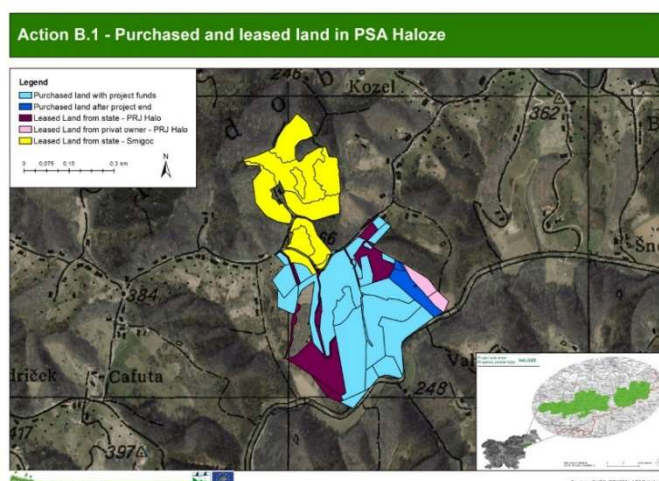
1. *At least 15 ha of leased land.*
2. *At least 15 ha of purchased land.*
3. *Ensured conditions for the implementation of action C.2*

This action was carried out in majority by project partner PRJ Halo. For detailed description see Annex B.1.

Possibility to lease/sell land was a part of the public invitation to participate in project activities (carried out in Action A.3). No interest from the farmers was expressed and no offers were received.

Potential sites for action implementation were then identified through results of actions A.1 and A.2. Five larger areas for the implementation of the action were identified namely Čerinovo being one of them. These are areas of large abandoned dry grassland complexes with important orchid populations. Key landowners were contacted. Invitation letters were sent to all landowners in September 2017 (Annex B.1_1). Only all **Čerinovo** land co-owners responded and expressed interest.

AB PRJ Halo **purchased 13, 66 ha** in two phases from private owners in area Čerinovo (co-owned by 7 people, on the map with light blue). The land ownership is already officially entered in State Land register (Annex B.1_2 and Annex B.1_3).



Picture 6: Purchased and leased land on Čerinovo area

The **LIFE nature conservation clause** was included in the purchase contract in accordance with EU regulation, since in Slovenia it cannot be officially entered into the Land state register (Annex B.2_1). Geographical information along with supporting documentation was sent to the **NEEMO Land purchase database** team who will enter it into the LPD, once the database is back online and functioning (See communication with the NEEMO Land purchase database team Annex B.2_2)

For the purchase of adjoining 0.90 ha of the privately owned land, procedures was not finished within project duration, due to complaints from another interested party (on the map with dark blue). It is still in progress. In after LIFE period AB PRJ Halo will purchase the land from its own funds. AB PRJ HALO obtained the permission from owners to manage the land.

Only one private owner was willing to rent land. AB PRJ Halo **leased 0.69 ha of land from one private** owner for 20 years (on the map with pink, Annex B.1_4)

Other private owners were **not willing to sell/lease the land since the price set in the project proposal** was too low. Since no other private owners were willing to sell/ lease the land, we searched for other options in the vicinity of the purchased and leased land in the area of Čerinovo, in hope of joining the small parcels to the now bigger plot.

AB PRJ Halo leased 3.56 ha (for 20 Years) of State owned land (on the map with purple) on its own cost (not a project cost) (Annex B.1_5). Furthermore additional 8.42 ha of adjoining state owned land was leased by a farmer Mr. Šmigoc (on the map with yellow) on his own costs (not a project cost) (Annex B.1_6). Both contracts included the LIFE nature conservation guidelines and both areas were included in the project activities of overgrowth removal C.1 and long term management C.2 and planting of tall tree orchards C.3). **Altogether 12.67 ha** of land was leased from state on Čerinovo area (on the costs of tenants, not a project cost).

Purchased from private owners	13,66
Leased from private owner by PRJ HALO	0,69
Leased from the State by PRJ HALO	3,56
Leased from the State by Jernej Šmigoc	8,42
Purchasing procedure not completed, managed by PRJ HALO	0,90
Altogether under project management	27,22

Altogether the complex of Čerinovo has 27.22 ha and is being managed as a complex by PRJ Halo and a farmer Šmigoc. The area is partially managed by grazing, mowing and tall tree orchards establishment and a long term management of the area was assured (which was one of the goals of this Action).

Due to lack of willingness to sell or lease the land (according to the low value of land specified in the project proposal) indicated goal was **not reached in total** (already pointed out in progress report II). But the establishment of complex of Čerinovo is gaining a lot of positive feedback from local community, past owners, schools (youth) and also experts.

In parallel, potential farmers, who would manage the purchased/leased land, were also identified. PRJ Halo established a **“Grazing community Čerinovo”** in order to assure suitable management of the area in the future (See Action C.2).

AB PRJ Halo transferred the unspent amount of 42.900 € from cost category Lease of land and 5.800 € from cost category Land purchase to other cost categories (External assistance: official land measurements and setting of land markers on the land bought, external staff was hired to help to install grazing fence in Čerinovo, these expenses were not initially planned; Durable goods: AB PRJ Halo purchased more capable mowers for steep terrain, which were more

expensive than originally foreseen; Other Cost: in connection with the establishment of grazing community, not planned in the proposal).

5.1.6 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 end date: June 2018

Status: partially completed

Expected results from the project application:

1. *At least 3 ha of purchased land.*
2. *Ensured conditions for the implementation of action C.2*

For detailed description see Annex B.2.

In the Gorjanci-Radoha project subarea AB DGK **purchased 2.36** ha of privately owned land over three plots on Miklavž area, previously overgrown grasslands (Annex B.2_3). The expected result of 3 ha was **not reached in total** due to low interest of land owners to sell their plots according to the value specified in the project proposal.

The ownership was officially registered in Land state register and information sent to the Land purchase database (Annex B.2_2). The LIFE nature conservation clause “permanent nature conservation purpose” was included in the purchase contract in accordance with EU regulation, since in Slovenia it cannot be officially entered into the Land state register (Annex B.2_1).

5.1.7 Action C.1: Removal of overgrowth

Foreseen start date: III/2016 Actual start date: May 2016

Foreseen end date: II/2020 Actual: September 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application:

1. *Overgrowth over at least 81 ha cleared from the habitat type 6210(*).*
2. *Overgrowth over at least 52 ha cleared and tree-stumps mulched at least on 16 ha from the habitat type 6230* in PSA Pohorje*
3. *Overgrowth over at least 45 ha in the PSA Haloze removed.*
4. *Overgrowth over at least 10 ha of in PSA Gorjanci removed.*
5. *Overgrowth over at least 26 ha of in PSA Kum removed.*

Detailed description of activities in Annex C.1.

We started the Action C.1 with the delay (described in Action A.3). In addition, removal of overgrowth was further hindered by an external factor beyond our control – severe weather conditions in winter 2017/2018 (already stated in Progress report). We also had difficulties in obtaining a contractor for mulching in PSA Haloze (multiple public calls were prepared). In the final stages of the project emergence of Covid-19 measures caused a delay in mulching in

2020. We finished works later than anticipated, in autumn 2020. Nevertheless, **we managed to finish the action and reach the planned goal.**

The activities were carried out by CB ZRSVN through various contractors and subcontractors. A **public tender** for »Removal of overgrowth in project sub-areas Pohorje, Haloze, Kum and Gorjanci « was published on European portal for public tenders in August 2017. External contractors were contracted. External contractor for PSA Kum later on withdrew from the contract and additional public tender was published and a new contractor contracted. Employees of the CB ZRSVN were regularly monitoring the progress and quality of the activities on the field and were in regular contact also with contractors and the landowners.

Overgrowth was removed in total on 139,14 ha (plan 133 ha). All biomass was transported off the plots in order to assure long-term management of grasslands. In Slovenia forests are property of the land owner thus trees logs, biomass and other residues, which were formed during the removal of growth, were the property of the owners, who used it according to their needs.

Overgrowth removal	Haloze	Kum	Pohorje	Gorjanci	Sum
Expected result	45,00	26,00	52,00	10,00	133,00
Realization	50,20	19,95	52,45	16,54	139,14
%	112%	77%	101%	165%	105%

If bare soil was present, **hay debris**, harvested on nearby extensive grasslands of targeted HT or oats was sown. Grasslands were restored over the area.

In addition to assure long-term management of grasslands **mulching** of tree sprouts and tree hives as well as pulling of hives was carried out. CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender for "Mulching of vegetation on project sub-areas Haloze, Gorjanci and Pohorje" in February 2019. Contracts were signed for PSA Pohorje and PSA Gorjanci. The public tender for PSA Haloze had to be repeated twice (May 2019 and July 2019) to finally sign a contract with the external contractor.

Mulching	Haloze	Kum	Pohorje	Gorjanci	Sum
Realization	54,06	/	25,68	10,95	90,69

In total, addition mulching of tree sprouts and tree hives as well as pulling of hives, was carried out on **90.69 ha**. Where works were completed late the long-term management (mowing, grazing, tall tree orchards planting) of the re-established grassland could begin only then, i.e. in a few cases almost at the end of the project. This was pointed out also in the evaluation of

the effect of project actions into the conservation status of HT by an external expert (see Action D.1).

Altogether, on all PSAs, **24 voluntary actions** were organized (expected result 16) involving 487 volunteers.

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).

Project sub-area Pohorje:

Potential locations for the overgrowth removal activities were defined in the document “Strategic guidelines for overgrown areas” for project sub-area Pohorje” prepared in Action A.2. External contractor Slovenia Forest Service (ZGS) labelled and determined the quantity and structure of trees. Activities of overgrowth removal on PSA Pohorje captured logging of spruce trees of indifferent age categories (from young trees to tall tree stands). All activities were carried out on overgrown grasslands. Activities were carried out on state owned land and on private land. The activities of overgrowth removal on private land were financed by the project and carried out by contractor of the CB ZRSVN. **The overgrowth removal on state owned land was financed by the State** (namely: on agriculture land by Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia – SKGZRS and in forests by Slovenia State forest ltd - SIDG).

In PSA Pohorje overgrowth was removed in total **on 52.45 ha** (40.71 ha on state owned land and 11.74 ha on privately owned land). Altogether **10.000 m³** of trees were cut down. On Pohorje PSA external supervision of forestry works was carried out by the contractor Slovenia forest service. After the overgrowth removal, **tree hives were mulched** by forest mulcher or **pulled out** on 25.68 ha, biomass was taken off the grasslands and the area levelled.



Picture 7: overgrowth removal on PSA Pohorje

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

Activities of overgrowth removals on PSA Haloze, Kum and Gorjanci captured felling of young deciduous overgrowth of different ages and densities over overgrown grasslands. The plots were small and fragmented, in addition activities were more demanding due to the steepness of terrain (some surfaces had a slope above 50%). It was, therefore, necessary to have very special mechanization to carry out the removal of overgrowth and mulching. In some places, the work had to be done manually (without machines). The overgrowth in these PSAs was very progressed slowly. The works started late due to reasons stated in Action A.3. To speed up works and catch with the time plan additional sub-contractors were contracted.

Overgrowth was removed on 50,20 ha on PSA Haloze, 19,95 ha on PSA Kum and 16,54 ha on Gorjanci. In total on the 3 PSAs the overgrowth was removed **on total 86,69ha** (expected result 81,00ha).



After overgrowth removal mulching of tree sprouts in the first year was carried out on **65,01ha** in total on PSA Haloze and PSA Gorjanci. Due to the emergence of Covid-19 mulching was delayed and works ended in September 2020.



Picture 8: removal of overgrowth and mulching on PSAs haloze, Kum and Gorjanci

Where works were completed later than planned, that meant that the long-term use of the established grassland (mowing, grazing, tall tree orchards planting) could begin only then, i.e. in a few cases almost at the end of the project. This was pointed out also in the evaluation of the effect of project actions onto the conservation status of HT by an external expert (see Action D.1).

After the completion of overgrowth removal some plots were not suitable for long term management by mowing/grazing jet (presence of rocks, lack of soil and uneven surface). CB ZRSVN subcontracted contractors for the implementation of additional remediation works, so long-term management was assured.

On PSA Gorjanci small trees logs which were formed during the removal of growth, were used to produce a charcoal dig. Charcoal that was produced was used to prepare project promotional product “Charcoal from Gorjanci meadows” – a zero waste charcoal in disposable gift packaging with higher added value.



Picture 9: Charcoal from Gorjanci meadows

“Charcoal from Gorjanci meadows” was packaged in disposable paper gift bags, a product with higher added value. The product was used for promotion activities at the Final conference of the project.

5.1.8 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 end date: September 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application:

1. Increased economic viability of the extensive use of dry grasslands in the project sub-areas (in connection with Action C.5 and C.7)
2. Ensured appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands on a surface of at least 517 ha

Detailed description in Annex C.2.

Action C.2 aims at ensuring appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands. Project partners purchased the necessary equipment which enabled local farmers (to whom we lend the equipment for free) to re-establish use of grasslands or in some cases to improve existing use. Signed agreement with farmers for joining the project's activities together with management plans (Actions C.5) are **assuring appropriate long term management of 678 ha** (expected result 517ha).

Long-term management (ha)	Haloze	Kum	Pohorje	Gorjanci	total
Expected result	180	50	257	30	517
Realization	283,67	83,16	276,88	34,75	678,46
%	158%	166%	108%	116%	131%
by mowing	203,73	73,83	94,89	34,75	407,20
by grazing	202,21	30,59	30,69	0,00	263,49

When discussing with farmers, who were prepared to be included in the project activities of longer management by mowing, they were interested only if they would have a possibility of a free use 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 external monitor, 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. We proposed changes in the Midterm and Progress report.

Separated public tenders were prepared for purchasing mowing (mountain mowers, mulcher, tractor mower, backpack movers) and grazing equipment (A - wire, B - insulators, C - wooden posts, D - electric fence chargers, E - livestock drinking supply systems). Public tenders were published on European or Slovenia Public tender portal in 2017. Different contractors were contracted.

Following **mowing equipment** was purchased:

- 1 modern mountain mower for steep terrain and 1 mulcher (brush cutter) by AB KS Dobovec (PSA Kum);
- 4 mountain mowers for steep terrain by AB PRJ Halo (PSA Haloze)
- 1 tractor mower by AB DGK (PSA Gorjanci)
- 20 backpack movers (9 by AB KS Dobovec for PSA Kum and 11 by AB PRJ Halo for PSA Haloze)

Mountain mowers and brush cutters were given for free use to small groups of farmers. Farmers had to jointly manage at least 20ha of grasslands in order to get free joined use of each mountain mower. The aim was to network farmers through joint use. Special Agreements were signed with frames for joined use of each mountain mower, establishing rules of co-use. **Trainings workshops** for proper use of equipment (mountain mowers) and mowers handing were organized. Farmers are already using the equipment (68 participants).



Picture 10: Handing over mountain mowers and presentation workshop

Joined public tender for purchasing **backpack movers** was prepared by partner PRJ Halo for KS Dobovec in October 2017. A supplier was contracted for supplying 11 backpack movers to PRJ Halo and 9 to KS Dobovec.

Project partner KGZ made expert assessment for the needed pasture equipment. Joined public tender for purchasing **grazing equipment** was prepared by partner PRJ Halo for partners PRJ Halo, ZRSVN and KS Dobovec. The 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). Contracts were signed with contractors and following equipment was purchased:

Pasture: fence for sheep and cattle (km)	Haloze	Kum	Pohorje	Gorjanci	Total
Expected result (km)	80,00	10,00	4,00	/	94,00
Realization (km)	90,89	16,26	6,55	/	113,70
%	114%	163%	164%	/	121%



Picture 11: Grazing equipment and grazing animals

All of the equipment was delivered by project partners or by external contractors to farmers. Farmers put up fences themselves. They also signed agreements that they would maintain the grazing equipment by themselves until 2025.

AB KGZ Ptuj and AB PRJ Halo prepared instruction, manuals (Annex C.2_1) and a video for the construction of wire fences. **Demonstration workshops** for setting up the grazing fence were organized by project partners (113 participants).

On PSA Pohorje traditional **wooden fence**, in the length of 2km was constructed in the most frequent tourist areas.

Joined public tender for purchasing **cattle trailers** was prepared by partner AB PRJ Halo for KS Dobovec and ZRSVN in October 2017. A supplier was contracted for supplying 4 trailers to PRJ Halo, 1 to ZRSVN and 1 to KS Dobovec.



Picture 12: Handing over trailers to farms for joint use

On PSA Pohorje a **grazing plan** for Grazing community Rogla was prepared, which covers 44.4 ha.

The action was successfully completed and we are happy to report that we **exceeded the expected result**. The project approach, of purchasing equipment for mowing and grazing and giving it to free use to farmers showed to be a good approach. Farmers were later not paid for their labour of grasslands management. They were nevertheless happy since they gained the possibility of free use of modern equipment, which could not be afforded otherwise by themselves.

Following equipment necessary to carry out this action was purchased:

- AB PRJ Halo: small field work material, one container for equipment storage, one voltage converter measuring and one measuring device for electric grazing fence;
- AB DG Košenice: small field work material.

5.1.9 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 end date: March 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application:

1. *The improved structure and function of the habitat type 6210(*) on a surface of at least 45.50 ha of dry grasslands.*
2. *Ensured appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands on a surface of at least 45.50 ha.*
3. *Increased economic viability of the extensive use of dry grasslands in the project sub-areas.*
4. *20 ha of existing traditional meadow orchards will be restored in the Haloze PSA*
5. *0.50 ha of existing traditional meadow orchards will be restored in the Gorjanci PSA*
6. *5 ha of existing meadow orchards will be restored in the PSA Kum*
7. *20 ha of steep slopes in the Haloze project sub-area will be re-planted*
8. *Improvement in the management of existing standard meadow orchards due organisation of training workshops.*
9. *Increased biodiversity in the project sub-areas.*

Detailed description the action is in Annex C.3.

Extensive tall tree meadow orchards are traditional on PSAs and prevent landslides of steep dry grassland. In addition they add to biodiversity and provide additional income to the farmers. AB KGZ Ptuj prepared a list of local old varieties of tall meadow orchard fruit tree which were traditionally grown on PSAs.

Initial check of availability of local old varieties of tall tree fruit varieties in nurseries showed that there are not enough seedlings of traditional varieties in nurseries available 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 tall 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



Picture 13: traditional meadow orchard

tender and an external subcontractor Kartuzija Pleterje was subcontracted. Kartuzija Pleterje is also Slovenian national genetic bank for old varieties of fruit tree. All saplings have ECO-certificate.

AB KGZ Ptuj prepared Descriptions of the traditional varieties (Annex C.3_1) and a Manual on how to properly plant and manage traditional orchard fruit trees (Annex C.3_2). Each farmer chose the varieties to be planted on the farm. Prepared saplings were delivered by the contractor to farmers of PSA Haloze, Kum and Gorjanci. **Farmers planted the sapling themselves** or were pated through voluntary actions of the project.



Picture 14: Delivery and planting of seedlings

CB ZRSVN also prepared a public tender for the **protective equipment for seedlings** in March 2017 (polls, underground protective nets for the root system and protective nets for trunks). Supplier delivered the equipment to frames.

Altogether **3493 sapling were planted** altogether on 3 PSAs (PSA Haloze 3185, PSA Kum 263, PSA Gorjanci 45) of **61 different fruit tree varieties** (of eight (8) different meadow orchard fruit trees types). Viability of panted sapling was checked on the field. **97% of sapling survived**. In addition CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender for rejuvenation pruning of old orchard trees in May 2017. The contractors also **pruned 777 old orchard trees** (PSA Haloze 588, PSA Kum 169, PSA Gorjanci 20).

Altogether **83.48 ha tall tree grasslands orchards were restored** (43.86 ha were restored and 39.62 ha planted a new; expected result restored 25.5 ha, planted a new 20 ha).

Tall tree grasslands orchards	Haloze	Kum	Pohorje	Gorjanci	Sum
Planned restoration (ha)	20,00	5,00	/	0,50	25,50
Actually restoration (ha)	40,56	2,74	/	0,56	43,86
Planned new planting (ha)	20,00	0,00	/	/	20,00
Actually: new planting (ha)	37,84	1,78	/	/	39,62
Planned together	40,00	5,00	/	0,50	45,50
Actually together	78,40	4,52	/	0,56	83,48

	%	196%	90%	/	112%	183%
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In addition **18 educational demonstration workshops** rejuvenation pruning of traditional tall fruit trees (13 in Haloze PSA, 4 in Kum PSA and 1 in Gorjanci PSA) farmers of were organized by AB KGZ Ptuj and attended by **452 farmers** (expected result 15).

To raise awareness among local population, general public, schools, local and national authorities of the importance of preserving traditional tall tree orchards and with the aim to help the farmers to plant saplings AB KGZ Ptuj, CB ZRSVN, AB KS Dobovec, AB Society



Picture 15: Voluntary action with the press conference attended by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, forestry and food Mr. Stanonik.

Gorjanske košenice and AB PRJ Halo organized **11 volunteer action** (expected result 8); 7 on PSA Haloze, 2 on PSA Gorjanci and 2 on PSA Kum) and attended by **263 volunteers**.

To ensure the successful pollination of orchards, increase the biodiversity of dry grassland orchards and increase awareness about impotence of pollinators, **25 insect hotels** were installed (10 PSA Haloze, 15 PSA Kum) in the vicinity of orchards and farms. PRJ Halo prepared public tender for construction of insect hotels in September 2017. Insect hotels are equipped with info boards with the topic of pollinators' conservation. The content of pollinators' conservation was also added to the project internet page available also by QR code (Annex C.3_3).



Picture 16: Insect hotel

<http://www.lifetograsslands.si/rezultati-projekta/hoteli-za-zuzelke/>

Action supports conservation of the **genetic diversity** of old fruit tree varieties in the field - **agrobiodiversity**, conservation of **pollinators** and other species of insects and birds. In addition orchards provide additional income to the farmer.

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. A car; Suzuki Vitara was purchased by CB ZRSVN in March 2016 (Annex C.3_4). Project car is regularly serviced and will be used for nature conservation purposes after the project end.

Utility clothes for field work were bought by KGZ Ptuj and small material for field work necessary to carry out this action were purchased by both KGZ Ptuj and DG Košenice.

To assure further development of product from orchards (see action C.7) additional equipment was bought by KGZ Ptuj: one fruit dehydrator machine, two digital refractometers brix and one pasterisator (50 L) (issue raised at monitoring visit on the 23rd of June 2020).

5.1.10 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: January 2017

Foreseen end date: III/2020

Actual end date: September 2020

Status: Completed

Expected results from the project application:

- 1. A working online platform for the networking of landowners in the Haloze project sub-area.*
- 2. Increased economic viability of the extensive use of dry grasslands in the Haloze project sub-area (in connection with Actions C.5 and C.7)*
- 3. Increased surface of dry grasslands where appropriate long-term use will be assured (in connection with Action C.2)*
- 4. In the long term, a decrease in overgrown dry grassland surfaces in the Haloze project sub-area (in connection with Action C.1)*
- 6. Increased awareness among the local population on the importance of preserving dry grasslands (see Action D.2)*

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. Detailed description in Annex C.4.

AB PRJ HALO prepared a public tender and the contractor constructed the **web portal** providing basic information about the project, its partners, LIFE mechanism and Natura 2000 as well as constant update on project development. The web portal is functional since April 2017, regularly updated and available on link: <http://www.travisca.haloze.org/>. AB PRJ Halo is the administrator of the page. Links to this web portal are available on web pages of LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project, AB PRJ Halo, CB ZRSVN and AB KGZ Ptuj and are added to the websites of local communities on PSA Haloze.

The portal facilitates exchange of information on land purchase/lease, livestock purchase/lease, livestock feed, current price of meat and a catalogue of products from dry grasslands. All relevant news about the project implementation are also available on the portal. The portal attracted several farmers and landowners to join the project in the initial stage. The catalogue of products from dry grassland was created and also published on the portal (see action C.7). **28.300 page visits** were observed until now.

In addition **Facebook account** (LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) was created to reach as many users as possible.

AB PRJ Halo organized **3 annual information events** (1050 participants), **5 workshops** for networking owners/farmers on PSA Haloze (53 participants), 5 training workshops for stakeholders and local communities to teach them how to use the portal and to offer assistance in searching for information (39 participants) (Annex EVENTS). All planned events for 2020 were cancelled due to COVID 19.

Expected results can be visible in other Actions (refer to A.3, A.4: signing agreement with farms, C.1: decrease in overgrown, C.2: assuring for long term management of grasslands, C.7: production of products and establishment of a collective brand).

Following equipment was purchased by PRJ Halo: 1 personal computer with software and 5 notice boards.

5.1.11 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 end date: October 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

- 1. Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230* prepared in action A.2 will be included in the management plans for key farms in project sub-areas.*
- 2. At least 49 farm management plans for dry grasslands management will be prepared*
- 3. A good practice of integrating conservation measures will be transferred into agricultural management via the farm management plans*
- 4. The surface area of dry grasslands will increase and appropriate use will be ensured (in connection with action C.2)*
- 5. The trend of dry grasslands overgrowing will decrease in project sub-areas in the long term (in connection with action C.1)*
- 6. The social and economic perspective of agriculture will improve in project sub-areas ensured (in connection with action C.7)*
- 7. Long term dry grasslands management will improve in project sub-areas (in connection with action C.2)*

Detailed description in Annex C.5.

Project working group (consisting of representatives CB ZRSVN, AB KGZ Ptuj and AB PRJ Halo) was established and agreed on contents of the Farm management plan for the project.

The preparation of Farm management plans was based on the management strategy of a farm, its future development potential and at the same time incorporating extensive management of dry grasslands, in the view of general improvement of the economic perspective of the farm and agriculture in project sub-areas.

49 Farm management plans (30 farms on PSA Haloze, 10 on PSA Kum, 2 on PSA Gorjanci and 7 on PSA Pohorje (expected result 49) were prepared by AB KGZ Ptuj and CB ZRSVN in close

collaboration with farmers (Annex C.5_1). **104 farm visits** were conducted by AB KGZ Ptuj and CB ZSRVN in the process. The plans were calculated for 10 year future potential economic development of a farm. A farm was addressed as a whole. The Farm management plan contains analyses of the current situation of agricultural holdings and its development strategy. Economic calculations were carried out by an agriculture economist (AB KGZ Ptuj). Special attention was paid to the management of dry grasslands, so Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230* prepared in action A.2 were included in the Farm management plans. **English translation** of one Farm management plan is in Annex C.5_2.

A new approach and a good practice example for Slovenia towards integrating nature conservation into farming practices was implemented. We believe Farm management plans will, in the long term, improve the social and economic perspective of farms and agriculture and at the same time support conservation of species rich grasslands on the PSAs.

Expected results can be visible also in other Actions (refer to C.1: decrease in overgrown, C.2: signing agreement for long term management, C.7: production of products and establishment to of a collective brand, D.1 monitoring of the impact of project actions success).

A **one 1-day trip to Austria** (9th of October 2018, 50 participants: farmers from PSAs) transferring good practice examples in management of grasslands, developing product from grassland as well as marketing and selling of product on farms, was organized. In addition **an educational day** (6th of February 2019, 64 participants) with 4 lectures about examples of good practice in producing product on farm, their networking and marketing under a collective brand from Slovenia, were organized. A 2 day trip was initially planned, but due to farmers preferences we split the event into two days.

The equipment necessary to carry out this action was purchased by KGZ Ptuj: 1 personal computer with software, 2 GPS devices with software and by ZRSVN: the GIS cartographic database.

The following deliverables were produced: 49 farm management plans for selected farms in PSAs (Annex DEL)

5.1.12 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 end date: August 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. *Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230* prepared in action A.2 will be integrated into the expert proposal of AEP measures related to the preservation of grasslands*
2. *The integration of the preservation of habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* in the system of agricultural (in connection with Action C.5)*
3. *The social and economic perspective of agriculture in project sub-areas and other comparable areas in Slovenia improved (in connection with action C.1, C.2, C.7, D.2)*
4. *Long term dry grasslands management improved in project sub-areas (in connection with action C.2)*

Detailed description of the action in Annex C.6.

A working group was established and 3 workshops were organized by CB ZRSVN for the preparation of an Expert Proposal of The Agro-Environment measure (AE Measures) related to the conservation of the habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* (Draft RBPS proposal) was studied. CB ZRSVN decided to use a **Result-based approach**. Relevant documentation about RBPs was studied by CB ZRSVN.

Workshops with external expert for the assessment of the effect of project actions on conservation status of the HT were organized (Action D.1). External expert prepared a short list of possible **positive and negative indicator plants** of status for each PSA (Annex C.6_1). **Field scoring sheets** were prepared by CB ZRSVN for each PSA, using positive and negative indicator plant and assessment of habitat conditions (Annex C.6_2). A scoring system 1-10 was used.

Project staff participated on 3 interventional conferences focused on RBP approaches:

1. 17th of October 2019; Conference organized by EC: Farming for biodiversity: Building on know-how from the result-based pilots, Brussels
2. 22nd – 23rd January 2020; Conference organized by EC: Farming for biodiversity: Results Based Payment Schemes for Biodiversity in CAP Strategic Plans, Brussels
3. 16th – 17th September 2019; International conference: RESULTS-BASED PAYMENTS, Setting up a network, Vienna, Austria, number of participants:

She visited Ireland and **exchanged experience** with LIFE projects (Burren Life (LIFE04 NAT/IE/000125) and ARAN LIFE (LIFE12 NAT/IE/000995), Irish EIP projects (Hen Harrier Project, Pearl Mussel Project, Caomhnú Arann Project) and with the Irish »Department Of Agriculture, Food And The Marine«) (see also Action F2 – networking).

Expert Proposal of a RBPS AEP measures for conservation of HT 6210(*) and 6230* on the PSAs was handed to responsible Ministry (MKGP) on the **4th of April 2019** (Annex C.6_3).

Training workshops (8) for identification of indicator species for farmers were organized in the field and a RBPS model tested on the field by farmers and project experts (90 farmers participated). CB ZRSVN prepared a protocol for farmer training workshops (Annex C.6_4).



Picture 17: Training workshops (8) for identification of indicator species for farmers

CB ZRSVN also **tested the RBPS model** and field scoring sheets (Annex C.6_5) for the proposal on eighteen (18) farms on Haloze, twelve (12) farms on Kum, 2 farms on Pohorje and 9 farms on Gorjanci. The test was conducted on project areas in cooperation with the farmers.

Farmer's feedback was positive. The project carried out a comparative analysis in collaboration with another project carried out questioners among farmers for Haloze (258 farms involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) and compared the result with the farmed from region of Karst (263 farms not involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS). Analysis showed that more farmers identified indicator plant from Haloze then from Kras, as an outcome from workshops of the project. In addition farmers from Haloze preferred a result based measure (measure without prescribed practices 40,7%) to a higher degree then in comparison to Karst (21,7%) (Annex C.6_6).

Findings from workshops and field testing of the model were used to improve the draft proposal at the end of the project.

A RBPS proposal was presented to farmers and relevant national authorities (MOP, MKGP, AKTRP, 39 participants). **Further efforts** are made for incorporation of the RBPS proposal in the CAP. CB ZRSVN organized a Meeting with Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia a field day with MKGP and an online workshop with relevant national authorities (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food representatives; Agency for Agricultural Markets and Rural Development – paying agency). At the moment there is an indication from the MKGP that the RBPS could be, at last as a test, potentially included in the future CAP.

Results-based payments network was established in Vienna in September 2019 with the aim to build a network of actors involved in the design and implementation of Results based payments schemes. A network web page was later on created <https://www.rbpnetwork.eu/> in co-financing from the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (additional activity not in the project proposal, in communication with the external monitor). The network offers a good platform

for exchanging experience in PRBPs approaches and offers the possibility of promoting activities being carried out in European countries. Project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS is presented under Slovenia (See Action E.5). 118 people already registered as members from 26 countries and, 9180 unique visits were detected until now.

CB ZRSVN representative Ms. Mateja Žvikart is a member of **Group for grassland**, formed by the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and food. The group is involved in preparation renewal of CAP. The group met 4 times during the project duration (Annex C.6_7).

The following deliverable was produced as part of Action C.6: 1 expert proposal document of AEP measures related to the preservation of HT 6210 (*) and HT 6230* (Annex DEL).

5.1.13 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: December 2019

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. *A recognised economic interest for further sustainable use of dry grasslands on all PSA Haloze*
2. *The social and economic perspective of agriculture improved.*
3. *Increased awareness among the local population on the economic and ecological importance of preserving dry grasslands (at least 350 re-oriented farmers).*
4. *At least 1,300 farmers in the Haloze sub area involved in the process of preparing the Development and Economics study of Dry Grasslands Preservation in the Haloze PSA*
5. *Platforms for agricultural, tourist, craftsman's and industrial products based on dry grasslands as a nature source in the Haloze area*

Detailed description with English abstract in Annex C.7.

Farming is being abandoned in project PSAs, posing the biggest threat to conservation of species rich grasslands. If farming is abandoned, grasslands get overgrown very quickly. If we want to conserve species rich grasslands, farming in these rural areas (with hard farming condition) has to be supported, promoted and maintained.



Picture 188: local product from grasslands

The main purpose of the action was to promote conservation of dry grasslands through **improving farm economics** and the promotion of multi-functional use of grasslands and production of products from grasslands. The aim was to increase the economic income of the farm by additional production of product from grasslands, networking the farmers in the area and connect them with the potential buyers. Educate farmers of the importance of branding their high quality and healthy products at higher price. All of this in a view of

assuring profitable farming supporting and promoting extensive use of dry grasslands.

A public tender was prepared by CB and The Economics study of Dry Grasslands Preservation in the Haloze project sub-area was prepared in phases by the contractor, CB ZRSVN, AB KGZ Ptuj and AB PRJ Halo.

8 workshops were organized (3 for the identification of local products and requirements and 5 workshops for preparing foundation for a trademark). In addition **8 trainings** (3 intensive 30-hour training workshops and 5 short 8-hour trainings/workshop) for local farmers and owners of the land in PSA Haloze for processing products (fruit, milk, meat) were organized. 285 farmers attended the workshops. Expected result was 13 workshops altogether.

Economics study for Dry Grasslands conservation in the Haloze project sub-area was prepared and it contains a geographic scope and classification of the study area, a snapshot/record of the situation in Haloze, the Vision and an Action plan for networking, logistics and marketing of products certified by the collective brand. A study also contains a **complete documentation** (rules, corrections, evaluation sheets, application and application ...) for granting the right of use of the **collective brand “From step meadows of Haloze”** (“S Haloških bregov”, Annex C.7_1). Test evaluations of products from dry grasslands for the collective brand took place on 29th and 30th of May 2020. **136 products from 40 farms** were evaluated. About half (50 %) of the products met the criteria for the brand and close to one third (33 %) of the products are already registered and sold on farms.



Picture 9: A catalogue of available products from dry grasslands

A **catalogue** of available product was prepared and is accessible on the web portal of the project (Action C.4) <https://www.travisca.haloze.org>. A leaflet with a list of providers and offers of products from Haloze grasslands was prepared.

Additional networking and branding efforts were made through communication with butchers, dairies, shops selling local product, restaurants and product from grassland were catered on project events.

Altogether 29 activities were carried out under this Action and more than **500 participants were actively involved**.

With the help or initiative of the project following **result** are:

- five farms switched to **organic farming**,
- eco farmers of Haloze organized themselves and now sell Eco-milk from Haloze to a local dairy at higher price,
- two farms already **registered a new complementary activity** on the farm (fruit processing, tourism on the farm) and additional 21 farms are considering registering a new complementary farm activity,
- nine surveyed farms (8.7%) already **increased their stock** of animals and additional 30 surveyed farms (29.1%) plan to increase the stock of animals in coming years (due to Action C.2),
- four farms have already started **fruit processing** during the project, 18 more are planning to do so in the future (Action C.3),
- 54.7% of the respondents agree that the project activities showed opportunities for **marketing products** from dry grasslands and new potential farming model,
- 52.3% of the respondents estimated that the project activities enabled them to acquire **new useful knowledge and skills**,
- 37 respondents (34.6%) expect that the project will **increase the income** from additional agricultural activity on their farm in the coming years,
- almost half of the surveyed agricultural holdings agreed that the project began to identify **new development opportunities** for agriculture in the Haloze area,
- majority believe that **increase in revenue** will follow.

The project also had an indirect impact on the local environment:

- a small grocery store offering local products was established in Majšperk named “Haložanka” (2019),
- product from grassland are also sold in a local grocery store in Ptuj,
- The hotel Grand Hotel Primus (Ptuj) now has the option of organizing catering of event with products from grasslands,
- networking with emerging gastronomic brand “Haloze - Land of a Thousand Hills” group was established,
- some local restaurants already offer local product on their menus.

On our estimation at least **366 farmers/land owners were reoriented** toward extensive use of grasslands (owners and co-owners from action A.2, A.3 (338) and additional 28 farms with products from dry grasslands).

The acceptance of Action C.7 by local farmers, landowners, agricultural officials and others was very positive.

To assure an **after LIFE evaluation** of the products from grasslands a protocol was agreed with AB KGZ Ptuj to evaluate the products from grasslands as a supplementary activity to national evaluation of products from farms under the “Goodies from Slovenian farms” (“Dobrote Slovenskih kmetij”) organized by the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and food and KGZ Ptuj.

This national evaluation has a history of more than 30 years and on average accepts around 1000 products for evaluation each year. In 2020 (after the action ended) 12 farms with 28 product entered evaluation of products from grasslands under “Goodies from Slovenian farms”.

We believe that the project showed **a new positive vision for farmers** in PSA and gave them incentive to keep active farming in the rural areas of the PSA.

Five (5) workshops to transfer the knowledge and results to other PSAs Kum, Gorjanci and Pohorje were organized and attended by 101 participants.

To assure further development of product from grasslands, project partners’ purchased additionally equipment: 2 fruit dehydrator machines, one cheese vat and pH meter. Farmers will be able to use the equipment free of charge for producing products from grasslands.

The following deliverable was produced as part of Action C.7: 1 Economic study of dry grasslands preservation in the Haloze project sub-area (Annex DEL).

5.1.14 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 end date: September 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. *Monitoring of the effects of field actions on the targeted habitats will be carried out*
2. *5 workshops, 1 for each project sub-area and 1 joined for all project sub-areas*
3. *Project actions will be evaluated to assess the suitability of the site management*
4. *Standardised field methods and monitoring indicators set*
5. *Detailed evaluation of demonstrative/innovative aspects and outcomes.*

See Annex D.1 for detailed description.

A joint Public tender with action A.2 for the Inventory of the initial situation of target habitat types and monitoring of the impacts of project activities on the status of target habitat types in the project sub-areas (refer to Action A.2) was prepared by the CB ZSRVN. The contractor University of Maribor, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (FNM) was contracted. FNM prepared a **protocol and the methodology of standardized field methods** for mapping and determining the conservation status of targeted habitats using **indicator species** and their reference values. **Field forms** for monitoring of the initial status and impact of project activities on targeted habitat types with assigned indicators and habitat structure for each PSA was prepared for each PSA in action A.2. (Annex A.2_9). Conservation status of targeted habitat types was recorded. A Report of initial situation was prepared in Action A.2.

Four (4) training workshops for project partners were organized by FNM on how to fill in the Field form (1 joined and 4 for each PSA).

Filed forms were filled in 2016, 2017 and 2018 and again in 2019 and 2020 (Annex DOC – Popisni obrazci). The data was then compared. An additional workshop for revision of field forms, used to assess the status of the habitat type was organized in February 2020 and field forms were updated.

A **Final report** of the impact of the project actions onto conservation status of habitats was prepared by FNM in August 2020 (Annex D.1_1).

The Final report noted the following:

- an increase in agricultural extensive use of land that was abandoned before (due to C.2 Action); 73 previously abandoned plots have now agricultural use re-established,
- a significant reduction of overgrowth (due to C.1 Action),
- improvement in management practices,
- decline in presence of negative indicators,
- an increase in number of present positive indicator species (except PSA Haloze*),
- a shift of presence of dominant species towards indicator species of grasslands 6210 (*) and HT 6230*,
- presence and diversity of orchid species (PSA Gorjanci: 11 different species, PSA Haloze: 15 different species, PSA Kum: 19 different orchid species).



Picture 19: management of species rich grasslands, orchid rich sites, by grazing

*It was also noted that some results do not show an accurate status since the inventory was carried out in the final stages of the overgrowth removal process (mulching), which was postponed and delayed due to the appearance of Covid-19 measures (see Action C.1). In addition it was noted that in such a short time after the intervention of restoration of meadow habitat we cannot expect a favourable conservation status condition of the habitat types in terms of re-presence of positive indicator species and that the final effect will be visible over time.

At the end of each C action, project partners systematically visited grasslands to observe the effect of project actions on the field and to fill in the field forms. All together project staff made over **300 field visits** to project areas in action D.1

Monitoring of the impact using **indicator species** presents a good practice example for monitoring of the status of the habitat type. This was the first time that it was used in Slovenia. This approach can be used for other habitat types and in other Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia.

The following deliverables were produced as part of Action D.1: 4 reports on monitoring and evaluation of the success of field actions on conservation status of the targeted habitats prepared (Annex DEL).

5.1.15 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 end date: July 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. *Estimated socio-economic effects of the project on the local economy and population.*

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 by CB ZRSVN. External contractor University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Geography, was contracted in September 2016. They prepared a **First phase report** where a set of social and economic indicators was developed to measure the socio-economic impact of project actions on the local economy and local population during the implementation of project activities. On the basis of calculating and interpreting socio-economic conditions, the analysis of the baseline situation of these rural areas was finished in December 2016 (Annex D.2_1). **The Final report** of the analysis of socio-economic impacts of project actions was prepared in July 2020 (Annex D.2_2). The study encompassed 141 villages on the area of 62.620 ha with 24.220 people and involved 8 Natura 2000 sites. In general, socio-economic situation in all project areas was below the Slovenian average.

Results showed that some social indicators have improved, such as the number of inhabitants and their level of education, while the average age in general remains above average. A general economic **wellbeing has improved**, although we have to take into account that there was a general economic growth in the country in this period.

To additionally evaluate direct and indirect social and economic effects, **additional survey, using of standardized questionnaire** was conducted in 2020 with farms that participated in the project (107 questioners were answered).

According to surveys lasting results of the project are already visible:

- five farms switched to **organic farming** with the project incentive and more farms planned in the future,
- two farms already **registered a new complementary activity** on the farm (fruit processing, tourism on the farm) and additional 21 farms are considering registering a new complementary farm activity,

- nine surveyed farms (8.7%) already **increased their stock** of animals and additional 30 surveyed farms (29.1%) plan to increase the stock of animals in coming years (due to Action C.2),
- four farms have already started **fruit processing** during the project, 18 more are planning to do so in the future (Action C.3),
- 54.7% of the respondents agree that the project activities showed opportunities for **marketing products** from dry grasslands and new potential farming model,
- 52.3% of the respondents estimated that the project activities enabled them to acquire **new useful knowledge and skills**,
- 37 respondents (34.6%) expect that the project will **increase the income** from additional agricultural activity on their farm in the coming years,
- almost half of the surveyed agricultural holdings agreed that the project began to identify **new development opportunities** for agriculture in the Haloze area,
- majority believe that **increase in revenue** will follow.

A part of the standardized questionnaire duplicated questions from the study titled “**Public opinion and attitudes towards Natura 2000 in Slovenia**” (Project LIFE integrated project for enhanced management of Natura 2000 in Slovenia (LIFE17 IPE/ SI/000011)) (Annex D.2_3). The aim was to compare the view of Natura 2000 between farmers included in our project and results from an independent study for general public in Slovenia done in 2019 (see also Action E2).

The following deliverable was produced as part of Action D.2: A study prepared for assessing the socio-economic impact (Annex DEL).

5.1.16 Action D.3: Assessment of the project 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: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. Estimated effects of the project on the restoration of dry grasslands ecosystem functions

See Annex D.3 for detailed description.

We reviewed the accessible literature and EU guidelines. CB ZRSVN published a Public tender for a Study on assessment of the project impact on ecosystem functions and External subcontractor was contracted in January 2017. The study uses the CICES classification for ecosystem services, from which the following six classes were chosen:

- Cultivated terrestrial plants (including fungi, algae) grown for nutritional purposes,
- Animals reared for nutritional purposes,
- Control of erosion rates,
- Pollination,

- Filtration/sequestration/storage/accumulation by micro-organisms, algae, plants, and animals,
- Physical and experiential interactions with natural environment.

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 agriculture.

Based on the results of both studies, following conclusions are:

- Nature conservation activities are economically justified in the long term, because they increase production value of areas.
- Project delivered substantial boost in the form of remediation of farmland, which would be the cost that the owners would have to carry, would not be for the project.
- Activities of Life to grasslands project increased the value of natural areas, where they were implemented and at the same time landowners and business owners can increase their business offer and effectiveness without any additional investment.
- The total increased monetary sum of all **ecosystem functions** was assessed at 1.837.700 €

Project staff also participated on two international workshops titled “Ecosystem services as a tool for nature conservation” organized by the AlpES - Alpine Ecosystem Services project (Interreg Alpine Space, European regional development fund).

List of events with short description in Annex EVENTS.

5.1.17 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: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. At least 5 workshops and 8 presentations and lectures for local authorities
2. At least 16 meetings with mayors and municipalities' councils organized
3. The knowledge of local authorities' increased, local authorities will be aware of the LIFE+ project, its actions and results. The local authorities will be equipped with the knowledge about the importance of dry grasslands, its species and habitats, as well as Natura 2000 network and this project life. They will be able to pass the knowledge on to the farmers, forest and land use owners and general public.

4. Appropriate (nature friendly) management of dry grasslands will be addressed

See Annex E.1 for detailed description.

The project **Communication manual** was prepared covering all awareness raising activities and other communication activities connected to all possible stakeholders (Annex E.1_1). Approaches for specific stakeholder groups were identified together with the targeted message for each stakeholder.

The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS, LIFE mechanism and Natura 2000 network was presented at **66 project events** for national and local authority (3 ministries, 2 agencies, 2 government working group, 28 municipalities, agriculture institutes, forestry service, parks authorities...) and associations (tourism, hunting, mountaineering and pasture...) (Annex EVENTS):

- 9 workshops (Expected result 5) - 170 participants;
- 30 lectures and presentations (Expected result 8) - 508 participants;
- 24 meetings with mayors and municipalities (Expected result 16) - 84 participants;
- 3 meetings/events were organized in cooperation with NGOs (Expected result 3) - 40 participants.

The project was also presented at the **Government Working Group for Haloze**, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, on the 25th of January 2016 in Podlehník. CB ZRSVN representative is a member of working Group for grassland, formed by the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and food. The group is involved in preparation renewal of CAP (Action C.6).

Through workshops, lecture and meeting alone, **802 representatives** of national and local authorities were educated (Expected result: total approx. 150). The local authorities were equipped with the knowledge about the importance of dry grasslands, its species and habitats, as well as Natura 2000 network and the project Life. They will be able to pass the knowledge on to the farmers, forest and land use owners and to general public.

Project staff actively participated at 12 **international or national conferences** (2 of which were organized by the project). On the 15th to the 17th of May 2019 CB ZRSVN organized three-day International conference named: Challenges and opportunities in multifunctional management of grasslands (see Action F2). 130 attendees registered in 2 days. 14 speakers presented 6 from different countries (Ireland, Austria, Romania, Czech Republic, Croatia and Slovenia). On the 17th of September CB ZRSVN organized the final conference of the LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project on Ptuj (see Action F.1) (76 participants, limitation due to COVID 19).

The following deliverable was produced as part of Action D.3: A study prepared for assessing the ecosystem function benefits (Annex DEL).

5.1.18 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 end date: October 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

- 1. Following events prepared: 5 press conferences, 30 articles in national and local newspapers and internet articles, 5 radio broadcasts on nature protection, 8 lectures/field trips for the general public and other interested groups (Open days on the grasslands), 8 lectures and 12 workshops for local farmers promotions of the LIFE project and of the Natura 2000 sites in the context of the Nature and health fair in Ljubljana (2), Agra – agricultural fair in Gornja Radgona (2) and Nature and agricultural platform meeting*
- 2. The general public, local community and all other interested parties will get up-to-date information on the project, its progress and results*
- 3. The awareness of general public, local community and all other interested parties about the importance of dry grasslands and its “species’ and habitats’ and the appropriate management of dry grasslands will be increased.*

See Annex E.2 for detailed description.

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 **64 events for general public and local community** (Annex EVENTS):

- 15 workshops for land owners/users, local farmers and local communities (Expected result 12); 369 participants
- 13 lectures at different events for land owners/users, local farmers and local communities (Expected result 8); 745 participants
- 7 fairs (Expected result 4); approximately 562.000 visitors: **four times at Slovenian agriculture fair AGRA (expected result 2), two times at Narava - Zdravje fair and once on Alpe Adria Fair**
- 13 open days (Expected result 8); approximately 1500 visitors
- 16 traditional events (Expected result 8), approximately 3970 visitors

Six press conferences were organized (Expected result 5).

The project together with the CB ZRSVN, Mountaineering Association Kum Trbovlje, TRD KP Kum and Municipality Trbovlje jointly organized an event celebrating **Green week and Natura 2000 day** on 20th of May 2016. 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 renowned photographer Mr. Matevž Lenarčič.

The project and its activities were also presented at:

- 5 event organized by Ministry of environment and spatial planning and of the LIFE project "Okrepljeni do evropskih sredstev za naše okolje" (Project LIFE Capacity Building (LIFE14 CAP/SI/000012), 16th of September 2016: networking 23 Slovenian LIFE project; on 5th of May 2017 "Europe needs LIFE for the next 25 years", 102 participants... All events were well covered by media,
- the **Nature and agricultural platform meeting, 5th Slovenian Rural Parliament** in Majšperk. The project exhibition was set up in the main area,
- at the Assemblies of Local Action Groups.

From the beginning of the project until the end, **115 articles** (Expected result 20) were published at national and local newspapers (83 written by independent journalists, 32 of them written by project staff), **104 internet articles** (Expected result 10) (88 written by independent journalists, 16 of them written by project staff), **23 radio and 18 TV broadcasts**. News about project activities were published in 32 different printed media, 42 different web media and 10 different tv/radio media (Annex E.2_1).

No publications were financed by the project. Altogether project activities reached 2 million people through all published articles, radio and tv broadcasts (if total reach and total circulation of media is considered).

National Radio Television Slovenia (RTV) produced a **documentary movie** titled "Living on the meadow" (Življenje na travniku) for their documentary series BIOTOPI. National Radio Television Slovenia (RTV) also presented the project in the context of presenting the Landscape park Kum (a PSA) in a series dedicated to educate the audience about protected areas of Slovenia. It is also accessible on the project web page <http://www.lifetograsslands.si/rezultati-projekta/zivljenje-na-travniku/>

In order to monitor the effectiveness of the public awareness campaigns news clipping were obtained.

As a part of the standardized questionnaire in Action D.2 duplicated questions from the study carried out in 2019 titled "**Public opinion and attitudes** towards Natura 2000 in Slovenia" (Project LIFE integrated project for enhanced management of Natura 2000 in Slovenia (LIFE17 IPE / SI / 000011)) were asked. The aim was to compare the view of Natura 2000 between farmers included in our project and results from an independent study of the general public in Slovenia. The **comparative analysis** at the end of the project showed:

- a better recognition of Natura 2000 network among farmers included in our project (95%), compared to the general population in Slovenia (63%),
- more farmers included in our project felt proud that they lived in a Natura 2000 area (85 % compared in project PSAs in comparison to 79 % of the general public),
- less of farmers in PSAs were of the opinion that Natura 2000 restricts agriculture (31 % in project PSAs in comparison to 68 % of the general public).

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. General questioners (374) were filled at various general public events. CB ZRSVN carried out an analysis of General questioners and additional comparative analysis comparing answers from years 2016 and 2019 (Annex E.2_2). The comparative analysis showed a better recognition of project sub areas in year 2019.

List of events with short description in Annex EVENTS.

In order to carry out this action a digital camera was bought by CB ZRSVN.

5.1.19 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: completed

Expected results from the project application

- 1 project brochure on 4 pages (4000 copies) Slovenian and English language (500 copies).
- 4 leaflets, describing project sub-areas, Slovenian (6000 copies) and Croatian only Gorjanci (500 copies).
- 1 leaflet, describing targeted habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* Slovenian language (2000 copies); English
- 1 brochure which will present dry grasslands and good practise in the management of dry grasslands (1000 copies)
- 4 transportable promotional banners (100cm x 200cm) to support all actions E
- 1 Thematic Exhibition will be produced (transportable)
- 4 different promotion posters printed in 500 copies each,
- Other promotional material: T-shirts (300 pieces), paper bags (1,000 pieces), hats (100 pieces), poster calendars (1,000 copies), Diary or folder (300 copies), Local products related to the dry grasslands (honey, tea, apple juice – promotional seed bag (with characteristic dry grassland species), Promotional work equipment (apron, grinder – 400 pieces)

See Annex E.3 for detailed description.

CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender covering all printed promotional materials. Following materials were produced:

- In the beginning of the project, a **project info-sheets** were prepared in Slovenian and English language (.pdf, printed as needed) (Annex E.3_1)
- A **project brochure** on four pages. The brochure was printed in Slovenian (4.000 copies) and English (500 copies) language. Additionally, a .pdf version in Croatian language was prepared to be printed if needed (Annex E.3_2)
- **4 different leaflets**, one for each project sub-area- (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) (Annex E.3_3).

- **A leaflet describing target habitat type** in Slovenian language (2.000 copies) and prepared as .pdf version in English and Croatian language to be printed if needed (Annex E.3_4)
- **5 transportable promotional banners** (one for each project sub-area and one general project banner) (Annex E.3_5)
- **1 Thematic Exhibition** on 6 transportable banners; promoted at 30 events, more than 33.000 people (Annex E.3_6)
- **A Didactic booklet** (produced in Action E.6) - 300 copies
- **One brochure of good practices** of dry grassland management - 1000 copies (Annex E.3_7)
- **A Poster calendars** - 1000 copies (Annex E.3_8)
- **4 different promotional posters** - 600 copies each (Annex E.3_9)
- **8 different postcards:** 8000 copies (Annex E.3_10)
- **A small notebook** for the International conference organized by the project 150 copies

CB ZRSVN also prepared public tenders covering all **other promotional materials**. Following other promotional materials were produced:

- T Shirts (3 different occasions 2017 – 350 pieces, 2019 – 300 pieces and 2020 – 250 pieces),
- cotton bags (1000 pieces),
- straw hats (200 pieces),
- diary (500 copies) (Annex E.3_11),
- paper folders (700 copies) (Annex E.3_12),
- small drinking bottles (50 pieces),
- orchid identification keys (300 pieces) (Annex E.3_13),
- local products related to the dry grasslands (honey - 150 jars, tea - 300 packages, apple chips - 100 jars, apple juice – catering at events, see also Action C.7),
- illustrations.

To see the distribution numbers see Annex E.3_14. All project publications are available in .pdf format on the project web page. Most of promotional materials have already been distributed. Good project promotion was achieved with produced promotional material. **Illustrations** for CPG, brochures, leaflets and exhibition, were prepared by CB ZRSVN staff member. Nearly all promotional material have already been distributed, except the once produced in 2020 (due to COVID-19). All prepared promotional material will be distributed. Some products were re-ordered due to high demand (didactic booklet, straw hats).

In order to carry out this action an A3 laser, colour, two-sided printer was bought by CB ZRSVN.

The following deliverables were produced as part of Action E.3: 2 brochures, 5 leaflets and other promotional material (bags, postcards, T-shirts, hats, calendars, 4 different promotion posters, diary and local products) (Annex DEL).

5.1.20 Action E.4: Information and interpretation tools

Foreseen start date: III/2017

Actual start date: May 2016

Foreseen end date: IV/2019

Actual: October 2020

Status: Completed

Expected results from the project application

1. *Following items constructed: 5 Complex info boards: Haloze (2), Kum (1), Gorjanci-Radoha (1), Pohorje (1); and 8 small project and Life info plates*
2. *upgrade of 3 existing teaching and hiking trails - Haloze, Pohorje and Gorjanci- Radoha*
3. *Public awareness of visitors and locals will be raised and the knowledge on the importance of the dry grasslands and its habitats and species be enhanced.*
4. *In connection with the educational programmes from action E.6 (children as one of the most important target groups)*

See Annex E.4 for detailed description.

The realization of action in the field was delayed due to redirection of part of the project personnel to Action C.1 Removal of overgrown. The first step in all PSA was to obtain written consent from all landowners (12) where we agreed to set up the interpretation trails and the information boards (Annex A.4_1). The activity was carried out by CB ZRSVN.

CB ZRSVN firstly prepared a public tender for preparation of **conceptual design** for **upgraded existing teaching / hiking trails** and tourist destinations (3) at PSA Haloze (Winettu valley, 3 farms), PSA Gorjanci (Miklavž), PSA Kum (Dobovec), Pohorje PSA (nearby Rogla tourist center) in March 2020. After the conceptual design of interpretation was prepared, CB ZRSVN prepared a public tender for its implementation. Following materials were prepared and installed in nature (Annex E.4_1):

- eight small **project info plates** describing the project were installed at partners premises,
- **5 Complex info boards:** PSA Haloze (2), PSA Kum (1), PSA Gorjanci-Radoha (1), PSA Pohorje (1) presenting Natura 2000 and promoting LIFE financial mechanism
- **3 info boards at selected farms** producing products from grasslands (Vovk, Bedrač and Murko),
- other boards and education materials.

CB ZRSVN financed a transport and installation of a new interpretation point (old barn) at begging of an existing info trail to Miklavž area on PSA Gorjanci.

3 existing teaching / hiking trails and tourist destinations were upgraded with interpretation and general public educated of importance of conservation of grasslands, tall tree orchards, pollinators and about the Natura 2000 network and LIFE financial mechanism. The upgraded hiking trails, interpretation points and complex info boards were installed in 2020 (later than planned) and have, by the end of the project, been visited by 5774 people.

With this action we contributed to education of the general public about the importance of the project sub-areas, targeted habitats and the animal and plant species of community importance as well as, project action and goals, Natura 2000 and the LIFE mechanism.

Additional: PRJ Halo bought one container for storage of equipment for managing (its own finances, not a project cost) the land bought through the project, which now also serves as interpretation point. 12 small boards with the representing flora and fauna in PSA Haloze were placed on the door, of the container.

The following deliverables were produced as part of Action E.4: Animation plans for the upgrading of 3 educational paths (interpretation points etc.) (Annex DEL).

5.1.21 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: October 2020

Status: Completed

Expected results from the project application

1. *The project's web page and project graphic identity.*
2. *The published information will raise the environmental awareness about the NATURA 2000 as well as the importance of dry grassland habitats (IN connection with Actions E.1 and E.2)*

See Annex E.5 for detailed description.

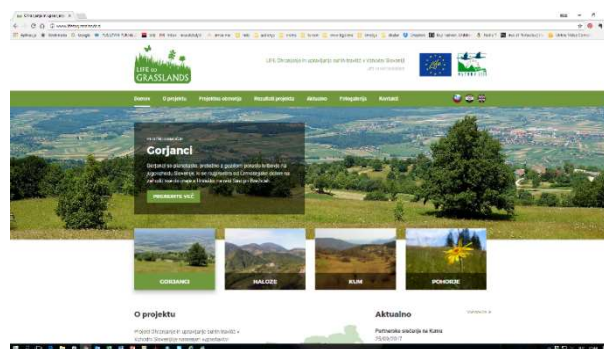
Project graphic identity was prepared by CB ZRSVN project staff (Annex E.5_1). With project identity and logo, we uniformed all project promotional material and events.



Picture 20: Project logo

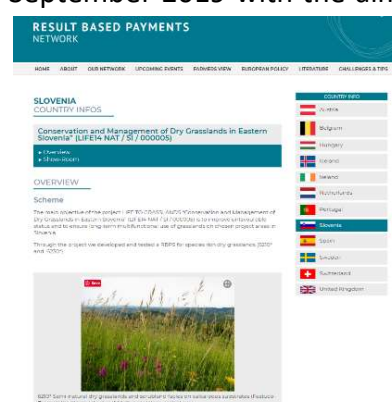
As a vital part of the project's publicity, **a web page** was prepared, which is regularly updated by CB ZRSVN. CB ZRSVN prepared a conceptual design together with most of the text for the web page. The subcontractor was chosen through public tender. The web page is up and running www.lifetograsslands.si in Slovene with English and Croatian subpage. The page contains the information about the project, its sub-areas, targeted habitat types, results, Life financial mechanism Natura 2000, publications and professional material created and gallery. Up to date **182.042 unique visitors** were detected, with an average retention time of just over 2 min. Project publications (Didactic booklet, Layman's report, various invitations to project events, Progress reports,

etc.) which were uploaded as .pdf files on the web page were downloaded a total of 115.540 times..



Picture 21: project webpage www.lifetograsslands.si

Result-based payments network was established in Vienna in September 2019 with the aim to build a network of actors involved in the design and implementation of Result based payments schemes. A **Result based payments network web page** was later on created <https://www.rbpnetwork.eu/> in co-financing from the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (additional activity not in the project proposal, in communication with the external monitor). The network offers a good platform for exchanging experience in PRBPs approaches and offers the possibility of promoting activities being carried out in European countries. Project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS is presented under Slovenia (See Action C.6). 118 people registered as members from 26 countries and 9180 unique visits were detected until now.



Picture 22: a Result-based payments web page

The following deliverable was produced as part of Action E.5: A project identity guide (Annex DEL).

5.1.22 Action E.6: Grassland classroom

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

Foreseen end date: II/2020 Actual end date: October 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. Environmental awareness and understanding the importance of dry grasslands amongst kids and scholars.
2. New educational programmes for different age levels (at least 3 different)
3. Innovative didactic tools (didactic game, didactic booklet, competitions)
4. Separate tag "Grasslands classroom" on the projects web page
5. Improvement of the school and kindergarten cooperation with local communities

See Annex E.6 for detailed description.

An Educational program for teachers “Dry grasslands as a model for learning about environment and biology” was prepared by CB ZRSVN (Annex E.6_1). The Educational program with working/learning sheets was prepared for 3 categories of youth:

- 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 Educational program for teachers 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 E.6_2). 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.

13 educational seminars/workshops for teachers (expected result 8) were prepared and 226 teachers from the entire country were educated through the project (Annex EVENTS).

Additional **57 events** (presentations, workshops or field days) for children and teachers were organized by CB ZRSVN. Altogether over **2500 children** from kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and students as well as **157 teachers** attended project events. Due to COVID-19 education events for schools were limited in 2020.



Picture 3: impression from different event for children

The project **web page also has a separate section** for school children and teachers with all the materials produced in the project accessible to public (<http://www.lifetograsslands.si/o-projektu/projekt/za-ucence-ucitelje/>).

A didactic booklet for schools (300 copies) (Annex E.6_3) and **didactic game** (Annex E.6_4) (Brain box: 10 themes, each containing 6 play cards, 200 copies) were prepared and printed by CB ZRSVN. The didactic game was also available as an internet game, accessible on the project web page (<https://www.lifetograsslands.si/spoznaj-travisca-z-arniko-primozkom/>).



Picture 23: prepared materials for children

A 4-day summer camp for children, called "Cvetnik" ("illustrating the colourful meadows of Gorjanci") was organized in 2020 by CB ZRSVN and AB DGK. 22 school children attended, limited due to COVID-19 restrictions; expected result was 50)

CB ZRSVN also prepared three programs (1 new and 2 updated, with the context of species rich grasslands and orchards) for the **Slovenian Centre for school and extracurricular activities** (ČŠOD – Center šolskih in obšolskih dejavnosti) (Annex E.6_5).

An **art competition** for school children was organized by CB ZRSVN in 2019. Altogether 131 entries were received and evaluated from 25 classrooms (Annex E.6_6). For the winners of



the competition two field trips were organized. In addition AB KGZ Ptuj prepared an art competition entitled "Flowering meadows and meadow orchards" as part of the 30th national exhibition "The Goodness of Slovenian Farms", for school form PSA Haloze (Annex E.6_7). More than 400 art works were received. All art works from children were exhibited at the 30th national exhibition "The Goodness of Slovenian Farms" 2019, as an adjoining event to the international conference organized by the project (Action F.2).

The project **web page also has a separate section** for school children and teachers. For better implementation of this action small material for classrooms was bought by CB ZRSVN.

The following deliverables were produced as part of Action E.6: didactic booklet for schools (for teachers and children) and a didactic game (Annex DEL).

5.1.23 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: March 2019

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. *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*
2. *Established 4 info rooms.*
3. *Information about the area and the project will be accessible.*
4. *A good example of nature conservation and dry grassland management will be shown.*

5. Information about the project, along with its actions, aim and results as well as the importance of the NATURA 2000 network will be presented.

See Annex E.7 for detailed description.

A public tender was prepared by CB ZRSVN for designing and equipping (furniture) info rooms on PSA Haloze and PSA Pohorje, and a project classroom on PSA Kum. External subcontractor was contracted in May 2017. They produced a **Conceptual design manual** and equipped the rooms. Info rooms at PSA Haloze and PSA Pohorje and a classroom at PSA Kum were equipped in 2018. Official opening were organized for promotional purposes.



Picture 24: info rooms on PSA Haloze, Pohorje and Kum

Establishing info room in Gorjanci was delayed since the building, where the info room was planned, had not yet been built. Once the building was built (own finances of the AB DGK, not a project cost) a public tender was carried out by the CB ZSRVN.

CB ZRSVN also carried out a public tender for technical equipment for the 3 info rooms and one class room in which four suppliers were chosen. Following equipment was purchased:

1. 1 projector and self-standing projector screen (PSA Gorjanci)
2. 3 TV screens with mounts (PSA Haloze, Pohorje and Kum)
3. 4 laptops (one room each), MS Office software

Project info rooms have already been visited by 8500 people/children. In 2020 visits were limited due to COVID-19. For all the info rooms, equipment agreements with project partners for obligations to **maintain the equipment** were signed (Annex E.7_1).

5.1.24 Action E.8: Layman's' report

Foreseen start date: I/2020

Actual start date: January 2020

Foreseen end date: IV/2020

Actual end date: October 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. One Layman's' report prepared.
2. Project and its results disseminated and promoted to general public in Slovenia and abroad

The Layman's' report was prepared and printed by CB ZRSVN (2000 copies) in Slovene and English language) (Annex E.8_1). Digital versions are available on the project website (<http://www.lifetograsslands.si/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/LIFE-TO-GRASSLANDS-Laymans-report.pdf>)



Picture 25: Layman's report in Slovenian and English language

The following deliverable was produced as part of Action E.8: Layman's report in Slovene and English language (Annex DEL).

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

Foreseen start date: IV/2015

Actual start date: November 2015

Foreseen end date: IV/2020

Actual end date: October 2020

Status: Completed

Expected results from the project application

1. Prompt and good implementation of the project goals, actions and objectives.

At the beginning of the project CB ZRSVN nominated: a full time **project manager** Nika Debeljak Ph.D, a part time **financial coordinator**, a full time project assistant and four part time **project sub-areas coordinators** (one for each PSA). A project manager also carried out work of a scientific coordinator. In addition, for easier coordination between partners, each of the associated beneficiaries' nominated **AB project coordinator** employees, who regularly communicate with the project manager.

CB ZRSVN signed **partnership agreements** with all four associated beneficiaries in December 2015 (Annex FIN_7). Annexes to partnership agreement were signed on 5th of September 2017 between CB ZRSVN, AB PRJ Halo and AB DGK due to transfer of finances for land purchase/lease. Issue was reported in the Midterm report (see chapter finances).

A **co-financers agreement** was signed in June 2016 with the Ministry environment and spatial planning (Annex FIN_6). The project manager was in regular contact with the representative of the co-financer Ms. Juliana Lebez Lozej, also a LIFE focal point for Slovenia.

Mr Nikolaj Pečenko (NEEMO) was an **external monitor** of the project. Project manager regularly consulted Mr. Pečenko.

Project manager was in regular contact with project sub-area coordinators and partner coordinators, where all activities were coordinated and planned well ahead. Project partnership coordination meetings were also organized.

For easier management and reporting of the partnership, CB ZRSVN prepared a **handbook** “Management plan of the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS” (Annex F.1_1) at the beginning of the project. It covered contents of the Annex X to the Model LIFE Grant Agreement, General conditions and reporting requirement of the EC and internal reporting rules.

A **kick off meeting** of the project partnership was organized by CB ZRSVN in February 2016. The kick off meeting was attended by the external monitoring team, Mr. Nikolaj Pečenko, who presented technical and financial revision rules for the project.

The **Supervisory board committee** was formed at the Kick off meeting. Representatives of all project beneficiaries nominated a member to Supervisory board committee. A representative of the co-financer (Ministry environment and spatial planning, also a LIFE focal point for Slovenia, Ms. Juliana Lebez Lozej was invited to attend all meetings).



Picture 26: Supervisory board committee meeting

The Supervisory board committee assured the successful management of the project and revived results. The Supervisory board met 10 times during the course of the project (every 6 months).

Through the duration of the project 55 different **project staff** were employed (26 full time and 34 part time members, 9 employees changed from full time to part time or vice versa). 8 non-addition employees worked on the project.

All partners prepared **written monthly reports on progress** of the activities to the CB ZRSVN. A **monthly joint partnership written report** on progress of the project was submitted by the CB ZRSVN to the external monitor (Mr. Nikolaj Pečenko, NEEMO). ABs prepared **financial reports every 3 months** (time sheets, expenditure reports and copies of all receipts/invoices that are all labelled with the project number). The reports were joined together by the CB ZRSVN to revise the project expenditure.

CB ZRSVN also organized yearly partnership field meeting (2 days):



Picture 29: partnership field meeting

During the course of the project five external monitor visits by Mr. Pečenko (NEEMO) were carried out. All project partners were present at the monitoring visits:

- 1st: 20. – 21. 1. 2016; Kick off meeting; number of participants: 83
- 2nd: 26. 5. 2017; external monitor; number of participants: 15
- 3rd: 15. – 16. 5. 2018; external monitor; number of participants: 16
- 4th: 23. – 24. 5. 2019; external monitor; number of participants: 16
- 5th: 23. – 24. 6. 2020; external monitor done online; number of participants: 11

On the 23rd of June 2020 an online **monitor visits by EC** desk officers was carried out.

The **final conference** of the project was organized by CB ZRSVN in Ptuj on the 17th of September 2020. The event was attended by CB and all ABs, co-financers and representatives of the Ministries, other national on local agencies mayors and representatives of various municipalities, landscape and regional parks and other stakeholders. The results of the project were presented. **A press conference** was also organised. The whole event was organized in accordance with COVID-19 national regulation measures at the time (number of participants in halls were limited to a maximum of 50 people with the minimal distance defined). The event had to therefore be split in session. 76 people attended the final conference.

No amendments to the Grant Agreement were signed.

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

5.1.26 Action F.2: Networking with other projects

Foreseen start date: I/2016

Actual start date: February 2016

Foreseen end date: I/2020

Actual end date: October 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

1. *Exchange of information between projects*
2. *A list of good practice examples on management of dry grasslands*

The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS actively **exchange knowledge** with 52 projects (33 LIFE projects and 19 projects funded from other EU funds). The project **networked** in total with 98 (77 LIFE and 21 projects funded from other EU funds (Annex F.2_1), by attending 67 networking events (Annex EVENTS).

Project staff attended following, **international conferences and networking events organized by EC**: 17th of September 2019 LIFE Platform meeting Netherlands, 17th of October 2019 Farming for biodiversity: Building on know-how from the



result-based pilots, Brussels, 22nd – 23rd January 2020; Farming for biodiversity: Results Based Payment Schemes for Biodiversity in CAP Strategic Plans, Brussels

15th-17th of May 2019 a **3 day International conference** titled »CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MULTIFUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF GRASSLANDS" was organized by the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS in Ptuj. Over 130 people from 6 countries attended the conference. The purpose of the conference was to encourage long term multifunctional grassland management, networking of experts and to exchange knowledge and experience about sustainable grassland management, including all the challenges of modern farm practises. Dr. Brendan Dunford (Burren LIFE, Farming for Conservation in the Burren (LIFE04NAT/IE/000125) was a key note speaker). Following other projects and themes were preseted:

- LIFE Butterflies CZ-SK: Integrated protection of rare butterfly species of non-forest habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (LIFE09 NAT/CZ/000364) and other Grassland restoration efforts in the White Carpathian mountains
- STIPA: Tarnava Mare SCI: Saving Transylvania's Important Pastoral Ecosystems (LIFE09 NAT/RO/000618) and Designing a results-based agri-environment payment scheme for Southern Transylvania – EC; DG Env
- Maintenance and preservation of high dry meadows on Vetrnik and Oslica (LIFE00 NAT/SLO/007223)
- Result based Payments in Agri-Environment program of Austria (The Austrian results-based nature conservation plan, Austrian Agri-Environmental Programme - Ergebnisorientierter Naturschutzplan, ENP; ÖPUL
- Goričko meadows: Effective management of extensive meadows in the Natura 2000 area Goričko (EEA Financial Mechanism Program 2009-2014)
- Gorička krajina: Maintenance of agricultural landscape for birds and butterflies in Goričko (Operational Program for the Implementation of European Cohesion Policy for the Implementation Period 2014-2020)
- Challenges in conservation of grassland biodiversity in the protected area of Nature Park Žumberak – Samoborsko gorje, Croatia
- Long-term effects of karst meadow fertilization on plant species biodiversity, yield and feeding value of forage
- Capacity building with farmers on biodiversity, lessons from Austria
- Farmers benefits from hay meat and hay milk production, EIP project



Picture 27: International conference in Ptuj

The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS also worked together with a project: **Targeted research project (V4-1814)**, Analytical support for greater efficiency and the goal of agricultural policies towards the environment and nature in Slovenia, Potentials of new concepts and participation of farmers in agri-environmental measures. The project carried out a comparative analysis and questionnaires among farmers for Haloze (258 farms involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) and compared the result with the farmers from region of Karst (263 farms not involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (see Action C.6 for details)).

List of other **important events** are highlighted below:

- 8th and 9th of June 2016: Ministry of the Environment and Spatial planning prepared two workshops for the preparation of **new LIFE projects**. CB ZRSVN was asked to present the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS as good practice example preparing campaigns for awareness raising and promotion of the project. Workshops were attended by more than 80 participants (potential LIFE applicants).
- 16th of September 2016: The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was presentation on the event entitled "**Enhanced to European Funds for Our Environment**" (Project LIFE Capacity Building (LIFE14 CAP/SI/000012)). It was organized in the framework of the LIFE project Capacity Building by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. The organized event with a press conference was attended by the Minister Irena Majcen. 23 Slovene LIFE project were presented.
- 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 (see action A.2).
- 2nd-10th of October 2016: during the visit of the CB ZRSVN staff to the **Environmental Agency of Iceland** (in the context of another bilateral exchange visit) the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was presented.
- 25th of May of 2017: 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 in the House of the European Union. The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was presented at the event along with LIFE project from 8 countries.
- 13th - 17th of June 2019: ZRSVN representatives **visited Czech republic** area to network with LIFE Beskydy (Preservation of species-rich Nardus grasslands in pSCI Beskydy LIFE12 NAT/CZ/000629), LIFE NARD (Restoration and conservation of semi-natural and natural habitats in eastern Ardennes- Belgium, LIFE15 NAT/BE/000774)) and Conservation of dry grasslands in White Karpaty and LIFE project: Integrated Protection of Rare Butterfly Species of Non-forest Habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (LIFE09 NAT/CZ/000364).



Picture 28: event - Enhanced to European Funds for Our Environment

- 24th -26th October 2019: Project staff **visited Ireland** and exchanged experience with LIFE projects (Burren Life (LIFE04 NAT/IE/000125) and ARAN LIFE (LIFE12 NAT/IE/000995), Irish EIP projects (Hen Harrier Project, Pearl Mussel Project, Caomhnú Arann Proejct) and the Irish »Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine« (see also Action C.6). Experiences from projects were incorporated into the LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project to develop the RBPS scheme. Project LIFE TO GRASSANDS was also presented at the Burren Winterage school – Farming for nature (2019) 24th -26th October 2019 as a part of the Burren Winterage Weekend. Project manager was in contact with Mr. Dunford regularly and exchanged information.
- 16th – 17th of September 2019 the project was presented at the International conference: **Results-based payments, Setting up a network**, Vienna, Austria. A result base payments network was established at the meeting and an internet page prepared later on. The project is presented on Results-based payments network internet page under Slovenia (see also Action C.6).
- The project joined a seies of web meeting (19th of June 2020, 15th of October 2020) organized by the **LIFEorchids** - Improving the conservation status of critically endangered orchid communities in selected habitats in Northwestern Italy (LIFE17 NAT/IT/000596). The project LIFE TO GRASSANDS was presented at orchid species conservation and conservation of habitats and detailed information were exchanged between 11 LIFE projects.
- The project was in communication also with **GrassLIFE** - Restoring EU priority grasslands and promoting their multiple uses LIFE16 NAT/LV/000262, especially in the topic of developing product from grasslands and establishing branding.

The project and its results were presents at the »Green Infrastructure Workshop« organized under the AlpGov 2 project and the **EU strategy for the Alpine region**, Action Group 7 (EUSALP AG7) on the 15th of September 2020.

In addition the **knowledge was transferred to 2 new project** that were already accepted: DINARA back to LIFE (LIFE18 NAT/HR/000847) - Management planning and restoration of Dinara dry grasslands to save biodiversity and support sustainable development (ZRSVN official supporter) and POHORKA, The vision of Pohorje 2030 (Cohesion funds) Improving the conservation status of grasslands, aquatic and minority forest habitats and providing peaceful zones on Pohorje (ZRSVN a project partner). IN addition 2 projects knowledge was also transferred to 2 new project that were rejected at the evaluation phase but will be upgraded and resend for evaluation (LIFE TO GRASSLANDS II - Conservation and sustainable economic use of dry grasslands in the common border area (LIFE20 NAT/SI/001182) and EIP GRASSLANDS “Farming for the conservation of species-rich grasslands through the transfer of knowledge to farmers”, 4th public tender for sub-measure M16.5_ Support for joint action to mitigate climate change or adaptation).

The following deliverable was produced as part of Action F.2: a list of good practice examples on management of dry grasslands (Annex DEL).

5.1.27 Action F.3: Audit

Foreseen start date: I/2018

Actual start date: June 2017

Foreseen end date: III/2020

Actual: October 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

Revised financial report.

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. They performed an overview of the documentation management and accounting system of all beneficiaries. The external independent financial auditor submitted a positive independent auditor report on the 8th of January 2021 (Annex FIN_13).

5.1.28 Action F.4: After-life conservation plan

Foreseen start date: I/2020

Actual start date: /

Foreseen end date: IV/2020

Actual: October 2020

Status: completed

Expected results from the project application

Assured long-term management of dry grassland on project sub-areas.

After-life conservation plan was prepared by CB ZSRVN in collaboration with the ABs according to the LIFE guidelines including after LIFE activities necessary to assure long term effect of project activities.

The following deliverable was produced as part of Action F.4: An After Life conservation plan (Annex DEL).

5.2 Main deviations, problems and corrective actions implemented

There has been a delay in signing the agreements with farmers in Action A.3. It took 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. We extended the duration of Action A.3, A.4 and B.1 (Midterm report) to reach the penned expected results. The delays in signing the Agreements with farmers (Action A.3, A.4) delayed the implementation in the Action C.1, C.2 and C.3 on the field. Nevertheless activities were finished in time.

In addition, large fragmentation of land, for example with the average farm size for PSA Haloze being 4.81 ha, demanded greater efforts to ensure the targeted expected result values for long-term management (more farms had to be involved). With the considerable additional effort, we managed to receive in total 192 Applications from farmers for potential inclusion in the project activities and sign 163 Agreements with farmers to be included in project activities (some applications were rejected since areas were outside Natura 2000 or did not have suitable habitat). As a result more working hours were recorded for Actions A.2 and A.3 than planned.

Prior to the 1st of July 2016 state owned land was managed by Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia. On the 1st of July 2016 the Republic of Slovenia divided the management of state owned to two institutions, 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). This new division in management of state owned land caused a delay in obtaining the consensus from both new managers of state owned land (due to reorganization and assignment of new management team). We handed in the application for consent to activities to be carried out on state owned land in March 2017 to Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenian state forests, Ltd. We managed to obtain written consensus to carry out project activities from Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia (SKGZS RS) in September 2017 (Annex A.4_3) and from the Slovenian state forests, Ltd. (SIDG) in August 2018 (Annex A.4_4). This delay also caused delays the on field for activities in Action C.1 overgrowth removal.

In Action A.2 a public tender for “forestry professional works” was published on the Slovenian Public tender portal in September 2016. We received no offers for public tender. We had to close the public tender without choosing any external subcontractor. CB ZRSVN solved the unforeseen situation in the way that additional project staff was employed (foresters Sebastjan Štruc and Klemen Kamenik). They overtook the forestry tasks and carried out analysis of the Status of the forestation processes. Further on, they e prepared, together with the CB ZRSVN staff dr. Jurij Gulič, the Strategic guidelines for overgrowing areas that covers the forest sector for project sub-area Pohorje. 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 before we exceeded the personnel category, and the issue was reported in Mid-term report.

Actions B: Private owners were not ready to lease the land at the price stated in the project proposal. PRJ Halo managed to leas only 0.69 ha of land from private owners. Due to lack of the willingness to lease the land (according to the low value of land specified in the project proposal) indicated goal was not reached in total (already pointed out in progress report II).

Action C.2: When discussing with farmers, who were prepared to be included in the project activities of long term management (mowing) of dry grasslands, they were interested only if

they would have a possibility of a free use of modern mowers, adjusted for steep terrain, which would make mowing much easier and less time consuming. They were not interested in renting ordinary mowers. After consultation with experts and farming organizations, we decided to purchase more capable mowers for steep terrain (lighter, hydrostatic drive, able to mow more hectares per day), which are more expensive mountain mowers than originally foreseen. In the proposal we planned to buy 8 simple mowers, but because of the expressed needs of farmers, 5 modern mountain mowers were purchased instead (reported in Midterm report and Progresses report).

Action C.3 and C.7: To assure further development of product from grasslands project partners purchased additional equipment, not initially planned in the proposal: 3 fruit dehydrator machines, two digital refractometers brix and one pasteurisator (50l), one cheese vat and pH meter. The issue was raised at monitoring visit on the 23rd of June 2020. Farmers will be able to use the equipment free of charge for producing products from grasslands.

In 2020 due to COVID-19 outbreak and measures taken by the state to prevent its spread, limited project events in 2020 (Action E.1 (authorities), E.2 (general public), E.6 (grassland classroom), F.2 (networking)). Project staff registered to international conferences which were then cancelled or postponed to 2021. We purchased a software for web conferencing (Go to meeting) and carried series of meetings and workshops over the web. In addition we networked through the webinars instead. Travel costs were not used in total.

5.3 Evaluation of Project Implementation

Action	Foreseen in the revised proposal	Achieved	Evaluation
A.1: Analysis of the initial situation of the agricultural use of dry grasslands	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Obtaining data on past and current agricultural use on all PSAs and its' trends</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to date analyses of the situation of the agricultural use of dry grasslands for all four project sub-areas. 2. Collection of indispensable expert data for the implementation of concrete C actions. 3. Databases containing information required for the implementation of concrete actions and long-term management of dry grasslands in all four project sub-areas. 4. Greater knowledge of the habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* status and potential threats to management in the near future 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>The studies showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change of 776.7ha of grasslands (of 4 PSAs from 2005 to 2015) into other land use categories (overgrown agriculture land, shrubs & trees, arable) - poor enrolment into current AEM measures - shift in management practise in the last 10 years from management by late mowing or in combination of mowing followed by grazing into just grazing.
A.2: Elaboration of the Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / 6230* in the project sub-areas	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Elaboration of Nature conservation guidelines for management of HT 6210(*)/6230* with experts, based on field work, initial state analysis and other LIFE projects experiences</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current status of the selected habitat in the project sub-areas evaluated. 2. The current status of the key elements of the habitat in the project sub-areas evaluated. 3. Standardised field methods and evaluation criteria set for the assessment of the suitability of the site management. 4. Updated databases containing information required for the implementation of concrete actions in the four project sub-areas. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 912 ha of HT 6210(*) (on 3 PSAs) in favourable and 948 ha in unfavourable conservation status, cca 100 ha of HT 6230* on Pohorje PSA in good and cca 100 ha in bad conservation status; - decline from 1491 ha to 771 ha of HT 6210(*) in good conservation status in PSA Haloze from 2006 to 2016 - standardised field method developed - conservation guidelines for HT 6210(*) and HT 6230* for 4 PSAs prepared - strategic guidelines for overgrowing areas of HT

	<p>5. Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230* for the four project sub- areas will be prepared (4 documents).</p> <p>6. Strategic guidelines for overgrowing areas of HT 6230(*) for Pohorje sub-area including 7 detailed silviculture plans for the implementation of concrete C actions will be prepared.</p>	<p>Yes; less silviculture plans were needed</p>	<p>6230* for Pohorje prepared by project staff</p>
<p>A.3: Involvement of landowners in the project and identification of areas for action implementation</p>	<p>Objectives: Identification of project implementation areas through intense communication with farmers/landowners</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interest among farmers, their involvement in the project and later management of the area. 2. Suitable areas for implementation of concrete actions C.1, C.2 and C.3 will be identified. 3. At least 4000 farmers and landowners will be informed about the contents and importance of the project (at least 400 will be also visited). 4. Improved knowledge of the issue of preserving dry grasslands, familiarity with local stakeholders. 	<p>Yes, with the delay and a lot of effort from project staff</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes, 9747 farmers informed about the project, 670 farm visits carried out</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20 workshops for farmers - a public invitation carried out - 192 applications from farmers to be include in the project activities received - areas for the implementation identified
<p>A.4: Permit procedures</p>	<p>Objectives: Obtaining all necessary permits following official procedures from in the field activities</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtained owner permits (at least 180 owners according to our estimation) 2. Obtained four nature conservation approvals (one for each project sub-area) 3. Estimate of around 15 permits in accordance with the Act on Forests will have to be obtained. 4. The implementation of concrete actions in accordance with national legislation. 	<p>- 338 owners permits obtained</p> <p>- 3 nature conservation consents (other not needed)</p> <p>- 30 permits for deforestation</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 163 Agreements to be involved in project activities signed with farmers
<p>B.1:</p>	<p>Objectives:</p>		<p>Partially completed</p>

Purchase and lease of land in the Haloze project sub-area	<p>Purchase and management of grasslands of highest nature conservation importance with the aim to ensure long-term existence of dry grasslands in Haloze PSA.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 15 ha of leased land 2. 15 ha of purchased land 	<p>13.66 ha purchased</p> <p>12.67 ha leased</p>	<p>Private land owners were not willing to sell or rent at a price proposed in the project proposal.</p> <p>Longer-term management assured (Action C.2).</p>
<p>B.2:</p> <p>Purchase of land in Gorjanci-Radoha project sub-area</p> <p>Description</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Purchase and management of grasslands of highest nature conservation importance with the aim to ensure long-term existence of dry grasslands in Gorjanci PSA.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 3 ha of purchased land 2. Ensured conditions for the implementation of action C.2 on at least 3 ha of land, cleared as part of action C.1 	<p>2.36 ha purchased</p>	<p>Partially completed</p> <p>Private land owner were not willing to sell or rent at a price proposed in the project proposal.</p> <p>Longer-term management assured (Action C.2).</p>
<p>C.1:</p> <p>Removal of overgrowth</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Cleaning of overgrown grasslands with the aim to establish and ensure sustainable management of dry grasslands.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overgrowth over at least 81 ha cleared from the habitat type 6210(*). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overgrowth over at least 45 ha of overgrown dry grassland surfaces in the Haloze project sub-area removed. - The clearing of at least 10 ha of overgrown dry grasslands surfaces in the Gorjanci- Radoha project sub-area. - The clearing of at least 26 ha of overgrown dry grassland surfaces in the Kum project sub-area. 3. Overgrowth over at least 52 ha cleared and tree-stumps mulched at least on 16 ha from the habitat type 6230* in Pohorje project sub-area. 	<p>HT 6210(*) in total: 86.69 ha</p> <p>PSA Haloze: 50.2 ha</p> <p>PSA Gorjanci: 16.54 ha</p> <p>PSA Kum: 19.95 ha</p> <p>HT 6230* PSA Pohorje 52.45 ha</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All biomass taken off the plots - Re-establishment of 139.14 ha of grasslands - Mulching of sprouts and tree hives after overgrowth removal carried out on 90.69 ha - 24 voluntary actions

C.2: Ensuring the appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands	<p>Objectives: Ensure appropriate long-term management of dry grasslands through implementation of nature conservation guidelines, communication with farmers/landowners and lease of farm equipment free of charge.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased economic viability of the extensive use of dry grasslands in the project sub-areas. 2. Ensured appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands on a surface of at least 517 ha 	<p>See action C.7</p> <p>Ensured long-term use of 678.46 ha of dry grasslands</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>Partners purchased mowing (1 mulcher, 4 modern mountain mowers, 1 tractor mower), grazing equipment (113 km of grazing fences on 263.38 ha), 6 cattle trailers</p> <p>Equipment was lent to farmers free of charge</p>
C.3: The restoration and maintenance of traditional orchards	<p>Objectives: Restoration and maintenance of traditional orchards, improvement of awareness of orchards and their role in ecosystem.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The improved structure and function of the habitat type 6210(*) on a surface of at least 45.50 ha of dry grasslands. 2. Ensured appropriate long-term use of dry grasslands on a surface of at least 45.50 ha. 3. Increased economic viability of the extensive use of dry grasslands in the project sub-areas. 4. 20 ha of existing traditional meadow orchards will be restored (rejuvenation pruning, planting of missing trees) in the Haloze project sub-area (1200 saplings planted (app. 60 saplings/ha)). 5. 0.50 ha of existing traditional meadow orchards will be restored (rejuvenation pruning, planting of missing trees) in the Gorjanci-Radoha project sub-area (30 saplings planted (app. 60 saplings/ha)). 6. 5 ha of existing meadow orchards will be restored (rejuvenation pruning, planting of missing trees) in the Kum project sub-area (300 saplings planted (app. 60 saplings/ha)). 7. 20 ha of steep slopes in the Haloze project sub-area will be re-planted (re-establishment of completely neglected 	<p>Yes, 83.48 ha</p> <p>Yes, 83.48 ha</p> <p>See action C.7</p> <p>Yes, 43.86 ha (3185 saplings planted)</p> <p>Yes, 0.56 ha (45 saplings planted)</p> <p>Yes, 2.74 ha (263 saplings planted)</p> <p>Yes, 40.56 ha</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 61 different old local varieties of eight (8) different meadow orchard fruit trees species were planted - cca 3500 sapling prepared for the project and planted by farmers or on voluntary actions - 11 voluntary actions for saplings planting - 777 old orchards tree pruned - 25 insect hotels installed at orchards for pollinators conservation

	<p>meadow orchards, 2000 saplings planted (app. 100 saplings/ha)).</p> <p>8. Improvement in the management of existing standard meadow orchards due organisation of training workshops.</p>	18 workshops	
<p>C.4: Networking of owners and users of dry grassland plots in the Haloze project sub-area</p>	<p>Objectives: Improve communication between landowners and users of dry grasslands in Haloze PSA by raising the awareness and setting up an online platform</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A working online platform for the networking of landowners in the Haloze project sub-area. 2. Increased economic viability of the extensive use of dry grasslands in the Haloze project sub-area. 3. Increased surface of dry grasslands where appropriate long-term use will be guaranteed. 4. In the long term, a decrease in overgrown dry grassland surfaces in the Haloze project sub-area. 5. Increased awareness among the local population on the importance of preserving dry grasslands. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>See Action C.7</p> <p>See Action C.2</p> <p>See Action C.1</p> <p>See Action E.2</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>28.300 unique portal visits</p>
<p>C.5: Preparation of farm management plans for improving dry grasslands management</p>	<p>Objectives: Involvement of interested farmers in the process of long-term planning of farming with the aim to raise economic output (and still carry out sustainable farming)</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*) / HT 6230* prepared in action A.2 will be included in the management plans for key farms in project sub-areas. 2. At least 49 farm management plans for dry grasslands management will be prepared 3. A good practice of integrating conservation measures will be transferred into agricultural management via the farm management plans. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>49 farm management plans were prepared</p> <p>Yes, in management plans</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>Farm management plans integrate economically viable extensive farming practices with nature conservation measures for species rich grasslands in the view of improving the social and economic perspective of farms.</p> <p>A new approach and a good practice example in Slovenia towards integrating nature conservation measures into farming practices was implemented.</p>

	<p>4. The surface area of dry grasslands will increase and appropriate use will be ensured.</p> <p>5. The trend of dry grasslands overgrowing will decrease in project sub-areas in the long term.</p> <p>6. The social and economic perspective of agriculture will improve in project sub-areas.</p> <p>7. Long term dry grasslands management will improve in project sub-areas.</p>	<p>272.85 ha</p> <p>Yes, See action C.1</p> <p>Yes, see action D.2</p> <p>Yes, see Action C:2</p>	
<p>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</p>	<p>Objectives: Preparation of AEP proposal for sustainable use on dry grasslands management</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of HT 6210(*)/HT 6230* prepared in action A.2 will be integrated into the expert proposal of AEP measures related to the preservation of the habitat type 6210 (*) and HT 6230* of the 2021 – 2027 Rural Development Programme. 2. The integration of the preservation of habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* in the system of agricultural policy in Slovenia improved for the long-term. 3. The social and economic perspective of agriculture in project sub-areas improved. 4. Long term dry grasslands management improved in project sub-areas. 	<p>Yes (See Action A.2, C.7, D.2)</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>A result based expert proposal was prepared and handed to responsible Ministry of agriculture, forestry and food in April 2019. Further efforts are made to include the proposal n to new CAP.</p>
<p>C.7: Development and Economics study of Dry Grasslands Preservation in the Haloze project sub-area</p>	<p>Objectives: Examine the possibilities for increase of profits in sustainable management of dry grasslands.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A recognised economic interest for further sustainable use of dry grasslands in the Haloze project sub-area. 2. The social and economic perspective of agriculture in project sub-areas improved. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed (see Action D.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 new complementary activities on the farm were registered - 5 farms switched to organic farming (selling milk at higher price) - 4 farms started processing fruit and additional 18 plan to do so

	<p>3. Increased awareness among the local population on the economical and ecological importance of preserving dry grasslands (at least 350 re-oriented farmers).</p> <p>4. At least 1.300 farmers in the Haloze sub area involved in the process of preparing the Development and Economics study of Dry Grasslands Preservation in the Haloze project sub-area.</p> <p>5. Platforms for agricultural, tourist, craftsman's and industrial products based on dry grasslands as a nature source in the Haloze area</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 21 farms are considering registering a new complementary farm activity (due to project actions) - Around 25 % of farmers included in the project increased the number of cattle - Documentation of collective brand from grasslands named "From the slopes of Haloze" prepared - Test evaluation of 136 products - A catalogue of products from dry grasslands available - 366 farmers/landowners were reoriented - 8.300 farmers were invited - Platforms for agricultural, tourist, craftsman's and industrial products based on dry grasslands as a nature source in the Haloze area available on the portal (See action C.4)
D.1: Monitoring of the impact of project actions success	<p>Objectives: Define the protocol and indicators for monitoring and monitor the effects of project actions on dry grasslands and their conservation status (before and after the implementation of project actions).</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring of the effects of field actions on the targeted habitats will be carried out on the basis of the standardised method 2. 5 workshops, 1 for each project sub-area and 1 joined for all project sub-areas 3. Project actions will be evaluated to assess the suitability of the site 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes, 5 workshops organized</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>The final report showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an increase in agricultural extensive use of land that was abandoned before (due to C.2 Action), 73 previously abandoned plots have now agricultural use re-established - a significant reduction of overgrowth (due to C.1 Action) - improvement in management practices (Due to Action C.2) - decline in presence of negative indicators

	<p>management, and assure the favourable conservation status of the targeted habitats</p> <p>4. Standardised field methods and monitoring indicators set for the assessment of the suitability of the site management,</p> <p>5. Detailed evaluation of demonstrative/innovative aspects and outcomes.</p>	<p>Yes, standardised field methods and monitoring indicators developed</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>an increase in number of present positive indicator species</p> <p>- a shift of presence of dominant species towards indicator species of grasslands presence and diversity of orchid species (PSA Gorjanci: 11 different species, PSA Haloze: 15 different species, PSA Kum: 19 different orchid species).</p>
<p>D.2: Assessment of the socio-economic impact of the project actions on local economy and population</p>	<p>Objectives: Assess the impact of project actions on local economy and population.</p> <p>Expected results: 1. Estimated socio-economic effects of the project on the local economy and population.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed (see also C.7)</p> <p>The study encompassed 141 villages on the area of 62.620 ha with 24.220 people on 8 Natura 2000 sites. Additional survey using standardized questionnaire was conducted in 2020 of farms that participated in the project (107 questioners).</p> <p>The study reports: that general economic wellbeing has improved, although we have to take into account that there was a general economic growth in the country in this period. It also showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 farms switched to organic farming (selling milk at higher price), - two farms already registered a complementary activity on the farm - 21 farms are considering registering a new complementary farm activity (due to project actions)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 farms started processing fruit and additional 18 plan to do so - nine surveyed farms already increased their stock of animals and additional 30 surveyed farms plan to increase the stock of animals in coming years (due to Action C.2). - more than half surveyed farms (54.7%) agree that the project showed them many opportunities to market products from dry grasslands - more than half agree that the project helped them acquired new useful knowledge and skills (52.3%) - respondents expect that the project will increase the income from additional agricultural activity of the farm and majority believes that increase in revenue will follow
D.3: Assessment of the project's impact on the ecosystem functions	<p>Objectives: Assess the impact of project actions on the value and providing ecosystem services; raise awareness about different ecosystem services which are provided by ecosystems on daily basis.</p> <p>Expected results: 1. Estimated effects of the project on the restoration of dry grasslands ecosystem functions in the project sub- areas.</p>	Positive effect, economically justified	<p>Based on the results of both studies, following conclusions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature conservation activities are economically justified in the long term, because they increase production value of areas. - Project delivered substantial boost in the form of remediation of farmland, which would be the cost that the owners would have to carry, would not be for the project. - Activities of Life to grasslands project increased the value of natural areas, where they were implemented and at the

			<p>same time landowners and business owners can increase their business offer and effectiveness without any additional investment.</p> <p>The total increased monetary sum of all ecosystem functions was assessed at 1.837.700 €</p>
<p>E.1: National and local authority education and information project</p>	<p>Objectives: Informing and communicating with different stakeholders about dry grasslands and their importance for conserving biodiversity; ensuring support for the project on different levels (local, national, professional services).</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 5 workshops and 8 presentations and lectures for local authorities (farming advisors, Municipalities, local foresters, Associations and Local communities), 2. At least 16 meetings with majors and municipalities' councils organized, 3. The knowledge of local authorities: farming advisors, Municipalities, local foresters, Associations and Local communities about species' and habitats' requirements, the conservation measures, and the appropriate management of dry grasslands increased, 4. Local authorities will be aware of the LIFE+ project, its actions and results, 5. The local authorities will be equipped with the knowledge about the importance of dry grasslands, its species and habitats, as well as Natura 2000 network and this project life. They will be able to pass the knowledge on to the farmers, forest and land use owners and general public, 6. Appropriate (nature friendly) management of dry grasslands will be addressed 	<p>- 9 workshops and 30 lectures and presentation</p> <p>- 24 meetings</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes, integration of nature conservation guideline into planning documents of other sectors (See Acton A.2)</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>802 representatives of national and local authorities were educated through 66 project events</p>

<p>E.2:</p> <p>General public and local community awareness campaign</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Raise awareness about the importance of dry grasslands for conserving biodiversity among general public, promotion of project and its actions via different media.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Following events prepared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -5 press conferences, -30 articles in national and local newspapers and internet articles, -5 radio broadcasts on nature protection, -8 lectures/field trips for the general public and other interested groups (Open days on the grasslands), -8 lectures and 12 workshops for local farmers on Haloze, Kum, Pohorje and Gorjanci-Radoha areas, -promotions of the LIFE project and of the Natura 2000 sites in the context of the Nature and health fair in Ljubljana (2), Agra – agricultural fair in Gornja Radgona (2) and Nature and agricultural platform meeting The general public, local community and all other interested parties will get up-to-date information on the project, its progress and results The awareness of general public, local community and all other interested parties about the importance of dry grasslands and its “species’ and habitats’ and the appropriate management of dry grasslands will be increased. 	<p>Following events organized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 press conferences - 115 articles in newspapers - 104 internet articles - 23 radio and 18 TV broadcasts - 15 workshops, 13 lectures, 13 open days - promotions at 7 fairs - 15 traditional events - documentary movie was produced by national TV on their cost <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>comparative analysis (project areas in comparison to national public opinion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a better recognition of Natura 2000 network among farmers included in the project (95%), compared to the general population in Slovenia (63%). - more farmers included in our project felt proud that they lived in a Natura 2000 area (85 % compared in project PSAs in comparison to 79 % of the general public). - less of farmers in PSAs were of the opinion that Natura 2000 restricts agriculture (31 % in project PSAs in comparison to 68 % of the general public).
<p>E.3:</p> <p>Promotion material</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Production of promotional material for popularisation of project and LIFE financial mechanism; raising the awareness about the importance of dry grasslands.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 project brochure on 4 pages with detailed information on project sub-areas, project targeted species/habitats 	<p>Yes, 1 project brochure prepared, Slovenian (4.000 copies) and English</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>See E.2</p>

	<p>and general information about the aim of the project, project action and its results and goals (4000 copies). Slovenian and English language (500 copies).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 leaflets, describing project sub-areas, with detailed information on project habitats and species. Slovenian language (6000 copies) and Croatian-only leaflet about Gorjanci (500 copies). - 1 leaflet, describing targeted habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* Slovenian language (2000 copies); English and Croatian version only in PDF. - 1 brochure which will present dry grasslands and good practise in the management of dry grasslands (1000 copies) - 4 transportable promotional banners (100cm x 200cm) to support all actions E - 1 Thematic Exhibition will be produced (transportable) - 4 different promotion posters printed in 500 copies each, - T-shirts (300 pieces), - paper bags (1,000 pieces), - hats (100 pieces), - poster calendars (1,000 copies), - Diary or folder (300 copies) - Local products related to the dry grasslands (honey, tea, apple juice, promotional seed bag - with characteristic of dry grassland species) – 500 pieces), - Promotional work equipment (apron, grinder – 400 pieces) <p>2. Increased awareness of national and local authorities as well as general public and local community will enable us to achieve project aims and goals easier. Encouraged landowners and farmers for sustainable land management.</p>	<p>(500 copies) language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 leaflets describing project sub-areas prepared - 1 leaflet, describing targeted habitat types prepared - 1 good practise brochure prepared - 5 banners printed - 1 thematic Exhibition produced - 4 different promotion posters printed - one poster calendars - 8 different postcards: 8000 copies - one small notebook - other promotional materials - local product form grasslands (straw hats, honey, herbal tea, apple chips) 	
E.4: Information and	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Design, production and instalment of complex info-boards and upgrade of animation trails on all PSA's; raise of</p>		Action completed

interpretation tools	<p>awareness about the importance of dry grasslands.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Following items constructed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Complex info boards: Haloze (2), Kum (1), Gorjanci-Radoha (1), Pohorje (1); and 8 small project and Life info plates Content, interpretive and animation upgrade of 3 existing teaching and hiking trails - Haloze, Pohorje and Gorjanci- Radoha Public awareness of visitors and locals will be raised and the knowledge on the importance of the dry grasslands and its habitats and species be enhanced. Connection and compliance with the educational programmes from action E.6 (children as one of the most important target groups) 	<p>Following items constructed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -5 Complex info boards -3 info boards at selected farms -3 existing teaching / hiking trails and tourist destinations were upgraded with interpretation 	
E.5: The project's web page and project graphic identity	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Design of recognizable project graphic identity; design of project web-page with content on dry grasslands, LIFE financial mechanism, nature conservation and Natura 2000.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The project's web page and project graphic identity. Information about the project, along with its actions, aim and results as well as the importance of the NATURA 2000 network will be widely assessable. The published information will raise the environmental and nature protection awareness about the NATURA 2000 as well as the importance of dry grassland habitats and species of community importance and show a good example of nature conservation in practice. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>es</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>www.lifetograsslands.si 182.042 unique visitors</p> <p>Result based payments network web page was also additionally created in 2020 by co-financing from the project (See action.6)</p> <p>https://www.rbpnetwork.eu/ 118 registered members from 26 countries and 9180 unique visits were detected until now</p>
E.6: Grassland classroom	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Production of educational programmes for different age levels and innovative didactic tools; raise awareness about the importance of dry grasslands.</p> <p>Expected results:</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>Following event were organized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -13 educational seminars / workshops for teachers -57 events for children - A 4-day summer camp

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental awareness and understanding the importance of dry grasslands amongst kids and scholars will improve and encourage them to study and work in the field of natural sciences and land management. 2. New educational programmes for different age levels (at least 3 different) 3. Innovative didactic tools (didactic game, didactic booklet, competitions) 4. Separate tag "Grasslands classroom" on the projects web page 6. Improvement of the school and kindergarten cooperation with local communities and nature conservation organisations and vice versa. 	<p>2500 children and 383 teachers were educated</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>A didactic booklet and a didactic game</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>The Educational program for teachers 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, which will assure also After LIFE education of teachers</p> <p>Additionally, the didactic game was also made as an internet game accessible on the project web page https://www.lifetograsslands.si/spoznaj-travisca-z-arniko-primozkom/</p>
E.7: Equipment for setting up project info rooms in Haloze, Pohorje, Gorjanci-Radoha and Kum project sub-areas	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Setting up info-rooms on all four PSA's for stressing out the importance of and raising awareness on dry grasslands.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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. 2. Established 4 info rooms. 3. Information about the area and the project will be accessible. 4. A good example of nature conservation and dry grassland management will be shown. 5. Information about the project, along with its actions, aim and results as well as the importance of the NATURA 2000 network will be presented. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>3 info rooms and 1 classroom</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>See Action E.2</p>
E.8: Layman's report	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Dissemination and promotion of project activities and results to general public.</p>		Action completed

	<p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One Layman's report prepared. 2. Project and its results disseminated and promoted to general public in Slovenia and abroad. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	
<p>F.1:</p> <p>Project co-ordination and management</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Coordination of project activities with the aim to ensure good implementation of project activities.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prompt and good implementation of the project goals, actions and objectives, according to the project proposal. 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regular coordination meetings - 10 supervisory board meetings - five external monitoring visits - a Kick off and a final conference organized - coordination and cooperation with External monitor Mr. Pečenko and representative of the co-financer (Ministry environment and spatial planning), also a LIFE focal point for Slovenia
<p>F.2:</p> <p>Networking with other projects</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <p>Exchange of experience with other LIFE projects (on dry grasslands); organisation of international conference on dry grasslands management.</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange of information between projects 2. A list of good practice examples on management of dry grasslands 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A 3 day International conference titled »CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MULTIFUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF GRASSLANDS" was organized by the project. Over 130 people from 6 countries attended the conference. - Project staff attended 3 international conferences and networking events organized by EC. - The project was presented or knowledge was actively exchange with 52 projects (33 LIFE projects and 19 projects funded form other EU funds. - The project networked in total with 98 projects (77

			<p>LIFE and 21 projects funded from other EU funds, by attending networking events</p> <p>- Transferred of knowledge to 2 new projects already running: Dinara back to LIFE (LIFE18 NAT/HR/000847) and POHORKA, Vizija Pohorje 2030 (cohesion funds)</p>
F.3: Audit	<p>Objectives: Revision of financial report.</p> <p>Expected results: 1. Revised financial report.</p>	Yes	Action completed
F.4: After-life conservation plan	<p>Objectives: Assure long-term management of dry grasslands on PSA's after project ends.</p> <p>Expected results: 1. Assured long-term management of dry grassland on project sub-areas.</p>	Yes	<p>Action completed</p> <p>After-life conservation plan prepared</p>

5.4 Analysis of benefits

Environmental benefits

a. Direct / quantitative environmental benefits:

With the implementation of **overgrowth removal** activities on 139 ha we extended the grasslands. In addition we assured **extensive long term management** of grasslands on 678 ha (units spread over entire Natura 2000 sites, of two targeted priority habitats HT 6210(*) and HT 6230*, thus effecting the status of the targeted HT on 7 Natura 2000 sites (35.599 ha) and contributing to achieve objectives of the Birds and Habitats directives.

Project restored 83.48 ha of **tall tree grasslands orchards** by planting of 3493 sapling. This Action supported conservation of the genetic diversity. In addition tall tree orchards planted on steep slopes prevent land sliding.

b. Qualitative environmental benefits

The project **improved management** of targeted habitat types (Action C.2) which is indicated in a change from overgrown grassland to extensively managed grasslands, reduction of presence of negative indicator plant and improvement of presence of positive indicator plant (Action D.1). In our estimation 366 farmers and landowners were reoriented toward extensive use of grasslands (owners and co-owners from action A.2, A.3 (299) and additional 28 farms with products from dry grasslands). The project contributes to the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and "Europe 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" (hereinafter the "Europe 2020 Strategy") and their objectives to tackle the causes of biodiversity losses.

Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of dry grassland were development (Action A.2) and their **incorporation into the sectoral plans** were implemented and will also be implemented in the future by CB ZRSVN. Management measures, management zones and management system for target habitat type currently set in Natura 2000 Management Programme for Slovenia (2015-2020) were upgrade. Knowledge gained from the project will contribute to implementation of several sectoral policies, in particular nature conservation, agriculture, environment, forestry and game management as well as spatial planning.

Tall tree grasslands orchards were restored in the project. Extensive species rich grasslands extend underneath tall fruit trees in these orchards. Old varieties of tall fruit trees are normally planted in this orchards that do not need any use of fertilizers and pesticides and are more resilient to drought and frost. These orchards are less susceptible to **climate change**. 3493 sapling of 61 different old local varieties of fruit trees were planned, supporting and promoting **agrobiodiversity**. Kartuzija Pleterje, a

Slovenian national genetic bank for old varieties of fruit tree who prepared eco-sapling especially for the project. Additionally 25 insect hotels were installed and equipped with educational board which emphasise the importance of **pollinators** and their conservation. This Action also supported conservation of pollinators and other species of insects and birds. These activities are in line with the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and efforts for conservation of wild pollinators. Tall tree grasslands orchards are a good example of the **biodiversity-friendly farming practices** pointed out in the EC CAP greening reform. In addition tall tree orchards planted on steep slopes prevent land sliding.

The expert proposal of a **result based payments** agri-environment measure was prepared in the project. Efforts are made to include the proposal in new CAP. A more effective result targeted measure for farming for conservation of species rich grassland can result in a better conservation status of these grasslands in the nature.

Economic benefits

According to surveys within the project socio-economic study (D.2) lasting results of the project are already visible:

- a general economic wellbeing has improved, although we have to take into account that there was a general economic growth in the country in this period
- 5 farms converted to ECO farming
- eco farmers of PSA Haloze organized themselves and now sell Eco-milk from Haloze to a local dairy at higher price
- one farm already **registered a complementary activity** on the farm in PSA Gorjanci (tourist activity) and one farm in PSA Haloze (processing of fruit and grapes). In addition 21 farms are considering registering a new complementary farm activity (due to project actions)
- nine surveyed farms (8.7%) already **increased their stock** of animals and additional 30 surveyed farms (29.1%) plan to increase the stock of animals in coming years (due to Action C.2).
- four farms have already started **fruit processing** during the project, 18 more are planning to do so in the future (Action C3 and C7)
- more than half surveyed farms (54.7%) agree that the project showed them many opportunities to **market products** from dry grasslands
- project activities encouraged a significant part of the surveyed agricultural holdings (37.7%) to **consider approaching a thematic collective** brand (such as the one we began implementing in action C.7)
- more than half (52.3%) of the respondents agree with the statement that the project helped them acquired **new useful knowledge and skills** which they could use to register new complementary farm activities.

- 37 respondents (34.6%) expect that the project will **increase the income** from additional agricultural activity on their farm in the coming years.
- scope of work on farms increased due to the project
- majority believe that **increase in revenue** will follow

The project also had an indirect impact on the local environment:

- a small grocery store offering local products was established in Majšperk named "Haložanka" (2019)
- product from grasslands are also sold in a local grocery store in Ptuj
- The hotel Grand Hotel Primus (Ptuj) now has the option of organizing catering of event with products from grasslands
- networking with emerging gastronomic brand »Haloze - Land of a Thousand Hills« group was established
- some local restaurants already offer local products in their menus

All this activities brought economic benefits to farmers and local landowners.

Social benefits

Special attention was given in the project to support and find new solution to developing **economically profitable farming** of species rich grasslands, taking into consideration their conservation. **Multifunctional use** of grasslands and tall tree orchards conservation was promoted, providing additional potential income to farms and at the same time assures conservation of species rich grasslands. Farm management plans (action C.5) and basis of a collective brand ("From Haloze steep meadows") were prepared (Action C.7), farmers were educated about processing new high quality products from dry grasslands and the registration of additional activity on the farm. Test evaluation of products from grasslands was conducted and activities to connect producers with buyer for setting up short food chains were carried out. Organic farming, as an environmentally friendly farming practice, has been promoted by the project, which also provides higher income to farms. Results are already visible (see Action D.2) among others 5 farms in Haloze already converted to eco-farming and are selling milk a higher price to the local dairy 2 farms already registered a new complementary activity on the farm (fruit processing, tourism on the farm) and additional 21 farms are considering registering a new complementary farm activity in the future, four farms have already started fruit processing during the project, 18 more are planning to do so in the future (Action C.3).... Further evaluation of product from grasslands, after the project end, is assure through national evaluation of product from Slovenian farms (Action C.7). A **new vision** for economically viable extensive farming in these specific rural areas was given to the farmers, which will help maintain farming in these areas. Active farming is crucial for conservation of these endangered semi-natural grasslands. These activities are in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy – for a fair,

healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. Improved economic viability of farms will also affect soci-economic status of these rural areas of PSAs.

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 PSAs have an excellent potential. Despite the high potential of the region with walking, cycling and wine routes passing through, touristic offer is very poor and disconnected. Environmentally friendly tourism was promoted through Action C.7 as a potential income to farms and was a part of the Economic study of Dry Grasslands Preservation in the Haloze. As a result some farms intend to register additional activity on the farm in the field of tourism (See Action D.2).

To support concrete actions, **promotional and educational activities** supplemented by series of meetings and workshops influencing local community and increasing its positive attitude towards dry grassland conservation. Educational nature trails and dry grassland info rooms and a grassland classroom, supported by education of youth and teacher increased the knowledge about the importance of dry grassland conservation (see Actions E.1, E.2). Our youth will once be the decision makers.

Replicability, transferability, cooperation:

Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of dry grassland (Action A.2) can be replicated to other Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia with the same habitat types and could also be transferred to other types of grassland habitats.

Management zones, specific management measures and conservation guidelines for sustainable management of dry grassless (targeted habitats), developed in the project (Action A.2), were and will be **integrated into sectoral plans** for forestry, game management, and local community development plans, which supports species rich grasslands conservation. 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.

Poor collaboration among the **nature conservation and agriculture sectors** is present in Slovenia. CB ZRSVN (nature conservation sector) and AB KGZ (agriculture sector) collaborated together very well and jointly came up to new good solution, to the satisfaction of both. In addition a good practice approach was established in the project; a farming advisor and nature conservation expert visited farms at the same time as a pair and jointly advising farmers. A good collaboration between sectors and a new vision that extensive agriculture can be economically viable and at the same time support conservation of species rich grassland is being transferred by AB KGZ Ptuj (and their farm advisors service) to other farming advisors at other regions in Slovenia as well as

is promoted to farmers. At the same time positive approach is being promoted by CB ZSVN to all its regional units and its nature conservation experts. AB KGZ Ptuj, due to project activities, specifically established and employed an agriculture advisor specialising in nature conservation issues. This is a good practice example which is also being promoted by the project and its partners.

By collaborating of the project with the **Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia** (Sklad kmetijskih zemljišč in gozdov Republike Slovenije); managers of state owned agriculture land) we managed to incorporate nature conservation guidelines for species rich grasslands management into their 10 years state owned **land lease contracts**. This is for the first time in Slovenia and it is a success. This approach can be transferred to other state owned land lease contract on areas of nature conservation importance. This new good practice approach of incorporating nature conservation guidelines into land lease contracts of SKZGRS is a good example of incorporating nature conservation issues in to other sectors. This approach was promoted in a letter from CB ZRSVN to the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning sent in July 2019.

An **International conference** titled »Challenges and opportunities in multifunctional management of grasslands" was organized by the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS. The purpose was to exchange and transfer knowledge and experience about sustainable species rich grasslands management, including all the challenges of modern farm practices. 5 LIFE projects and 5 project financed from other EU funds were presented to over 130 people from 6 countries attended the conference (representatives of national authorities, scientific institutions, parks, municipalities, NGO). The conference was very well accepted.

Project manager was asked to present the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS at several workshops for the preparation of **new LIFE projects** proposals organized by MOP (See Action F2. Knowledge was passed on to other LIFE projects in preparation.

In addition knowledge and experience from the project were transferred to 2 **new projects** which are already accepted (Dinara back to LIFE - LIFE18 NAT/HR/000847, CB ZRSVN official supporter) and POHORKA, Vision Pohorje 2030 - Improving the conservation status of grasslands, aquatic and minority forest habitats and ensuring peaceful zones on Pohorje (CB ZRSVN a project partner, Cohesion funds) and to 2 others, which did not pass the evaluation phase, but will be upgraded and handed again, namely LIFE TO GRASSLANDS II - Conservation and sustainable economic use of dry grasslands in the common border area (LIFE20 NAT/SI/001182; ZRSVN a project partner) and an EIP GRASSLANDS project called "Farming to preserve species-rich grasslands by transferring knowledge to the farmer". In addition young staff employed

by the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was later on employed at other LIFE projects and the knowledge was transferred on.

Knowledge gained during preparation of the expert proposal for the result based AEM measure in Action C.6, which was the first attempt for Slovenia, was transferred to a project titled “Test of two-stage implementation of the measure for conservation of bird habitats in moist extensive meadows”. CB ZRSVN is also a lead partner of the project. A project prepared and tested a **two-stage result based measure** for conservation of bird habitats in moist extensive meadows (also for corn crane).

The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS also **cooperated with the project**: Targeted research project (V4-1814), Analytical support for greater efficiency and the goal of agricultural policies towards the environment and nature in Slovenia, Potentials of new concepts and participation of farmers in agri-environmental measures. The projects carried out a comparative analysis and questioners among farmers for PSA Haloze (258 farms involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS) and compared the result with the farmed from region of Karst (263 farms not involved in the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS). Recommendations for new CAP were prepared. Joined analysis brought a new value to the information gathered by both projects.

Through the duration of the project we cooperated and transferred knowledge **to other LIFE projects and projects financed from other financial mechanisms** (Action F.2). The project was presented or knowledge was actively exchanged with 51 projects (32 LIFE projects and 19 projects funded from other EU funds) on conferences, workshops online webinars or through the mail.

CB ZRSVN previously coordinated a LIFE project WETMAN (LIFE09 NAT/SI/000374) where National Radio Television Slovenia (RTV SLO) was an associated beneficiary. A good collaboration between the two organizations still lasts. National Radio Television Slovenia approached CB ZRSVN and they produced a **documentary movie** titled “Living on the meadow” (Življenje na travniku) under the series The BIOTOPS where the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS was also presented. It is also accessible on the project web page <http://www.lifetograsslands.si/rezultati-projekta/zivljenje-na-travniku/>. RTV SLO also presented the project in the context of a series dedicated to educate the audience of protected areas of Slovenia, presenting the Landscape park Kum (also PSA KUM).

Best Practice lessons:

A good practice approach was established in the project: a farming advisor and nature conservation expert visiting farms at the same time as a pair and jointly advising farmers. It proved to be a very good approach.

The project provides good practice examples in the field of **Multifunctional use of grasslands** and active management of species rich grasslands supported by development of supporting activities, addressing **economically viable farming** in rural area (see socio-economic benefits). Processing and producing high quality products from grasslands (including grassland orchards) and selling them at higher price can assure the needed additional income to small rural areas. Potential networking under a “collective brand” (at the one prepared in the project) bring additional added value. We believe that the project showed a **new vision** to farmers in PSAs and gave them incentive to keep active farming in the rural areas of the PSAs which is crucial for conservation of semi -natural species rich grasslands. The multifunctional approach to management of grasslands, that supports economically viable farming for conservation of species rich grasslands, is a good practice example.

Filed training workshops for farmers were organized to discuss suitable management of species rich grasslands and to educate the farmers of identification of indicator plants of species rich grasslands. They also served as test of the model of farmers’ “self-assessment” of the conservation status of grassland. They were well accepted by the farmers and a lot of knowledge was exchanged. The comparative analysis carried out in collaboration with the target research project showed (Action C.6) that farmers from PSA Haloze are statistically better at recognizing indicator plants and are supporting RBPS approach better in comparison to farmers from areas not included in the project. Workshops are a good practice example on how to transfer specific knowledge to farmers.

Innovation and demonstration value:

The **multifunctional management of species rich grasslands** supported by development of supporting activities in the farm, addressing economically viable farming by producing product on farms which are sold under a collective brand, is to our knowledge an innovative approach in this field.

A **result based approach Agri-Environment measure** for conservation of the habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* was prepared and tested in the field. Innovative approach using indicator plants for assessment management of species rich grasslands was developed in the project and used for the first time in Slovenia. This approach has a demonstrative value for further development of other RBPS measure in Slovenia.

Policy implications:

Result based approach Agri-Environment measure for conservation of the habitat types 6210(*) and 6230* was prepared and tested in the field. Innovative approach using indicator plants for assessment management of species rich grasslands was developed in the project and used for the first time in Slovenia. Efforts are made to incorporate the approach in to new CAP (See action C.6).